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SOCIAL CRITICISM IN THE NOVELS OF D.H. LAWRENCE

by

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Introduction

One of the major problems in attempting an analysis of D.H. Lawrence's social ideas is the sheer amount of material which must be covered. Lawrence wrote profusely about the shortcomings of society in all his publications: the novels, short stories, poems, essays, and literary criticism. From the time he left childhood to the closing moments of his life, Lawrence never changed his central position that something was basically wrong with modern industrial society. From year to year, from book to book, Lawrence recorded with astonishing impact both the obvious and the subtle deficiencies of the life of our times.

Although Lawrence's answers to the problems he uncovers are not often taken seriously, his criticism of

the accepted values of a machine age society is still valid. And this pertinence, this applicability of his criticism to today's world of social unrest and hydrogen bombs is one of the reasons Lawrence continues to fascinate. Lawrence's social views, however, appear in a multiplicity of contexts. And as so often happens in a writer who is not a systematic philosopher, each expression of thought about society's workings tends to be colored by the stresses present in the writer's life at the time of composition. Thus, there exists in the vast body of D.H. Lawrence's notions, much animosity directed toward people in real life, and a great deal of bitterness which stems from his own difficulties in managing personal situations. He attacked those social structures which he felt had deprived him -- and thus man in general -- of the possibilities of personal fulfillment.

The question can therefore be raised: where is the best, the truest rendering of D.H. Lawrence's social criticism? As he himself answered the question in the first chapter of Studies in Classic American Literature:

The artist usually sets out -- or used to -- to point a moral and adorn a tale. The tale, however, points the other way, as a rule. Two blankly opposing morals, the artist's and the tale's. Never trust the artist. Trust the tale. The proper function of a critic is to save the tale from the artist who created, it. ¹

Of course, for an artist who wrote so much that was not in the form of a tale, it is hard to take this admonition at face value. He obviously wanted his ~~non-fiction efforts~~ non-fiction efforts to be read. And yet it truly is Lawrence's fiction that presents to us his views and ideas, his critical "analysis" of the workings of society, in a way which through the force of symbol and metaphor, character and situation, moves us as the non-fiction cannot. When we read non-fiction we expect in most cases an orderly presentation of ideas, governed by the rules of logic; we are on our guard against irrational preaching or vituperative ranting. We discredit digressions and unsupported assertions. We expect the writer will appeal to our rational, conscious minds in an effort to persuade us that his views are correct. Lawrence in his non-fiction, of course, fails to follow these guidelines for good expository writing. And yet, the thoughts which he presents in these essays make up what is commonly held to be the body of Lawrence's "ideas." It is easy to discredit Lawrence as a thinker (political, social, or otherwise) when these ideas are held up to the light of the rational intellect. "Blood knowledge" sounds like a shoddy piece of rhetoric, an evasion of the main job of communication, a resort to emotionalism. "Star polarity," "submission to the God within" etc. all appear as mystical totems without

effect in the real world. And for better or worse, non-fiction makes a direct and implicit demand upon that realworld.

But Lawrence was not a philosopher. As Julian Moynahan points out, Lawrence was a "professional novelist but no more than an amateur prophet and a mortal man." ² He was a particular kind of novelist, however, a novelist of social criticism, a novelist who saw the world around him, created an imaginary world which resembled that observed world, and in so doing, rendered his judgement upon it. At his best, Lawrence in the novels does not say this is wrong with society or that is wrong with society; he shows in dialogue and action, in description and scene, in movement of plot, the very essence of his criticism of modern life.

Lawrence's sense of life did not come from the upper reaches of the philosopher's ivory tower, but from contact with the life of nature and the life of human beings. Thus, his most perceptive analysis of human behavior, of social relationships, of the larger forces of society, occurs in the novels where the judgement is objectified in flesh and blood characters and living situations.

Lawrence's ability to make these ideas meaningful in the context of literature grew as he cultivated his intuitive genius as a writer. Lawrence's total output can be conveniently separated into four distinct

periods. The novels of each period, having similar characteristics of form and content, will contain the social criticism peculiar to that phase of Lawrence's life. In each of these periods I have selected a representative novel for detailed analysis. By looking at these four works, we shall be able to see the aspects of Lawrence's criticism which change with time and those which remain constant.

Most critics find Sons and Lovers the best novel of the early period, the culmination of Lawrence's growing capabilities as a novelist. I agree with this evaluation; nevertheless, I have chosen instead to discuss The White Peacock because it contains in embryo, open for study, all the themes which will occupy Lawrence for the rest of his career. Here in the very first novel, we can examine both his flaws and his virtues in their elemental states, and then perhaps recognize more clearly the achievement of the later novels. A great deal can be gained by studying this first effort of Lawrence's to bring order and form to the many social ideas which were a part of his early life. Moreover, there are certain aspects of The White Peacock which are carried over into the later works. Sons and Lovers is, in a way, a dead end, the completion, the summing up of particular matters in Lawrence's personal life. The subsequent novels, The

Rainbow and Women in Love, seem to look back more to The White Peacock than to Sons and Lovers for their themes and interests.

Concerning these last two novels, there is little doubt that they represent Lawrence's finest work of the second period. Indeed, nearly all critical judgement agrees with F.R. Leavis that these are Lawrence's best novels. Thus, the choice of only one is difficult.

Women in Love is more explicitly contemporary, that is, contemporary with the context of Lawrence's life when it was written. It surveys the attitudes and values of the 20th century. In a very real way, however, the condemnation of society presented in this book must be set against the background of an earlier and a better social order, not an ideal social order, but one which formerly existed. What was the nature of this Eden from which man has fallen? It is the pastoral world evoked somewhat immaturely in The White Peacock. But it is also the world of the Brangwens in the first part of The Rainbow. The Rainbow, then, is, for my purposes, more rewarding of study because it shows what once was and how it came not to be. It describes three generations of Brangwens in the Midlands from the time of the first railroad in the 1850's right up to World War I, providing the reader with a forceful contrast between the felicities of the old life and the indignities of

the new.

One novel, because of the history of its composition, does not fit easily into either the second or the third stage ^f of Lawrence's writing. During the first three months of 1913, he wrote half of what was to become The Lost Girl before turning his complete attention to The Rainbow and Women in Love. The manuscript was not completed until 1920, a short time after Lawrence had left England for Italy. There is a great deal of social criticism in the novel, particularly in the detailed picture of life in England which makes up the first part of the book. Alvina Houghton rejects the every day, small town, Midlands existence and yearns for something more satisfying. Unavoidably one thinks of the Brangwen women. But in the second part of the novel, she bears a closer ~~spiritual~~ resemblance to Kate Leslie of The Plumed Serpent as she seeks spiritual rebirth in the passional life with her dark Italian lover. The Italian section of the novel also indicates Lawrence's growing concern with the roots of individual power and his identification of that power with the Dark Gods of old. This last theme clearly places the book in the third period which follows the end of the First World War.

Jascha Kessler,

Though William York Tyndall, Keith Sagar, and L.D. Clark defend The Plumed Serpent, most critics

seem to agree that "the leadership novels" -- Aaron's Rod, Kangaroo, and The Plumed Serpent -- are not good books. It is ironic that these works, which are most obviously concerned with "social" questions (politics, labor, the organization of the state, etc.) should provide so little valid social criticism. Yet this demonstrates clearly my position that the best social criticism in Lawrence's novels occurs when the novelistic technique is of a high order. In order to gain a comprehensive picture of the changing nature of Lawrence's social views and his ability to assimilate them in his fiction, we must examine one of these novels. I have selected Kangaroo because it contains Lawrence's most moving response to the devastating moral and psychological effects of World War I and should be read for that reason alone. It also contains several didactic passages which reveal a great deal about the post-war chaos and moral confusion and Lawrence's reaction to this state of affairs.

In the final phase of Lawrence's writing there is only one novel available for discussion, Lady Chatterley's Lover. Though it has received much attention, there is no better place to see the ultimate expression of Lawrence's vision and to perceive the difficulties he had in embodying that vision in fiction. In Lady Chatterley's Lover, Lawrence presents

his final estimate of 20th century society, the end product of a life of concern with the world around him.

Anyone writing on D.H. Lawrence can hardly be said to be breaking new ground. The justifiably well-known works of F.R. Leavis, Harry T. Moore, Mark Schorer, Julian Moynahan, Mark Spilka, Eliseo Vivas, and others have provided great insight into the complexities of Lawrence's work. Yet some critics have spent most of their time vindicating Lawrence as a man of letters without giving due regard to his social criticism. John Harrison, in The Reactionaries (1967), shows clearly that the common practice of separating Lawrence's "ideas" from his total accomplishment as a writer of fiction is an error of critical judgement.

Moreover, how on earth can anyone appreciate Lawrence's novels without taking his social criticism seriously? One has not only to understand Lawrence's ideas but to make some attempt to sympathize with them, before one can begin to appreciate a novel such as The Rainbow. 3

Even F.R. Leavis, one of Lawrence's most astute critics, only deals with Lawrence's ideas because Lawrence "was an artist of genius." ⁴ But Lawrence was not merely an artist; he was a writer of novels who intended those novels to "inform and lead into new places the flow of our sympathetic consciousness." ⁵ It is informative

to review Lawrence's critics to find out how many of them "take seriously" the proposition that the social criticism is an integral part of the fiction.

Actually the very first attempt at serious critical evaluation, Herbert J. Seligmann's D.H. Lawrence: An American Interpretation (1924), comments on Lawrence as a social critic. Though immoderately enthusiastic about Aaron's Rod and Kangaroo, Seligmann recognizes the challenge to American life in Lawrence's attacks on democracy, the increasing pressure of mechanization, and the rise of the independent woman.

Following Lawrence's death in 1930, a spate of memoirs appeared which contain little critical judgment of Lawrence's work, although they do shed some light on the people Lawrence knew. Favorable literary judgements were made in the 30's by Aldous Huxley in the Introduction to The Letters of D.H. Lawrence (1932) and the essay by F.R. Leavis published in For Continuity (1933). Neither of these discussed Lawrence as a social critic.

Lawrence had many detractors in that decade, the most famous of whom was T.S. Eliot. In After Strange Gods (1933), Eliot attacked Lawrence for not being an artist and more or less dismissed Lawrence as a thinker. A complete refutation of Eliot's position is found in Leavis' D.H. Lawrence: Novelist (1955),

but for the most part neither Eliot nor Leavis really take Lawrence's social criticism seriously as a basis for their disagreement. Leavis does admit that Lawrence can bring "the insight, the wisdom, the revived and re-educated feelings for health" that our civilization "desperately" needs, but he insists upon the primacy of "the work and the art" as literature.⁶

One critic of the 30's who took Lawrence's social ideas seriously, but failed to find anything worthwhile in them, was Christopher Caudwell. In an essay in Studies in a Dying Culture (1938), Caudwell attacked Lawrence for his failure to accept the cause of the working man, i.e. to become a Marxist, when he so obviously detested a society based on money relationships.

William Troy's perceptive essays, though written before World War II, have only recently become generally available. His discussions of Lawrence and Myth deserve reading for their sense and objectivity though they do not specifically refer to the social criticism.

Since the 1950's there has been an overwhelming amount of material published on Lawrence. Harry T. Moore's critical biography The Life and Works of D.H. Lawrence (1951) was the forerunner of many books which attempted to revive Lawrence's reputation as a writer. Moore, like Leavis, prefers not to comment specifically on the social criticism and its role in the fiction.

He assumes that Lawrence's diagnosis of the problems facing society is correct and proceeds to evaluate the fiction as fiction, leaning heavily on biographical information. In his Introduction, he states that not all readers will agree with Lawrence's "philosophy, with his remedies for the social illnesses which he so effectively diagnosed." Nevertheless, the reader will be rewarded by "the expressional power of Lawrence's utterance: his writing, just as writing, provides one of the richest reading experiences of our time." ⁷

But Lawrence's writing cannot be taken "just as writing." The importance of the ideas to the shape and form of the "writing" is too apparent. Moore's attitude may have been necessary when Lawrence's reputation was at its lowest, but now that his stature as one of the foremost writers of the 20th century is assured, one has to deal objectively with the work. And if the work is inextricably bound up with the ideas, then the ideas, the social criticism must be examined, not merely accepted. Its true relationship to the fiction must be made clear.

Julian Moynahan, in his book The Dead of Life (1963), presents an attitude similar to Moore's.

While no critic can discuss Lawrence's fiction without moralizing, without taking political stances, without frequent reference to symbolism, none of these approaches is exclusively suited to accomplish the perennial tasks of criticism, which

are: to discriminate the formal organization of works of art; to determine the coherence and completeness of these organizations; to judge the moral, intellectual, and affective value of what has been discriminated. 8

What Moynahan means is that he will deal with Lawrence's novels and tales as works of art, but he will avoid comments on the "prophetic message" or the "morality" of Lawrence's prescriptions. But if one is to judge the "moral, intellectual, and affective value" of Lawrence's work, one cannot escape dealing with the moral, intellectual, and affective value of the ideas which underlie and indeed course through the fiction.

Actually, Moynahan does have something to say about Lawrence's social criticism. In a roundabout way his "literary" analysis of the novels and tales reveals Lawrence's social criticism as it exists in the fiction, as an integral part of the fiction. When he discusses the themes of The Rainbow and says that "maximum relatedness" and "maximum individuation" must be combined to produce wholeness of being, he is identifying one of Lawrence's ideas. Indeed, Moynahan's excellent discussions on the form of The Rainbow and especially his description of the method of characterization provide an insight into the way in which Lawrence reveals his social criticism in that novel.

Moynahan also presents one of the most balanced

discussions of The White Peacock to be found anywhere, but he seems too eager to praise Lady Chatterley's Lover for "the rich simplicity of its structural design." This seems to be one of the problems of the critic who attempts to analyze only the structure without considering the way in which the structure and the ideas are connected. When a complex social problem is the subject of a novel, a simple structure, though striking and refreshing, may be an inadequate vehicle for the most complete and affective expression of that problem.

Another writer who states unequivocally that he will not deal with Lawrence's ideas is the aesthetician Eliseo Vivas. In D.H. Lawrence: the failure and the triumph of art (1960), Vivas defines rigid criteria for the evaluation of art and then applies them to Lawrence. He finds that Lawrence as an artist occasionally reaches great heights when his novels are infused with "constitutive symbols" -- a term which Vivas explains at length. Constitutive symbols are simply those non-allegorical symbols which affect the total consciousness, not merely the intellectual faculties. Indeed, it is the intuitive aspect of Lawrence's symbols which most interests Mr. Vivas, since he is notably unsympathetic to Lawrence as a thinker.

For those who uncritically accept Lawrence's philosophy, however, reading Vivas' opinions should

prove an arresting experience guaranteed to temper irrational enthusiasm. Though he is sometimes sarcastic, his rational approach clearly reveals many of the inconsistencies and inadequacies in Lawrence's thought. Vivas is most convincing in his detailed exposure of the fallacies in Lawrence's "sexual ethic," particularly as it appears in The Plumed Serpent and Lady Chatterley's Lover. Vivas shows that Lawrence generalized his personal experiences into an autocratic dogma applicable to all, which overlooks the variations in an individual's response to sex, variations which Lawrence with his interest in "spontaneous" individuality should have recognized.

When Vivas attacks Lawrence's ideas on love and sex, he is undoubtedly replying to the excessive praise they receive in Mark Spilka's The Love Ethic of D.H. Lawrence (1955). Unlike Vivas, Spilka is a disciple; he continually presents a sympathetic reading of Lawrence's ideas. Unfortunately, he sometimes allows his approval of the ideas to overcome his literary judgement, as in his interpretation of Clifford Chatterley. Spilka goes so far as to find Chatterley "more sharply drawn...than Gerald Crich in Women in Love, because his crippled body and his moral failure coalesce, in a dramatic and symbolic manner." ⁹

Chatterley may function well as a symbol, but he seems lacking in those qualities which would make him a

"dramatic" character in a novel.

Again, the date of publication for Spilka's book may explain the less than objective approach. Even as late as the 50's Lawrence was viewed with distrust by most critics and their literate audiences who were, in effect, still under the sway of T.S. Eliot's judgements. Not only did his work not meet the stringent requirements for form laid down by the New Criticism, but it was also surrounded by an aura of the cheap, the popular, and the sensational. This was true even though Eliot had consented to write a forward to Father Tiverton's D.H. Lawrence and Human Existence (1951).

Because their aim was to recommend Lawrence to the literary public, Moore, Leavis, Aldington, and others who published early in the fifties were inclined to minimize Lawrence's deficiencies so that his good points might more easily be recognized. Subsequent criticism has often gone in the opposite direction, as in Vivas' case, but there are a number of well-balanced treatments that attempt to see Lawrence in the round. Graham Hough's The Dark Sun (1957) is an excellent example of the urbane, sophisticated approach which recognizes both Lawrence's liabilities and his assets as a writer and a thinker. Anthony Beal (D.H. Lawrence, 1961) and Ronald P. Draper (D.H. Lawrence, 1964) follow in Hough's footsteps. Draper includes a useful comprehensive survey of Lawrence's critical reputation.

Keith Sagar's approach (The Art of D.H. Lawrence, 1966) is strikingly intelligent and unpretentious as he objectively tries to discover the "appropriate form" by which Lawrence's vision of life "finds utterance in art." 10

Though Mary Freeman's D.H. Lawrence: A Basic Study of his Ideas (1955) is sensible and complete in its examination of Lawrence's "ideas," it was written early enough to require a preface justifying the objective, comprehensive approach as a much needed corrective to the "fallacious view" of Lawrence prevalent in those days. She calls for the elimination of the "narrow view" in favor of a "broader perspective."

For example, it becomes evident that the customary psychoanalytic evaluations tend to lose what he said in why he said it, that the rigorous dichotomizing of the artist from the prophet destroys the basic unity of his work, and that the attribution of his incongruities to inspired mysticism or to hopeless irrationality not only throws him over to the cultists but excludes him from the serious consideration which is his due. 11

Though the modern trend in Lawrence criticism is to examine the work objectively and analytically, there are still examples of critics who fail to see Lawrence in all his complexity. George Ford in Double Measure (1965) makes a striking observation about Law-

rence.

Lawrence is a major social critic occupying a role in the Twentieth century comparable to Carlyle's in the Victorian Age. 12

But Ford finds much of the social criticism expressed in a strident jeering tone which he finds objectionable. Instead of examining closely this flaw in Lawrence's style, Ford concentrates on Lawrence's merits. He quotes W.P. Ker to justify his approach. "The best one can do, and it is no dishonorable office, is to get to the right point of view, to praise in the right way." ¹³ An objective and analytical critic, however, must also be able to condemn in the right way to get at the whole of a work of literature.

This is not to say that Ford's discussion of Lawrence is not worth investigation -- there are a great number of useful observations made -- but rather that it is less critical of Lawrence's deficiencies than other studies. By de-emphasizing some of the elements he finds distasteful in Lawrence's writing, Ford gives us a less complete picture of Lawrence's work.

H.M. Daleski's The Forked Flame (1965) is less satisfactory than Ford's book. Daleski's analysis of dualism in Lawrence and his work is too narrow in scope. Though he makes the connection between Lawrence's

ideas as expressed in the essays and the ideas as they appear in the fiction, he cannot elaborate on the complexity of Lawrence's symbols because he has to fit every aspect of Lawrence into the confines of his thesis. Daleski bases much of his argument on a psychological interpretation of the events of Lawrence's childhood -- the conflict between his mother and father, the resulting mixed loyalties towards the male and female principles, early problems of sexual adjustment -- and sees Lawrence's opposing categories -- sun-moon, light-dark, northern-southern -- as examples of the continuation of the male-female split. He states that Lawrence was unable to reconcile the male and female elements which formed his character and that he remained essentially female. Daleski points out that men Lawrence admired, from Walter Morel to Mellors, are all female figures and that the dominating women he hated, from Mrs. Morel to Hermione, are all male figures. From this evidence Daleski fashions criteria by which to judge the novels. Though there may be a great deal of truth in what he says about Lawrence, he seems to view the novels merely as corroborative evidence for his idea of Lawrence the man. He does not ask whether the ideas -- dualistic or otherwise -- in the fiction have a larger function, a relation to the reader and the reader's world.

In The Utopian Vision of D.H. Lawrence (1962), Eugene Goodheart faces the problem of Lawrence's ideas directly. And though he professes to see the ideas and the art as a whole, he spends most of his time placing Lawrence in the context of European philosophy. He recognizes the role of social criticism in the fiction, but he does not deal with the objective facts, Lawrence's criticism of what is. Rather, he emphasizes the visionary element of Lawrence's thought in both the fiction and the non-fiction.

Goodheart views Lawrence as a visionary prophet, a "tablet breaker" (Nietzsche's term) in the tradition of Blake, Dostoevsky, and others whose literature is mystically religious. There is undoubtedly a part of Lawrence which searches, yearns for the transcendent world both within and without man. This part of Lawrence is present in all his work, yet it seems a less rewarding area of study than the more concrete aspects of his social criticism. Lawrence's "vision" is too often vague, and as such withstands objective analysis. On the other hand, his literary technique and the social criticism of the recognizable world which it conveys present a body of material suitable for analysis. Though Goodheart identifies Lawrence as a visionary prophet, he does not go so far as to suggest that we follow Lawrence's prescriptions. He points out that the value of "tablet breakers" to society is their

ability to shake complacency, to call for a re-evaluation of customs, habits, and traditions.

We respect the vision,
but we can not embrace the
doctrine. Between Lawrence
and every serious reader
of him there must be, I
believe, a permanent tension:
a sense of provocation and
danger. 14

Readers holding fast to liberal, humanistic ideals, who value the uses of the intellect, democratic political institutions, and Christian ethics are prone to experience this sense of danger in Lawrence's works. One may be able to dismiss his preaching against such values in the non-fiction, but it is often hard to resist the effect of the same attacks in the fiction. After reading Lawrence and looking at the world we live in today, at times there arises the thought that Lawrence may be completely right in his diagnoses of the ills that beset society, that indeed it is the Christian love ethic, democracy, and intellect which have brought us to our present state. Lawrence's ability to write moving prose is, in part, responsible for luring us into an unconscious acceptance of his intellectual assumptions.

On the other hand, we all experience in our lives moments of frustration in which we feel that our individual needs are not being satisfied in the mass production, mass consumption, mass communication

world we live in. This feeling is most evident in large urban centers, yet it occurs in suburbia as well. This sense of alienation from the distant, anonymous, and powerful forces which appear to rule our lives tends to elicit, irrespective of the merits of the fiction, a positive response to a story like that of Connie and Mellors who are struggling to free themselves from those forces. Even when Lawrence's diagnoses of social problems is superficial, even when he makes sweeping generalizations which are necessarily a bit false, he strikes a responsive chord because he clearly articulates the frustrations of the individual in a mass society. And the reader who responds favorably to the vision a priori is likely to overlook the flaws both in the doctrine and in the literature.

One critic who is aware of this difficulty is John Harrison. In his remarkable book The Reactionaries (1967), he is both sympathetic and objectively critical. He says that Lawrence

deserves sympathy when he struggles to describe entirely new and much better personal and social relationships, but a certain viciousness of temperament, together with the evasiveness of his style do much to counteract the sympathy. 15

Harrison examines in great detail the reasons for Lawrence's anti-liberal, anti-Christian, anti-democratic

stance and makes the point that Lawrence, unlike the other "reactionaries" covered in the work -- Yeats, Eliot, Pound, Wyndham Lewis -- seems truly concerned with the plight of man and not merely the predicament of the artist. In that sense, he sees Lawrence as more sincere in his social criticism, less selfish and egotistical in his approach, and thus to be viewed with a greater measure of tolerance than the others. Harrison does not, however, minimize the dangers in Lawrence's thinking. He is very clear in his exposition on that point. Nevertheless, he concludes that Lawrence's

novels exist as records of his own psychological problems, and as he was pre-eminently the product of the society into which he was born, they are the problems of man in present-day society. His novels present his beliefs concerning social and personal relationships in our modern industrial society, and the difficulties which confronted him are to a large extent those which still confront us today. 16

Agreeing wholeheartedly with Harrison's conclusions, I have also attempted to adopt his sympathetic but objective attitude in my discussion of Lawrence's social criticism.

Undoubtedly, the social ideas are at the heart of the novels. The fiction would not exist in the form

it does -- perhaps not exist at all -- if Lawrence had not been socially conscious, concerned with the world around him. The task which I have set myself is to show how the fictional technique and the social criticism work together to produce an effect which neither could produce alone. The corollary to this view should also be apparent: since they are so clearly integral in Lawrence's work, the best social criticism, the most applicable, valid, and affective social criticism, exists in those novels or those parts of novels in which the novelistic technique is of the highest order.

It may seem a contradiction then to choose The White Peacock as the representative novel of the first period, for admittedly, it is not the best. Yet to gain a comprehensive idea of Lawrence's achievements as a novelist of social criticism, it is necessary to look closely at his earliest work as well as his latest. This approach will demonstrate Lawrence's development in time, reveal his changing views about society and his changing ability to incorporate those views in fiction. There is no better place to begin than the place where Lawrence began -- The White Peacock.

In that novel we can see the influence of Eliot and Hardy at work on the budding novelist; we can see the influence of his home life, particularly his mother's attitudes, on his earliest social ideas. We

can observe the youthful writer straining towards a literary style; we can observe the superficial quality of his understanding of society. Yet it should also be apparent that by discovering the initial sources of Lawrence's literary and social ideas, we can more fully recognize the accomplishments which the later works certainly are. In The Rainbow, Kangaroo, and Lady Chatterley's Lover Lawrence transcends the limitations of his sources. To what degree will be made clear in the chapters dealing with these novels.

Footnotes: Introduction

- 1 D.H. Lawrence, Studies in Classic American Literature (New York, 1964), p. 2.
- 2 Julian Moynahan, The Deed of Life (New York, 1963), p. xviii.
- 3 John Harrison, The Reactionaries (New York, 1967), p. 17.
- 4 F.R. Leavis, For Continuity (London, 1933), p. 119.
- 5 D.H. Lawrence, Lady Chatterley's Lover (New York, 1959), p. 146.
- 6 F.R. Leavis, D.H. Lawrence: Novelist (New York, 1956), p. xiii.
- 7 Harry T. Moore, The Life and Works of D.H. Lawrence (New York, 1951), p. 20.
- 8 Moynahan, p. xviii.
- 9 Mark Spilka, The Love Ethic of D.H. Lawrence (Bloomington, Indiana, 1955), p. 181.
- 10 Keith Sagar, The Art of D.H. Lawrence (Cambridge, 1966), p. 3.
- 11 Mary Freeman, D.H. Lawrence: A Basic Study of his Ideas (New York, 1955), p. v.
- 12 George Ford, Double Measure (New York, 1965), p. 12.
- 13 Ford, p. 15.
- 14 Eugene Goodheart, The Utopian Vision of D.H. Lawrence (New York, 1962), p. 172.
- 15 Harrison, p. 189.
- 16 Harrison, p. 164.

I.

The White Peacock

The White Peacock contains almost all of Lawrence's themes in their earliest forms. Published in 1911, The White Peacock was Lawrence's first attempt at a long work which provided an opportunity for the expression of a comprehensive picture of society. It is not only a first novel; it is also a test of the young Nottingham author's ability to incorporate his ideas about society in the structure of a novel. And because the novel is less than perfectly realized, we are able to see dramatically the problems Lawrence faced as he attempted to record his youthful impressions of society in novelistic terms. Taking into account all the difficulties any writer has to contend with in a first novel, we can also note the degree to which Lawrence surmounted these problems and actually produced a book in which

plot and character, scene and dialogue embody the social views that Lawrence held at the time.

A study of The White Peacock should also provide a firm basis for analysis of Lawrence's later novels. It prefigures the novels that follow in the same way a young plant bursting forth from the earth prefigures the mature plant. Though paler in color and lacking in power, it contains within its outer covering the promise of future development, the full flowering of Lawrence in his thirties. But even here in his mid-twenties Lawrence has grappled with the themes which will consistently appear again and again in all his work that follows: the "modern" woman, the class system, the conflict between mental knowledge and physical awareness, the rejection of socialism or any other "ism" as a means to improve society, and the antagonism toward a machine culture.

In some ways The White Peacock may be regarded as a bildungsroman. It is the story of the education of George Saxton, who begins as a contented young farmer who cares for nothing in life but his work and physical comfort. Unfortunately he undergoes a process of education which increases his awareness of the possibilities of life without providing the means whereby he might make those possibilities realities. His close friends, Cyril and Lettie Beardsall, who are lower middle class college graduates, introduce him to art and literature, philosophy and music. But he is not able to become one of them

because he feels personally inferior. He speaks often of "the cage of society" that has trapped him, but this "cage" is not simply the class system. As time progresses George rises economically; he even overwhelms an upper class rival from the speaker's platform at a socialist rally, thereby demonstrating the advances he has made in self-improvement. Nevertheless, though he moves far in education and economics, he never feels at ease in the company of the "cultured." Because he can never gain access to the upper circles, he eventually rejects their values. The process of education which he has undergone has taken away his contentment and left only vague yearnings and dissatisfactions. He turns to drink and slowly degenerates, a victim of his own inability to rise above the limitations of his nature. The blame rests partly on society -- the class system, the emphasis on culture -- and partly on George himself who cannot grasp what is offered him. His failure seems partially a failure of will.

Woven in and around this plot are many threads which can legitimately be called social criticism. But the manner in which Lawrence's unique prose style both helps and hinders the unfolding of these various themes deserves some comment. Richard Aldington in his introduction to the Penguin edition of The White Peacock remarks about the "eloquent and natural writer Lawrence was." ¹ Certainly no one can come away from this book without being conscious of the extraordinary sense of

poetry which fills page after page. Yet there are times when Lawrence (having by this time published several well-received poems) loses control of his medium and indulges in a kind of "poetic prose" for its own sake. And this to the detriment of the novel as a whole. Of course these youthful excesses are excuseable in a first novel; but they should be recognized here in the earliest of his work so that we may see if the faults are eliminated in the subsequent novels.

The flaws inherent in Lawrence's limpid, romantic style can be seen in the following passage. (*Italics mine.*)

The day had been hot and close. The sun was reddening in the west as we leaped across the lesser brook. The evening scents began to awake, and wander unseen through the still air. An occasional yellow sunbeam would slant through the thick roof of leaves and cling passionately to the orange clusters of mountain-ash berries. The trees were silent, drawing together to sleep. Only a few pink orchids stood palely by the path, looking wistfully out at the ranks of red-purple bugle, whose last flowers glowing from the top of the bronze column, yearned darkly for the sun. (p. 38)

Though a mood and a scene have been established, there seems to be no direct correlation with the action which follows, George and Cyril's discovery of a drunken tramp sleeping in the woods who later turns out to be Cyril's long lost father. Instead the cloying quality of the personification of nature -- the sunbeam clinging

"passionately" to the berries, the orchids yearning "darkly for the sun" -- creates an atmosphere of over-ripe sensitivity. The prose is too rich, too obviously contrived to demonstrate the writer's poetic skill.

Although there are many descriptive passages like this in The White Peacock, in which Lawrence seems to be striving so hard to be exquisite that he fails to avoid being ludicrous, there are many more in which the states of feeling of the characters are galvanized into dramatic imagery. To indicate the tentative yet powerful nature of the confrontation beneath the surface of the casual remarks uttered by George and Lettie as they discuss a painting, Lawrence can do this:

"Didn't you know the picture before?" she said, in a low toneless voice.

He shut his eyes and shrank with shame.

"No, I've never seen it before," he said.

"I'm surprised," she said. "It's a very common one."

"Is it?" he answered, and this make-belief conversation fell. She looked up, and found his eyes. They gazed at each other for a moment before they hid their faces again. It was a torture to each of them to look thus nakedly at the other, a dazzled, shrinking pain that they forced themselves to undergo for a moment, that they might the moment after tremble with a fierce sensation that filled their veins with fluid, fiery electricity. She sought almost in panic for something to say.

(p. 48)

Notice how the use of words with a highly sensual connotation -- "nakedly," "fierce sensation," "fluid, fiery

electricity" -- create an effect in keeping with the point of the meeting of the two characters. The same kind of imagery loosely applied to nature in the previously cited passage -- the "passionate clinging" and the "dark yearning" -- merely gets in the way of our understanding. Perhaps it is the result of time, but the purple prose of a bygone era is no longer readable for its own sake. Our tastes demand a more consistent use of imagery to amplify the major elements of a novel.

Another example of the difficulties Lawrence had with his prose can be found in the description of the gamekeeper's funeral. He begins by picturing a lovely spring day, full of delightful images of birds, trees, and flowers into which slowly creeps the sad and mournful procession bearing the coffin. In typical romantic fashion nature reflects the attitudes thrust upon it. The birds cry for the deceased, echoing the cries of the human mourners. "How the crying frightens the birds, and the rabbits; and the lambs away there run to their mothers." (p. 208) All of nature is sad and distressed. Even the "pitiful red clusters of elm-flowers sweep along it [the coffin]" as if they whispered in sympathy -- "We are so sorry, so sorry -- '... ." (p. 209) But again the personification of nature is overdone to the point of bathos. The 20th century novelist cannot hope to get away with talking trees. Lawrence is obviously trying to contrast the sense of life in all its robust health and vitality with the sorrow of death, but he lacks a

sense of proportion. He does not know when to stop.

While describing the loveliness of ~~this~~ this particular morning in spring Cyril, the narrator, digresses and begins to discuss the nesting habits of the birds in the most flowery prose.

I cannot help forgetting, and sharing the spink's triumph, when he flashes past with a fleece from a bramble bush. It will cover the bedded moss, it will weave among the soft red cow-hair beautifully. It is a prize, it is an ecstasy to have captured it at the right moment, and the nest is nearly ready.

Ah, but the thrush is scornful, ringing out his voice from the hedge! He sets his breast against the mude and models it warm for the turquoise eggs -- blue, blue, bluest of eggs, which cluster so close and round against the breast, which round up beneath the breast, nestling content. You should see the bright ecstasy in the eyes of a nesting thrush, because of the rounded caress of the eggs against her breast! (p. 207)

Again there is no artistic necessity to personify the individual birds in this fashion. The delineation of mood and feeling necessary to provide a vivid and meaningful contrast between the spring day and the funeral could have been accomplished in fewer words and without the gushiness of sentiment which marks Lawrence's earliest attempts to project himself into the "quick" of the flora and fauna around him.

It is not a difficult task to find illustrations of this particular flaw in Lawrence's prose. It is fascinating, however, to see how the very same scene can

contain passages which in the simplicity of their descriptions induce an over-all feeling of artistic control. For instance, tucked in between the overly romanticized accounts of nature, Lawrence can present a passage which conveys very effectively the meaning of death to the people of the procession:

The men come over the brow of the hill, slowly, with the old squire walking tall and straight in front; six bowed men bearing the coffin on their shoulders, treading heavily and cautiously, under the great weight of the glistening white coffin; six men following behind, ill at ease, waiting their turn for the burden. You can see the red handkerchiefs knotted round their throats, and their shirt-fronts blue and white between the open waistcoats. The coffin is of new unpolished wood, gleaming and glistening in the sunlight; the men who carry it remember all their lives after the smell of new, warm elm-wood.
(p. 208)

Unfortunately Lawrence was not able to restrict himself to this kind of description. It is natural and effective prose, without any of the disturbing, overly-poetic effusions which mar the book. Here the words accurately convey the meaning; there is no sense of intrusion. Though much of the funeral scene contains overblown figures of speech, we feel that Lawrence has succeeded in rendering a real and moving experience.

A similar lack of consistency is noticeable in

the treatment of characters. On the one hand he can create the fully rounded figure of George, and yet fail to achieve a real embodiment of the first person narrator Cyril. He can portray a vital, fascinating game-keeper, Annable, and then kill him off early in the story as though he didn't know quite what he wanted to do with him. He can briefly sketch in the personality of the young mine owner Leslie Tempest (a study for Gerald Crich in Women in Love) without fully developing a worthy figure to oppose this example of the ruling classes.

Cyril is the most obvious instance of poor management. In his only novel written in the first person, Lawrence fails to make a living character out of his narrator. He also fails to limit his story to those events which the narrator might reasonably be expected to have witnessed. With the love triangle of Lettie, Leslie, and George the most important part of the story, Lawrence must resort to some very awkward maneuvers to supply the reader with information.

In the first part of the book, when Cyril is living in the country near the other principal characters, it is difficult to imagine him being on hand every time something of importance occurs between Lettie and George. When in the second part of the book he moves to London far from these people, it is almost impossible. Lawrence must contrive long-winded letters from people

in the country to tell what is happening there. Cyril has to make sporadic unmotivated visits to the country to visit George (though by this time they have very little in common and nothing to talk about) so that the story may continue.

The most obvious violation of novelistic credibility occurs on the occasion of Lettie's thirty-first birthday party. Lawrence needs a scene between Lettie and George and so Cyril accompanies George to Highclose for the event. As the dialogue between Lettie and George begins to dominate the after-dinner conversation, however, Cyril literally disappears and Lawrence ends the scene in outright third person. (pp. 383-90)

Our total conception of Cyril is similarly vague and unreal. His almost ghostly disappearance from the scene between Lettie and George mentioned above is actually not very surprising, for Cyril never comes alive as a person. He is affected, priggish, and poet-ically "sensitive," merely because Lawrence wants to describe the world in poetically sensitive terms. But Cyril seems noticeably lacking in knowledge (other than the literary sort), opinions, and logic. By using a first person narrator who is not really involved in the main story, Lawrence takes all the body out of him as a character. Unlike Conrad's Marlow, Cyril never comments on the actions of the other characters. He seldom makes judgements. He merely describes.

Thus when Cyril first goes to London, he can walk about and nostalgically recall the lovely, wild, "wet place in the valley of Nethermere" where he longs to be. Yet a few pages later he can delight in the poetry of city life.

The spring came bravely, even in south London, and the town was filled with magic. I never knew the sumptuous purple of evening till I saw the round arc-lamps fill with light, and roll like golden bubbles along the purple dusk of the high road. Everywhere at night the city is filled with the magic of lamps: over the river they pour in golden patches their floating luminous oil on the restless darkness; the bright lamps float in and out of the cavern of London Bridge Station like round shining bees in and out of a black hive; in the suburbs the street lamps glimmer with the brightness of lemons among the trees. I began to love the town. (p. 341)

Cyril becomes a mouthpiece for the sensitive observations of the author and nothing more. We never know what he does in London, whether he is really involved with Emily, George's sister, or anything important about him. He is simply a device for overhearing what the other characters are saying. One might point out the similar way in which Hardy has characters overhear important conversations, but in most cases in Hardy there are consequences which arise from the facts revealed. Nothing happens to Cyril when he overhears things. He just passes them on to the reader like some mechanical device. Cyril never moves the plot in any way by an action which

is the direct result of some previously witnessed scene.

When Cyril is with George the first time they meet Annable, the Squire's gamekeeper, he is struck and knocked down by the gamekeeper. Yet despite this manifest hostility between himself and the man, Cyril soon becomes Annable's friend and confidant. This is all the more surprising in light of the animosity between George and Annable over the Squire's rabbits. One would think that Cyril might think of his loyalty to George and avoid the company of the rascally gamekeeper. If Cyril were a real character he might, but as the narrator he cannot. Lawrence can't afford to allow Cyril emotional attachments to other people in the story. Lawrence can't allow Cyril to have feelings, other than his response to nature. He cannot have emotional relationships with the other characters and still serve as the kind of narrator Lawrence wants. Cyril's characterization is severely strained by Lawrence's demand that he be both sensitive artist and objective reporter. At times Cyril functions as a flat character; far more frequently he appears to be no more than an awkward device.

The gamekeeper is by far the most arresting and enigmatic character in the book, though he, too, serves as an example of the young novelist's difficulties with characterization. Annable is the first of a long line of figures who physically resemble Lawrence and who often act or speak for the author. They are usually short, wiry in build, and dark of complexion; they are articulate

though living in a somewhat primitive situation. And they are wont to inveigh against the established order or whatever it is Lawrence is opposed to at the time of writing. These characters seem like projections of what Lawrence thought himself to be like.

Annable is just such a man, but Lawrence is not quite sure what he wants Annable to do. It is obvious what he stands for:

He was a man of one idea: --
that all civilization was the
painted fungus of rottenness.
He hated any sign of culture.

(p. 196)

By being an enemy of culture Annable represents in a bold way the theme of the book, for it is "culture" which is somehow responsible for George Saxton's downfall. But why then does he have to leave the picture? Why is it that Lawrence cannot come to terms with this man? He is introduced as the keeper of the Squire's lands, the protector of the Squire's game, especially the rabbits which cause so much damage to the crops on Saxton's farm. Having him appear as an immediate physical enemy, (in his first appearance in the book, Annable knocks the wind out of George and Cyril with powerful blows) Annable seems to be on the side of the upper classes, the land-owners. By working for the Squire he is in effect employed by the cultured class, though he lives like an animal himself. Thus when he appears as the spokesman for the anti-establishment, anti-cultured woman theme, and be-

comes very friendly with Cyril, there is an inconsistency in the drawing of the character. In fact, inconsistency seems to be Annable's major characteristic. Not only does he help support the class he hates by his labors, but he can also speak like an Oxford don when he chooses -- an ability not often found in gamekeepers outside of Lawrence's novels. But Annable's decision to use either dialect or standard English is dictated chiefly by the author's desire for clarity. For instance, when Annable tells Cyril the story of his first marriage to the high-born, "souly" woman, an important piece of narrative, he drops the dialect. In this long speech he reveals his familiarity with cultured words as well as his direct experience of the cultured world, itself.

As a person who has lived in both worlds, Annable would seem the ideal figure to deliver a trenchant criticism of the cultured life. A few short pages after his denunciation of the establishment, however, Annable is killed in a rock slide for no apparent reason. That is to say, there is no internal action in the story which demands his death. Perhaps the reason for the keeper's early demise is that he is not really Lawrence's spokesman; he does not represent Lawrence's ideals at this stage of the author's development. In later works the gamekeeper figure will be the incarnation of all of Lawrence's beliefs. But here in this first novel Lawrence seems to be groping for a middle way somewhere between the primitive existence of an Annable and the

overly sophisticated life of the Tempests. As we shall see later, Lawrence finds this ideal in the traditional values represented by the English farm life like that of Strelley Mill. It is, of course, poor novelistic technique -- to create a viable, fascinating character and then dispose of him arbitrarily.

There seems to be a pattern to the flaws which are being enumerated. Lawrence is at fault when he is obvious, sentimental, or unsure of his technique. We have seen these problems in his prose and his sense of characterization. We can also see it in some of his first attempts to call attention to social evils. When Lawrence moralizes on a particular subject, he does not succeed in communicating his social criticism in novelistic terms.

One of the earliest social evils that Lawrence mentions in the book, alcoholism, is treated as if it were the subject of a temperance lecture ^{complete} with illustrated slides. The man Cyril and George had stumbled upon in the woods was in reality Cyril's father. Having abandoned his wife and children years before, he returns to the old neighborhood. He does not tell anyone of his return; he only wants to see his children from afar. He shortly dies of delirium tremens, leaving a sum of money to his wife and a letter which calls the family to his corpse for the burial. When Cyril and his mother arrive, they are told of his last horrible hours.

In order to arrange for the funeral, Cyril's

mother, Cyril and the doctor visit the joiner, the sexton and the vicar, with each of whom the doctor has a drink "to seal the bargain." They return to the doctor's cottage before setting out, both Cyril and his mother somewhat alarmed about the doctor's intention of driving them to the station. Although the doctor's drunkenness seems relatively mild, the death of Cyril's father from alcoholism placed together in this context reveals Lawrence's attitude towards drink.

The entire story of the father is handled in an extremely sentimental fashion. Lawrence's treatment of alcoholism is typical of his youth and does not bear strongly on his later views. It is a slight aberration in the accepted scheme of values in the community, something which if corrected would improve but not materially change the conditions of the world as it is. Whenever Lawrence specifically and obviously points to a social ill, as he does in his treatment of the Squire's rabbits, or the effects of drink, he is not making any attempt to change the total structure of society. He seems to accept society as it is and to be only concerned with eliminating some of the things he has recognized as "bad" for society.

When he works his ideas about society into the situations of the plot, however, Lawrence shows signs of his true genius. When he is being subtle, as he is in the over-all development of the novel, he seems to be attacking something very basic in social institutions and not just one of the surface problems. He goes beyond the

notion of making simple changes in the outward structure of society and reveals wide scale defects which lie beneath the surface. For instance, the novel as a whole questions the value which society places on the attainment of culture. Lawrence implies that culture can be harmful in many ways. We see the effects most clearly on George, but the other characters also demonstrate how vain and empty the lives of the "cultured" can often be. Lawrence calls attention to the dilemma of the modern woman as he traces Lettie's dissatisfaction with her life. He shows us how her education -- liberal and humanistic -- has not prepared her for the life she must accept as the wife of a wealthy mine owner. The modern, progressive ideas and ideals which she has read about make her unhappy because she cannot live up to them. The basic problems -- the changing relationships of people and institutions in the modern world -- are the important problems. But these problems cannot be attacked naively and simply in fiction in the manner that Lawrence chose for his attack on the evils of drink; it requires the full breadth of the novel and all the skill the novelist can muster to portray his world so truthfully that the reader can feel, as well as know, the real depth of the social criticism being presented.

Lawrence's youthful enjoyment of style often stands in the way of this kind of social criticism. By calling attention to itself, the style focuses attention on the specific problem and makes it stand out from the

narrative. Such an example occurs at the beginning of Chapter VI. Strelley Mill, the farm which the Saxtons rent from the Squire, is described as being surrounded on three sides by the Squire's woods. The rabbits' carnage of the crops makes farming the land economically impractical. The farm is being put in the red by the forays of the rabbits. Thus, for the Squire's benefit, the small farm owner is being forced to give up his land and his livelihood. Lawrence shifts abruptly from the easy, soft poetic style in which he has described the farm nestled in the woods to an ironic tone.

Now the squire of the estate,
head of an ancient, once even
famous, but now decayed house,
loved his rabbits. Unlike the
family fortunes, the family tree
flourished amazingly; Sherwood
could show nothing comparable.
Its ramifications were stupendous;
it was more like a banyan than a
British oak. How was the good
squire to nourish himself and his
lady, his name, his tradition,
and his thirteen lusty branches
on his meagre estate? An evil
fortune discovered to him that
he could sell each of his rab-
bits, those bits of furry vermin,
for a shilling or thereabouts in
Nottingham; since which time the
noble family subsisted by rabbits.

(p. 82)

Notice here the almost 18th century wit in the diction. The above paragraph is followed by a paragraph in which irony is replaced with serious poetic prose. This passage, however, is extremely effective because it is not over done.

Farms were gnawed away; corn
and sweet grass departed from
the face of the hills; cattle
grew lean, unable to eat the de-
filed herbage. Then the farm be-

came the home of a keeper, and
 the country was silent, with no
 sound of cattle, no clink of
 horses, no barking of lusty dogs.
 (p. 83)

The Squire, Leslie Tempest's father, and his rabbits represent the monied classes who are bringing ruin on the small landowner by allowing the farms to go to seed. The abandoned fields turn into primitive wildernesses. The good life for Lawrence is in this early work represented by a harmony with nature which comes from the placid cultivation of a small farm. The primitive, that which overthrows, and strangles the civilized aspect of life is seen as a destroying force.

The influence of George Eliot and Thomas Hardy on Lawrence's thinking is here very evident. The harmony with nature, the living with the seasons and the cycles of cultivation are present in these writers whose works Lawrence knew well. Scenes from Adam Bede, Far From the Madding Crowd, or The Return of the Native presenting the contentment and joy of the farm family and their hired hands sitting down to a harvest supper come quickly to mind. The traditional values of honesty, warmth, and affection are part of the picture of 19th century English farm life which Eliot and Hardy described in their novels. Lawrence himself portrays such a harvest supper with great zest in the final pages of The White Peacock. Many critics have pointed to Lawrence's debt to Eliot for much of the mood and temper of this first novel.

Graham Hough has a particularly perceptive account of this relationship in his book on Lawrence. He also calls attention to the fact that the creation of George Saxton "owes a little to Gabriel Oak," ² the farmer in Far From the Madding Crowd.

One of Lawrence's continual themes is natural harmony. Even the mowing machine on the farm does not constitute a threat when it fits into the traditional pattern of cultivation.

The machine started. The bed of the knife fell, and the grass shivered and dropped over. I watched the heads of the daisies and the splendid lines of the cocksfoot grass quiver, shake against the crimson burnet, and drop over. The machine went singing down the field, leaving a track of smooth, velvet green in the way of the swath-board. (p. 293)

Lawrence sees man as a creature of nature who must always be in tune with nature. Later, however, when he sees the extent to which the mechanical principle, the anti-natural, has come to govern modern life, he seeks the answer in what appears to be the most "natural" -- namely, the primitive. Here in his first look at society, he has not yet seen the awful spectre of mechanization in all its strength. Indeed, the pits at the mines, which in The Rainbow and Lady Chatterley's Lover become so symbolic of the ruin of the countryside, are in this book scarcely criticized.

Whenever the mines are brought into the story, they usually form a part of the background (except for

two incidents -- the strike, and the Christmas party). They are not terribly attractive, but Lawrence does not dwell on their ugliness. Nature still overshadows them; Lawrence feels and sees the larger element encompassing man's poor scratchings into the crust of the earth. The first mention of the mines in The White Peacock describes the "ugly village" of the miners. But a little later, the mines and their sounds seem a part of life, something seen in a romantic haze.

The beautiful day was flushing to die. Over in the west the mist was gathering bluer. The intense stillness was broken by the rhythmic hum of the engines at the distant coal-mine, as they drew up the last bantles of men. As we walked across the fields the tubes of stubble tinkled like dulcimers. The scent of the corn began to rise gently. The last cry of the pheasants came from the wood, and the little clouds of birds were gone. (p. 75)

Although the mines play a minor role in the book as objects of social criticism, they are, nevertheless, part of the underlying structure of the society presented in the novel. They are one of the economic supports of the "cultured" classes. The leisure and money required to pursue refinement are available to the Tempests because they own the mines. In great part Lettie decides to marry Leslie Tempest because he can offer her the sort of life she has come to expect, and that life depends on the fact that he is a mineowner and not a miner.

Lawrence very subtly and capably makes us aware of this connection between the mines and the life of

Lettie and Leslie when he thrusts into a scene of Christmas merry-making the figures of two boys who, instead of going to bed early on Christmas Eve, must go down to the pits and work. Cyril and Lettie meet them walking in the snow.

"Why!" said Lettie. "Are you going to work on Christmas Eve?"

"It looks like it, don't it?" said the elder.

"And what time will you be coming back?"

"About 'alf past two."

"Christmas morning!"

"You'll be able to look out for the herald Angels and the Star," said I.

"They'd think we was two dirty little uns," said the younger lad, laughing.

"They'll 'appen 'a done before we get up ter th' top," added the elder boy -- "an' they'll none venture down the shaft." (pp. 136-7)

A pointed remark: the angels would never venture into the pits, emphasizing the dirt and darkness of the mines. Outside, above ground, all is still and white and pure. Cyril and Lettie are well dressed and on their way to a party. The thinly clad boys are on their way to the pits. Lettie says as they walk on, "Fancy...those boys are working for me!" (p. 137) The whole structure of her life, her marriage to Leslie, the parties, the college education, the atmosphere of culture and respectability of the whole class depends on the wealth dug from the ground by the poor, the uneducated, the young who have no other future.

After the party -- "It was a splendid party; it was brilliant, it was dazzling." (p. 138) -- full of glitteringly vacuous flirtations and conversations, the idle rich amusing themselves, Lettie and Cyril see the two boys on their way home. "They were very grotesque in the dark night as the lamp-light fell on them, showing them grimy, flecked with bits of snow." (p. 140) Without any other explicit condemnation of the situation, the inequality of the social structure is made evident by stark contrast. But Lawrence somehow throws away the full impact of the scene by adding a Dickensian note of jollity. The boys shout "merrily" their good wishes for a happy Christmas and cry "'ooray!" to Lettie's wave. "Christmas came in with their acclamations." (p. 140)

Though Lawrence seldom has the mines in direct focus, their connection with the other elements is brought in from time to time as suggested above. Mrs. Annable, now a widow, makes a stern protest against sending her sons into the pits. "My husband always used to say they should never go in th' pit." (p. 243) Annable's antagonism to the life of culture and his love of the vital earthy nature of man extend to an abhorrence of the mines. Although Lawrence is never able to say so directly, the connection between the mines and the life of the leisured is strengthened by Annable's revulsion. Culture and mechanization are linked together.

The one incident in The White Peacock in which

one might expect Lawrence to fully develop an attitude towards the problems of the mines -- the strike -- is also curiously underplayed. His description of the situation of the miners and their problems is cold and distant.

The distress was not awful, for the men were on the whole wise and well-conditioned, but there was a dejection over the face of the countryside, and some suffered keenly. (p. 169)

The effect the strike has on Lettie and Leslie, however, is handled with a surer touch. Lettie, having inherited democratic views from her mother, debates the issues with her fiance. Or at least she tries to. "He heard her with mild superiority, smiled, and said she did not know."

(p. 170) The enmity which she has felt emanating from the lounging, out-of-work miners, who watch her walk by in her furs, the cold emptiness which separates the working classes from the masters of industry, is revealed dramatically in Lettie's actions toward Leslie. And whereas in the description of the hardships imposed on the miners we feel nothing (it is like some objective newspaper report), in the dramatically revealed conversation we feel the hopelessness of the situation.

"So!" said she, with a quiet, hopeless tone of finality.

"There now, you understand, don't you, Minnehaha, my Laughing Water -- So laugh again darling, and don't worry about these things. We will not talk about them any more, eh?"

"No more."

"No more -- that's right --
you are as wise as an angel.
Come here -- pooh, the wood
is thick and lonely! Look,
there is nobody in the world
but us, and you are my heaven
and earth!"

"And hell?"

"Ah -- if you are so cold --
how cold you are! -- it gives
me little shivers when you
look so -- and I am always
hot -- Lettie!"

"Well?"

"You are cruel! Kiss me --
now -- No, I don't want your
cheek -- kiss me yourself.
Why don't you say something?"

"What for? What's the use
of saying anything when there's
nothing immediate to say."

"You are offended!"

"It feels like snow to-day,"
she answered. (pp. 170-1)

I admit this is an extremely tenuous analogy: to say that
the feeling of hopeless distance between Lettie and Leslie
in their argument over the strike is a revelation of the
hopeless distance between Leslie the mine owner and the
striking miners. Yet it has that effect, coming as it
does immediately after the one page summary of the strike
itself. To show, however, that even here Lawrence is
ultimately not too concerned about the lack of justice
in the miners' plight (something he was to care about
passionately in later books), he very simply disposes of
the end of the strike.

The strike was over. The
men had compromised. It was
a gentle way of telling them
they were beaten. But the
strike was over. (p. 171)

Lawrence then gets on to a description of the coming of spring, something he feels he can handle with more skill.

The birds fluttered and dashed; the catkins on the hazel loosened their winter rigidity, and swung soft tassels. (p. 171)

Et cetera. There is of course a contrast formed merely by contiguity: the wonder and joy of spring juxtaposed with the empty, cold resignation of the strike, but there is no special emphasis, no attempt to make a pointed social criticism at this time.

Having examined several different examples of Lawrence's technique -- his prose style, his treatment of characters, and his overt social criticism -- and noted the flaws which are apparent in this first novel, we can assess the way in which the novel lives. Since it is my purpose to show that Lawrence's best social criticism works through the very nature of the fiction, it is best to look at The White Peacock as a unit, as a meaningful whole, every part of which, in all its numerous details, adds to the effect Lawrence was trying to render. Though there may be faults evident throughout the book, weaknesses which when examined in detail seem gauche, and even when read in context often produce a sense of inconsistency, the total effect produced by the book is, nevertheless, remarkably vivid: an accurate picture of a social milieu with all the faults therein that the young Lawrence was able to reveal.

As stated earlier the main theme of the book, the education of George, is Lawrence's most positive social criticism. It is all encompassing; it includes all the minor themes: the mines, the rabbits, the modern woman. George Saxton's destruction, his gradual change from a happy, carefree farm worker to a decrepit middle-aged alcoholic can be traced to a combination of all these elements. The education which George receives at the hands of his kind friends is appropriate to their way of life, a life built on mines and rabbits, a life that produces highly cultivated complex women, a life whose complexities inevitably destroy the happiness inherent in the simpler life.

Indeed the novel may be looked at as having two main sections. The first part concerns George and his life on the farm, the second, his life at the pub. In the first part (Books I and II), the pattern of events is relatively smooth and undisturbed, like a tranquil stream running through fields and woods; the second part (Book III) is full of upheavals, partings, ugly and terrible sights, scenes of human suffering witnessed at a crossroads in a big city. Lawrence has in the very texture of the story pointed out the essential contrast. The farm and everything it stands for in English tradition, the connection with Nature, the homely virtues of the simple uncluttered life, is seen as an example

of the good life. The pub and everything it stands for, the meaningless tales, the transiency, the hopeless ambitions, is depicted as the corrupting force.

George is characterized in the very beginning of the story as simple and content. He is the image of the "natural" man of Rousseau. He is content with his small share of the world and he is inherently good. Out in the fields or in his own home, George is full of grace and natural beauty. But invited indoors into Cyril's house for supper, he appears awkward sitting "stiffly on a horse hair chair." (p. 41) Cyril's sister Lettie and a friend named Alice, both tease him for his awkwardness, especially at the dinner table. It is the first scene in which the simple, natural man comes in contact with the complex world of society.

When we were seated she flourished her spoon and asked him what he would have. He hesitated, looked at the strange dishes and said he would have some cheese. They insisted on his eating new, complicated meats.

"I'm sure you like tant-afflines, don't you Georgie?" said Alice, in her mocking fashion. He was not sure. He could not analyze the flavours, he felt confused and bewildered even through his sense of taste! (p. 41)

The commonplace confrontation, a man who has never eaten fancy foods bewildered by his first taste of middle-class delicacies, serves as an excellent preparation for what is to follow. Just as his taste buds are

awakened to the subtle flavors of "complicated" meats, so his mind will be awakened to the subtle excitements of art, philosophy, and music.

Cyril is the first to begin the actual education of George. Later Lawrence would have criticized the transference of such useless knowledge ("mind knowledge") to one who would be happier without it. At this time, however, there is no condemnation of Cyril's action. It is just part of the story. It is only the reader who slowly becomes aware of the harm that is being done as he watches later developments. This is an example of good fictional technique; it is much more effective than direct statement or harangue. Indeed, the very chapter from which the following passage is quoted also contains the forced and obvious discussion of the Squire and his rabbits previously cited. The contrast in tone shows how smooth Lawrence can be in introducing an important element of the plot without calling undue attention to it. And yet it will be remembered later as the direct progenitor of subsequent events. In this case, George's change from simple and happy to aware, but miserable.

As I worked with my friend through the still mornings we talked endlessly. I would give him the gist of what I knew of chemistry, and botany, and psychology. Day after day I told him what the professors had told me; of life, of sex and its

origins; of Schopenhauer and William James. We had been friends for years, and he was accustomed to my talk. But this autumn fruited the first crop of intimacy between us. I talked a great deal of poetry to him, and of rudimentary metaphysics. He was very good stuff. He had hardly a single dogma, save that of pleasing himself. Religion was nothing to him. So he heard all I had to say with an open mind, and understood the drift of things very rapidly, and quickly made these ideas a part of himself. (pp. 84-5)

For the sake of simplicity, George is characterized as an empty vessel into which Cyril can pour all his knowledge, so that we may see the effect this cultural improvement will have on the untried soul. George is an eager pupil of Cyril's because Lettie has become his guiding light. He is obviously in love with her and he knows she is much too fine for him; but he wants to be able to speak to her on her level. And so he progresses rapidly. Shortly, however, he begins to feel the pain that knowledge can bring. He is after all not in Lettie and Cyril's class. He now sees that he is in a box. With the rabbits slowly driving his father from the family farm, George tells Cyril he will emigrate. He feels peer pressure will keep him from doing "new things" here at home. Cyril asks him what has shaken him out of his comfortable routines.

"I don't know. I've not felt the same since that row with Annable. And Lettie said to me: 'Here, you can't live as you like -- in any way or circumstance. You're like a bit out of those coloured marble mosaics in the hall, you have to fit into your own set, fit into your own pattern, because you're put there from the first. But you don't want to be like a fixed bit of mosaic -- you want to fuse into life, and melt, and mix with the rest of folk, to have some things burned out of you --' She was downright serious."
(p. 92)

Lettie, the modern educated woman eager to be free, voicing her own desires, has influenced George to be dissatisfied with his lot. He wants to change himself, to feel fresh things. But except for emigration, there are few avenues open to him. His one hope is Lettie herself, but she, too, eventually finds the task of overcoming all the traditions of her class too difficult.

Lettie's decision to marry Leslie Tempest seems similar to Catherine Earnshaw's in Wuthering Heights. She chooses "wealth, security, adoration, a life of elegance and frivolity" ³ instead of her heart's true love. If we further compare these two novels it is possible to see that George is not merely a victim of the system or of Lettie's rejection. He does not have the power of will which Heathcliff had. He cannot seize the opportunity which lies before him.

Only later, when it is too late, does George

rouse himself to action. Then he tries to improve himself, to lift himself out of the predestined pattern of his life as he sees it. He goes so far as to learn to dance -- the minuet, the valeta, the mazurka -- all for Lettie. But the night of Lettie's twenty-first birthday party, when he is able to compete with the others at least on this level, George learns that she has become Leslie Tempest's fiancée. While dancing with her he asks her why? She knew of course that he loved her, that she had awakened not only his finer senses but also the stirrings of his heart.

"You see I couldn't help it."

"No, why not?"

"Things! I have been brought up to expect it -- everybody expected it -- and you're bound to do what people expect you to do -- you can't help it. We can't help ourselves, we're all chess-men," she said. (p. 163)

Throughout her conversations with George we are aware that she might have preferred some other way. If George had been resolute enough to run off with her, if she had had a little more strength -- but neither of them is able to surmount the cage of society. It is too strong for them. She, because of her education and spirit, is aware of the possibilities which she must now forsake. He, because of her instruction, is also aware of the possibilities, and with her gone, he sees little hope. "You have awakened my life --" he tells her. "Things will never be the same...I imagine things I couldn't have... ." And Lettie replies, "Ah! -- I am very sorry,

I am so sorry." (p. 158)

But the damage is irreparable. George's vision has been lifted just enough so that he cannot stay on the farm, even if that were practically possible. He sees in the life of the town something of the larger life which he could have had with Lettie; he is not able to see what he is giving up by letting go his contact with nature. Lettie sees the problem very clearly, however; she feels the loss, the lack of contact with nature. Though conscious of this sense of loss, Lettie cannot communicate it to George or to anyone else. While walking in the woods with Leslie, Cyril and Emily, Lettie comments on a field of white flowers. Emily had already said they were probably symbols of tears to the Druids.

"More than tears," said
Lettie. "More than tears,
they are so still. Something
out of an old religion, that
we have lost." (p. 175)

She fears their influence.

"They belong to some
knowledge we have lost,
that I have lost and that
I need." (p. 175)

And what is it that she has lost and what all the rest of her class have lost? The contact with nature, the close harmony with living life. And she has helped, unwittingly, to sever that connection for George. In fact, all the people of her class, Cyril, Leslie, the Squire and his rabbits, all seem part of a conspiracy to force

George off the farm, away from his roots in the soil.

Annable surprises the two couples gazing at the flowers in the wooded dell. Not recognizing Leslie at first, he believes them to be lovers trysting on the Tempest property. After their identities are established, a discussion ensues. Lettie and Emily stand aloof "from the man they instinctively hated." (p. 177) They are aware of his hatred of women, especially "ladies." For, as he tells them, "I was once a lady's man. But I'd rather watch th' rabbits an' the birds; an' it's easier breeding brats in th' kennels than in th' town." (p. 177) He tells them how he raises his children:

"Do as the animals do. I watch my brats -- I let 'em grow. They're beauties, they are -- sound as a young ash pole, every one. They shan't learn to dirty themselves wi' smirking deviltry -- not if I can help it. They can be like birds, or weasels, or vipers, or squirrels, so long as they ain't human rot, that's what I say." (p. 178)

Annable hates society because he has had an un-manning experience married to a cultured, refined, "souly" woman. He feels that he has lost his self respect as a man while in the situation. Now living like an animal, rejecting all the values of the middle class from which he originally came, he has found himself.

The keeper talks too much and too well. But because of the vitality of the portrait (notice the excellent use of dialect which gives the feeling of

lower class life in the rhythms of his speech), he is remarkably effective. In a way he is a figure to be placed in contrast with George. Annable was once an educated man living in a rich woman's house. He accepted the values; he placed a woman on a pedestal; he was subservient to her wishes and desires. But he found this to be more than he could bear and he returns to his basic animal nature. George, on the other hand, starts out within the context of natural animal life and through his education moves in the opposite direction. He sees Lettie as a woman above him, one whom he would serve if he could. He has placed her on a pedestal.

Annable constantly criticizes women and the society which lets them thrive. It is Annable who articulates the symbolic meaning of the white peacock in the scene with Cyril at the abandoned chapel. This scene deserves examination because it is another example of Lawrence's ability to transcend the limitations of the beginning writer. Despite the artificial elements -- Cyril's reasons for befriending the keeper, our recognition of Lawrence's youthful enthusiasm for clever intellectual remarks, Cyril's analogy between the state of religion and the condition of the chapel, the overstatement as Cyril connects the white peacock and the keeper's first wife -- the image of the bird defiling headstones emerges as a real and powerful symbol.

The chapter whose central incident is the conversation between Cyril and Annable opens with Cyril's summary of the keeper's attitudes: "He was a man of one

idea: -- that all civilization was the painted fungus of rottenness. He hated any sign of culture. ...When he thought, he reflected on the decay of mankind -- the decline of the human race into folly and weakness and rottenness. 'Be a good animal, true to your animal instinct,' was his motto." (p. 196) But this summary seems unnecessary, for a few paragraphs later Lawrence, through his prose, is able to convey this very mood and feeling of decay, not by overstatement but within the actual description of the abandoned church. And it is in this emotionally rich setting that the keeper enunciates the meaning of the book's title.

The grassy path to the church-yard was still clogged with decayed leaves. The church is abandoned. As I drew near an owl floated softly out of the black tower. Grass overgrew the threshold. I pushed open the door, grinding back a heap of fallen plaster and rubbish, and entered the place. In the twilight the pews were leaning in ghostly disorder, the prayerbooks dragged from their ledges, scattered on the floor in the dust and the rubble, torn by mice and birds. Birds scuffled in the darkness of the roof. I looked up. In the upward well of the tower I could see a bell hanging. I stooped and picked up a piece of plaster from the ragged confusion of feathers, and broken nests, and remnants of dead birds. Up into the vault overhead I tossed pieces of plaster until one hit the bell, and it 'tonged' out its faint remonstrance. There was a rustle of many birds like spirits. I sounded the bell again, and dark forms moved with cries of alarm overhead, and something fell heavily. I shivered in the dark, evil-smelling place, and hurried to get out of doors. (pp. 196-7)

Once outside in the gathering gloom, Cyril sees a

peacock flapping into the abandoned church yard. It settles on a grave marker. "The bird bent its voluptuous neck and peered about. Then it lifted up its head and yelled. The sound tore through the dark sanctuary of twilight." (p. 198) Annable comes up to Cyril:

"The proud fool! -- look at it! Perched on an angel too, as if it were a pedestal for vanity. That's the soul of a woman -- or it's the devil." (p. 198)

And a bit later on the same page:

"Just look!" he said, "the miserable brute has dirtied that angel. A woman to the end, I tell you, all vanity and screech and defilement."

Thus we are told explicitly that the white peacock represents the refined, cultured, educated woman. And though Lettie is perhaps not all "screech and defilement," she does have the vanity and pride of a peacock. Perhaps she is too proud, in Annable's terms, to be a little animal. If she had come down off her pedestal and reached out to George on his level, he might never have been ruined. Annable escaped from the peacock, but George never does.

What then can we say of Lawrence in his role of novelist and social critic in regard to this explicit condemnation of society and the modern woman as the chief blight of that society? To be sure, the incident of the peacock is simple, obvious, and artificial; yet the entire scene remains embedded in the mind as the rest of the story unfolds. Despite the amateurish qual-

ity of its presentation, Lawrence's vividly created character, Annable, and the subtly defined image of the peacock defiling a headstone give life to this symbol. As the book progresses and we see more and more of the vanity and pride of those characters who are of the "cultured" class, we recognize the underlying criticism of that class with an increasing intensity.

In one of the last chapters before George leaves the farm to marry Meg, the girl whose aunt owns the pub in the village, Lawrence evokes the good life in a lovely pastoral scene. The image of two men working in the fields, partaking of the communion of manual labor, becomes a contrasting image when recalled only ten pages later during the Tempests' picnic.

Such a morning I went up to George, on the top fallow. His father was out with the milk -- he was alone; as I came up the hill I could see him standing in the cart, scattering manure over the bare red fields; I could hear his voice calling now and then to the mare, and the creak and clank of the cart as it moved on. Starlings and smart wagtails were running briskly over the clods, and many little birds flashed, fluttered, hopped here and there. The lapwings wheeled and cried as ever between the low clouds and the earth, and some ran beautifully among the furrows, too graceful and glistening for the rough fields.

I took a fork and scattered the manure along the hollows, and thus we worked, with a wide field between us, yet very near in the sense of intimacy. I

watched him through the wheeling peewits, as the low clouds went stealthily overhead. Beneath us, the spires of the poplars in the spinney were warm gold, as if the blood shone through. Further gleamed the grey water, and below it the red roofs. Nethermere was half hidden, and far away. There was nothing in this grey, lonely world but the peewits swinging and crying, and George swinging silently at his work. The movement of active life held all my attention, and when I looked up, it was to see the motion of his limbs and his head, the rise and fall of his rhythmic body, and the rise and fall of the slow waving peewits. After a while, when the cart was empty, he took a fork and came towards me, working at my task.

(p. 287)

George and Cyril are here closely in touch with the moving reality of nature. They are in harmony with the basic elements of life. But George is not able to see its true worth. When he witnesses the fake pastoral, he is able to downgrade the leisure class with all its literary pretensions, but he fails to see that his second choice, the life of the town, is as bad as his former goal of rising to a position of culture and knowledge.

This lack of self-recognition is made clear, ironically enough, by one of the fatuous snobs from Tempest's circle during their picnic. George is up on a hill scything hay while down below the gaily dressed young men and women are sitting and talking of Daphnis and Amaryllis and eating fancy foods packed in

wicker baskets. Miss D'Arcy suggests they invite him to their party. "I'm sure he doesn't know what a happy pastoral state he's in -- let us go and fetch him."

(p. 298) It seems to be one of the ironies of life that the poor and illiterate hard-working peasants never seem to appreciate the wonderful life that poets and writers always tell us they are leading. When Miss D'Arcy is introduced to George, he is only aware of the disparity between his calloused hand and her soft white one. She chatters on foolishly all the while.

"We thought you looked so fine," she said to him, "and men are so embarrassing when they make love to somebody else -- aren't they? Save us those foxgloves, will you -- they are splendid -- like savage soldiers drawn up against the hedge -- don't cut them down -- and those campanulas -- bell-flowers, ah, yes! They are spinning idylls up there. I don't care for idylls, do you! Oh, you don't know what a classical pastoral person you are -- but there, I don't suppose you suffer from idyllic love --" she laughed, "one doesn't see the silly little god fluttering about in our hay-fields, does one? Do you find much time to sport with Amaryllis in the shade? -- I'm sure it's a shame they banished Phyllis from the fields --" (p. 299)

Later after the frothy, meaningless talk over tiny porcelain teacups has ended and all the revelers have gone, George and Cyril talk. George had been irritable and nervous in the presence of the others. He has seen the horrible irony of the idle rich sitting in the

fields in their fine clothes, eating cakes and tea, while the poor farmers are being driven off the land by the Tempest rabbits, rabbits whose meat and skins have paid for the cakes and tea.

Later, when all had gone to bed at the mill, George and I sat together on opposite sides of the fire, smoking, saying little. He was casting up the total of discrepancies, and now and again he ejaculated one of his thoughts.

"And all day," he said, "Blench has been ploughing his wheat in, because it was that bitten off by the rabbits it was no manner of use, so he's ploughed it in: an' they say with idylls, eating peaches in our close." (p. 305)

There is no doubt here of the effectiveness of the social criticism. The characters in speech and action have made the problem all too clear.

The pseudo-pastoral ends the first section of the book in which George is presented in his life on the farm. Actually it takes up about two-thirds of the pages and two of the three "books" into which Lawrence has divided his material. The last portion of the novel traces George's life as a married man, and the owner of a pub. He becomes a man no longer set in the context of nature, but in the life of the town.

Everyone leaves the valley of Nethermere. Cyril is off to London; Lettie's marriage to Leslie has taken place and she and Leslie are traveling on the continent.

George seeks in his marriage to Meg, a likeable, warm, sensual girl, an answer to the vague uneasiness to which his education has brought him. George explains to Cyril:

"But you see, you and Lettie have made me conscious, and now I'm at a dead loss. I have looked to marriage to set me busy on my house of life, something whole and complete, of which it will supply the design. I must marry or be in a lost lane. There are two people I could marry -- and Lettie's gone."
(p. 310)

George approaches his marriage and his change of station with a great deal of anticipation. Yet he is soon disappointed. His troubles, instead of coming to a close, are just beginning. It is apparent that Lawrence, though keeping his eye on George, has shifted the emphasis of his criticism. He begins now to look closely at man in contact with man (the life of the town) and man in his contact with woman (marriage). But throughout this portion of the book we are always conscious of what has come before. That is, while viewing George or Lettie in their less than perfect marriages, we at the same time recall the peace and ease of the life of George's parents on the farm. They were an example of harmony and repose. Even the actions and incidents of the plot, the very prose itself, of the first section proceeded slowly and quietly.

The mood and tone of the last section is entirely

different. Events occur with rapidity, days, weeks, and years leap by as people move from place to place, from viewpoint to viewpoint. Cyril goes to London. He hates it at first, then he loves it. He denies the former good feelings he had about nature and the farm and the valley. George has children, finds marriage intolerable, hangs about with unscrupulous horse traders drinking and gambling; then he gives up all that and becomes a socialist, full of idealism. That too turns to nothing and he goes back to drink. The motion of the story is made more erratic by the fact that Cyril in London must receive his news of George and the others by letters or by making excursions to the country. Up, down, all around, the whole feeling of this portion presents a bewildering array of thoughts and images. It is in itself a replica of the lives, unhappy and erratic, that the characters are now leading since they have left their roots, their connection with the earth and nature, that real connection which is basic and fundamental.

From the time George begins managing the pub, his fortunes take a discomfiting and deleterious turn. He no longer reads; he is more restless than ever. He writes in a letter to Cyril:

Last week I made over five
pounds clear, one way and
another, and yet now I'm
as restless, and discontented
as I can be, and I seem
eager for something, but I

don't know what it is.
 Sometimes I wonder where
 I am going. (p. 340)

One of Cyril's friends from the old circle reports that Meg has had twins. She also relates the fact that George has taken to heavy drinking and running about with the Mayhews, the local horse dealers. Lawrence's earlier attack on the evils of drink is recalled. Now this particular flaw is joined to the main theme, George's downfall.

Georgie came upstairs. I
 saw Meg seem to shrink
 when she heard him kick
 at the stairs as he came
 up, and she went white.
 When he got to the top
 he came in. He fairly
 reeked of whisky and
 horses. Bah, a man is
 hateful when he reeks of
 drink! (p. 343)

Cyril pays a visit to the pub to see George and the children. George makes the typical complaint of a man tied down by one of the most familiar cages of human existence, marriage.

"There doesn't seem a
 single spot anywhere where
 I can sit quiet. It's the
 kids all day, and the kids
 all night, and the servants,
 and then all the men in the
 house -- I sometimes feel as
 if I should like to get
 away. I shall leave the pub
 as soon as I can -- only
 Meg doesn't want to."
 (p. 348)

When asked where he will go if he leaves the pub, George

gives vent to a sentimental longing to be back on the farm. But somehow he knows he never will return.

Lawrence is able to use George and his marriage as a living example of one of the most pernicious aspects of that social institution: the battle of the sexes, the drive which women have to dominate men. Recall that after suffering in that hateful position, in which his masculinity was threatened, Annable fled from the intolerable situation, and in his marriage to a simple ordinary woman of the lower classes, dominated her. He was master, the ruler of his family, the fearful patriarch.

George on the other hand has been caught and tamed. To be sure, because he was not able to marry Lettie, he is not made to suffer (at least within his marriage) from the effects of a "soulful" woman. But he is made to suffer from a "soul-less" woman. the incursions motherhood and children lay upon him. This points to a middle ground somewhere, a woman who is a little of both, as the answer.

Meg as a mother is, of course, secure. Emily, now a school teacher, is also present and at dinner, she and Cyril drift into a conversation about Strauss and Debussy, which effectively creates a breach between them and their hosts. But Meg does not feel it. She goes about nursing her child from the elevated position of mother. But George who has not continued his earlier

interest in the arts and reading is left out.

George was looking glum and listening to us. Meg was quite indifferent. She listened occasionally, but her position as mother made her impregnable. She sat eating calmly, looking down at her baby, holding us in slight scorn, babblers that we were. She was secure in her high maternity; she was mistress and sole authority. George, as father, was first servant; as an indifferent father, she humiliated him and was hostile to his wishes. Emily and I were mere intruders, feeling ourselves such. (p. 354)

Things have gotten so bad for George that he can't stand Sunday nights because the pub is closed. Then he must talk with his wife, which is almost impossible since they have nothing in common, or else go out with the Mayhews, which only incites his wife's anger. "I hate Sunday night -- it's a dead end." (p. 356) He had looked to marriage to bring some security, some center to his life. But he is now thoroughly disillusioned. Lawrence projects this very accurate description of what family life is really like in the lower class world entirely with the novelist's tools -- the plot, the dialogue and description.

When Lawrence is dealing with marriage, when he is viewing society in one of its smaller configurations, he is marvelously accurate. When he tries in some of his later books to see man in a larger unit, the political one for instance, he often fails to penetrate to the core of the matter. But his aim is seldom off when he

is observing what he knows best, and marriage is just such an aspect of the social structure. Notice how apt he is in describing the typical night off with the boys.

In this room [at the Mayhews'] George and the Mayhews met with several men two or three times a week. There they discussed horses and made mock of the authority of women. George provided the whisky, and they all gambled timidly at cards. These bachelor parties were the source of great annoyance to the wives of the married men who attended them. (p. 360)

The coldness which grows steadily between the husband and wife seems to Meg to come from his companions. She writes to Cyril, "she was sure it was only those men at Mayhews made him what he was." (p. 361) But the reader knows this is not so. The very act of having a character make a false judgement about another character forces the reader once again to recall exactly what the situation is. No one else comments on Meg's erroneous view. No one tells us that it is not the men at Mayhews who are the cause of George's "being what he is." In our minds we recall the whole process of George's education, his dissatisfactions, his frustrations. Actually the men at Mayhews are the result, not the cause, of what he is.

The next erratic shift in the last part of the book is George's involvement with the socialists. George, while visiting Cyril in London, sees for the first time the suffering of the poor. Lawrence portrays in a vivid description a real sense of poverty's misery which, because it is displayed objectively as though the reader were there, moves us to understanding.

At night, after the theatre, we saw the outcasts sleep in a rank under the Waterloo bridge, their heads to the wall, their feet lying out on the pavement: a long, black, ruffled heap at the foot of the wall. All the faces were covered but two, that of a peaked, pale little man, and that of a brutal woman. Over these two faces, floating like uneasy pale dreams on their obscurity, swept now and again the trailing light of the tram cars. We picked our way past the line of abandoned feet, shrinking from the sight of the thin bare ankles of a young man, from the draggled edge of the skirts of a bunched-up woman, from the pitiable sight of the men who had wrapped their legs in newspaper for a little warmth, and lay like worthless parcels. It was raining. Some men stood at the edge of the causeway fixed in dreary misery, finding no room to sleep. Outside, on a seat in the blackness and rain, a woman sat sleeping, while the water trickled and hung heavily at the ends of her loosened strands of hair. Her hands were pushed in the bosom of her jacket. She lurched forward in her sleep, started, and one of her hands fell out of her bosom. She sank again to sleep. George gripped my arm.

"Give her something," he whispered in panic. I was afraid. Then suddenly getting a florin from my pocket, I stiffened my nerves and slid it into her palm. Her hand was soft, and warm, and curled in sleep. She started violently, looking up at my, then down at her hand. I turned my face aside, terrified lest she should look in my eyes, and full of shame and grief I ran down the embankment to him. We hurried along under the plane

trees in silence. The shining cars were drawing tall in the distance over Westminster Bridge, a fainter, yellow light running with them on the water below. The wet streets were spilled with golden liquor of light, and on the deep blackness of the river were the restless yellow slashes of the lamps.

(pp. 363-4)

This one scene ending as it does in a luminescent description seems almost Joycean in its perfection. There is no obvious editorial comment made; the sinuous prose is not too soft. It has enough controlled imagery and power to state its case against society. The city against the country, the continual contrast in this book, is not made obvious. But it is there.

Lawrence masterfully brings together all of the several threads of his story -- George's thwarted love of Lettie, the Squire, the rabbits, the mines, and the cultured classes -- in this final excursion into a specific social area. George and Cyril had witnessed the previous scene while on their way to Lettie and Leslie's London town house where a small gathering is to take place. The talk is of art and economics, music and literature. Fine clothes, lavish furnishings, and dainty sweetmeats abound; George is silent and uncomfortable. He thinks Lettie has become terribly affected. Talking to Cyril on the way home, he links his discomfiture with Lettie to the previous scene of the beggars.

"She makes my blood boil. I could hate her."

"Why?" I said gently.

"I don't know. I feel as if she'd insulted me. She does lie, doesn't she?"

"I didn't notice it," I said, but I knew he meant her shirking, her shuffling of her life.

"And you think of those poor devils under the bridge -- and then of her and them frittering away themselves and money in that idiocy --"

He spoke with passion.

(p. 367)

It is not surprising that George becomes a socialist. In so doing he is reacting against Lettie and the "cultured" life which he once thought he wanted, and he is also placing himself in direct opposition to Leslie Tempest, a mine owner and capitalist. In a sense he is still competing for Lettie's attention. Thus Lawrence maintains a lively, psychologically correct motivation for his plot. People act like real people and the impression we get of the socialist movement and Lawrence's view of that movement is fundamentally more accurate than any explicit comment the author might make.

The main outcome of George's visit to London was a "wild devotion to the cause of the downtrodden." It lasts for over five years, but it only takes Lawrence three pages to get through it. He uses letters from Lettie (now living at the Tempest estate, since the death of the old Squire) to summarize the action and compress the time. In one letter we are shown the connection between George's socialism and Lettie's life.

"We happened to be motoring from Derby on Sunday morning,

and as we came to the top of the hill, we had to thread our way through quite a large crowd. I looked up, and whom should I see but our friend George, holding forth about the state endowment of mothers. I made Leslie stop while we listened. The market-place was quite full of people. George saw us, and became fiery. Leslie then grew excited, and although I clung to the skirts of his coat with all my strength, he jumped up and began to question. I must say it with shame and humility -- he made an ass of himself. The men all round were jeering and muttering under their breath. I think Leslie is not very popular among them, he is such an advocate of machinery which will do the work of men. So they cheered our friend George when he thundered forth his replies and his demonstrations. He pointed his finger at us, and flung his hand at us, and shouted till I quailed in my seat. I cannot understand why he should become so frenzied as soon as I am within range. George had a triumph that morning, but when I saw him a few days later he seemed very uneasy, rather self-mistrustful --"

(p. 381)

Though Lettie cannot "understand" why George should become so frenzied when she comes within range, it is obviously his frustrated love for her, which has turned to hate of her class and the class system.

The socialist phase ends very quickly (almost without motivation, another example of Lawrence's youthful awkwardness) and George turns to land speculation. He tries to bury his sense of frustration in a mad scramble for money, but like the socialist movement, the mere

acquisition of material wealth is not satisfying enough. As George had once said about himself: "I came too soon." (p. 371) He means that the introduction to higher avenues of fulfillment had come before those avenues were open to people like himself. In a similar way the same thing has happened to Lettie. In her marriage she has buried all the early feelings for the larger and more satisfying self. And yet because she is or has once been aware of the possibilities, her life seems small and empty. Children suffice for Meg, but not for Lettie. She has written to Cyril that "she had nothing at all in her life, it was a barren futility." (p. 373) Or:

"I hope I shall have another child next spring," she would write, "there is only that to take away the misery of this torpor. I seem full of passion and energy, and it all fizzles out in day to day domestics --"
(p. 374)

Yet she is ambivalent, certainly not like Ursula in The Rainbow, who finally rejects the complacency of an ordinary marriage. As elsewhere in the book, Lawrence is critical of the modern woman (the white peacock) in definite terms, but at times he seems to be criticizing Lettie for not being able to fully step into that role and to play it to the hilt, and not criticizing the role itself.

Like so many women, she seemed to live, for the most part contentedly, a small indoor existence with artificial light and padded upholstery. Only occasionally,

hearing the winds of life
 outside, she clamoured to be
 out in the black, keen storm.
 She was driven to the door,
 she looked out and called
 into the tumult wildly, but
 feminine caution kept her
 from stepping over the
 threshold. (p. 374)

It is clear that Lawrence has not made up his mind about Lettie as a representative of the "modern woman." The tentative nature of some of his early social views is apparent throughout the book, but this quality is especially evident in the second half. He says very little at all about industrialism; he is facile and clever in his remarks about the socialists, but he moves on quickly as though he did not want to be identified with a particular position, in this case an essentially conservative one. Even the attack on the cultivated life is somewhat blunted by the lengthy passages devoted to the problems of lower class life. This, despite the fact that we know George's predicament is a result of his "education." There are two of Lawrence's judgements, however, which are presented with conviction -- his opinions on marriage and his antipathy toward alcohol.

He bears down heavily on marriage: none of those mentioned seems very successful except perhaps Annable's, and it is doubtful that Lawrence is holding that example up as a model for others to follow. It is true that George's parents led a calm and contented existence, but they are seldom recalled during the time that George's and Lettie's marriages are being discussed. Even the

picture of Emily and Tom's happiness brought in gratuitously at the end does not alter the overall sense of Lawrence's negative feelings towards marriage.

In presenting his definite views on the destructive effects of alcoholism, Lawrence felt it was necessary to relate George's downfall in complete detail to the bitter end. It was perhaps a mistake of the beginning novelist to do so. The main theme -- the criticism of the cultivated life -- is not really enhanced by such a comprehensive report of the successive stages of George's decline. Lawrence over estimated the weight of his narrative and the interest generated for his characters. Once it is clear that George will never recover from his overdose of culture there seems little point in going on with it. And since the characterizations of Emily and Leslie and Cyril are not highly developed, it is difficult to arouse any real concern for their ultimate fates. But, modeling his book after any number of 18th and 19th century novels, Lawrence tried to give his story a sense of completeness which seems inappropriate for the dimensions of the narrative.

Because his introduction to culture has created a gulf between himself and nature (the farm) and between himself and his class (Meg), George finds himself floating between one thing and another. He has no center to his life. He is virtually an outsider.

Thus their $\angle$ George and
Meg $\angle$ natures contradicted
each other. He tried hard

to gain a footing at Eberwich. As it was he belonged to no class of society whatsoever. Meg visited and entertained the wives of small shopkeepers and publicans: this was her set.

George voted the women loud-mouthed, vulgar, and narrow -- not without some cause. Meg, however, persisted. She visited when she thought fit, and entertained when he was out. He made acquaintance after acquaintance: Dr. Francis; Mr. Cartridge, the veterinary surgeon; Toby Heswall, the brewer's son; the Curtisses, farmers of good standing from Everley Hall. But it was no good. George was by nature a family man. He wanted to be private and secure in his own rooms, then he was at ease. As Meg never went out with him, and as every attempt to entertain at the "Hollies" filled him with shame and mortification, he began to give up trying to place himself, and remained suspended in social isolation at the "Hollies." (pp. 382-3)

George is full of the malaise of modern times. He feels aimless, lacking a purpose. He has tried to get rid of this feeling in several ways: marriage, the pub, socialism, horse trading, investments. But nothing has succeeded in bringing him satisfaction. And without Lettie there to lead him on, he must go down, the victim of his "education." Speaking to Lettie, he says:

"I was only a warmth to you," he said, pursuing the same train of thought. "So you could do without me. But you were like the light to me, and otherwise it was dark and aimless. Aimlessness is horrible."

(p. 389)

He sees his life as aimless. He has no wish to go on living. Even this occasional contact with Lettie is only fate teasing him with something he will never have. At the end of his conversation with her, he says that he will never come again. He cuts his last string and begins the drift towards death.

But before Lawrence can end his story, in accordance with his feeling that everything must be followed to the ~~happy~~ end, he very carefully inserts a contrasting portion of success, a reminder perhaps that all is not lost. Emily, who also was an educated young woman (a school teacher), has married a young uncultivated man and given up all her pretensions to intellectuality. She and her husband Tom have bought a farm and have set up a solid, comfortable domestic life, reminiscent of the life pictured earlier ^{at} ~~and~~ George and Emily's home at Strelley Mill. It is Tom who first mentions that George is killing himself with drink. He and Emily are visiting George and Meg when Cyril drops in. A few moments later George comes down from his bedroom with a hang-over, looking terrible. Meg walks in and is

described as completely in control of the situation.

Meg had grown stouter, and there was a certain immovable confidence in her. She was authoritative, amiable, calm. She wore a handsome dress of dark green, and a toque with opulent ostrich feathers. As she moved about the room she seemed to dominate everything, particularly her husband, who sat ruffled and dejected, his waistcoat hanging loose over his shirt. (p. 399)

We are reminded of George's comment on marriage: it is obvious that Meg is winning the duel.

About two years later, George has so declined into fits of delirium tremens that he has been sent to his sister who cares for him. Cyril pays his last visit to him at Emily and Tom's farm. On the way, bicycling through the woods, he is placed in a mood which recalls the evening he had his talk with Annable in the churchyard. Lawrence is working at bringing the plot line full circle.

At the end of September the foliage was heavy green, and the wheat stood dejectedly in stook. I rode through the still sweetness of an autumn morning. The mist was folded blue along the hedges; the elm trees loomed up along the dim walls of the morning, the horse-chestnut trees at hand flickered with a few yellow leaves like bright blossoms. As I rode through the tree tunnel by the church, where, on his last night, the keeper

had told me his story,
I smelled the cold rot-
ting of the leaves of
the cloudy summer.
(p. 407)

The mood cast over Cyril is like a foreshadowing of the
end of George.

Brown birds rustled in
flocks like driven leaves
before me. I heard the
far-off hooting of the
"loose-all" at the pits,
telling me it was half-
past eleven, that the
men and boys would be
sitting in the narrow
darkness of the mines
eating their "snap",
while shadowy mice dart-
ed for the crumbs, and
the boys laughed with
red mouths rimmed with
grime, as the bold little
creatures peeped at them
in the dim light of the
lamps. The dog-wood
berries stood jauntily
scarlet on the hedge-
tops, the bunched scarlet
and green berries of the
convolvus and bryony hung
amid golden trails, and
blackberries dropped un-
gathered. I rode slowly
on, the plants dying
around me, the berries
leaning their heavy
ruddy mouths, and lan-
guishing for the birds,
the men imprisoned under-
ground below me, the
brown birds dashing in
haste along the hedges.
(p. 407)

The mines are a part of the dismal autumn scene,
but treated with the same indiscriminate romantic melan-
choly. ~~Very subtle~~ Lawrence hints at the connection be-

tween the mine and the Tempests, and George's death. We recognize that George was given a glimpse of, but never allowed to enter, the world of those who live off the mines, those whose rabbits helped force him from his farm.

It is ironic in the end that George who was made aware of so many things cannot turn back to the soil. Living as he does in the home of his sister where the amenities of such a life are obvious, he should be able fully and firmly to turn his back on the "higher" life as Emily has done, to return to his roots. But he cannot see it. It is Cyril, the observer, who must inform us of what George cannot.

Many generations of peaceful men and fruitful women had passed through the room, and not one but had added a new small comfort; a chair in the right place, a hook, a stool, a cushion, a certain pleasing cloth for the sofa covers, a shelf of books. The room, that looked so quiet and crude, was a home evolved through generations to fit the large bodies of the men who dwelled in it, and the placid fancy of the women. At last, it had an individuality. It was the home of the Renshaws, warm, lovable, serene. Emily was in perfect accord with its brownness, its shadows, its ease. I, as I sat on the sofa under the window, felt rejected by the kind room. I was distressed with a sense of ephemerality, of pale, erratic fragility.

(pp. 408-9)

Cyril (the despairing romantic artist) somewhat superficially sees that he cannot fit in ^{either} ~~himself~~. As mentioned before he never really had much contact with nature, certainly not to the extent George did. But he does enumerate the good qualities of the traditions of the simple yeoman farmer's life. Here is the best that Lawrence can see in this world. It is a lovely, charming, peaceful life in which harmony and happiness exist. Cyril doesn't fit in; Lettie's life has no such satisfactions; and George is dying of alcoholism. But Emily has come home. She has come full circle. She will repeat the life cycle that her parents started.

Emily, in her full-blooded beauty, was at home. It is rare now to feel a kinship between a room and the one who inhabits it, a close bond of blood relation. Emily had at last found her place, and had escaped from the torture of strange, complex modern life. (p. 409)

In his last description of George, barely strong enough to walk outside and lean against a fence, Lawrence expertly catches all the nuances of his condition with a perfect use of simile.

Like a tree that is falling, going soft and pale and rotten, clammy with small fungi, he stood leaning against the gate, while the dim afternoon drifted with a flow of thick sweet sunshine past him, not touching him. (p. 415)

Here the poetic imagery works for Lawrence to produce an

effect of lingering corruption, anticipating the final dissolution. Thus it is unnecessary to have George actually die at the end of the book.

Throughout The White Peacock, Lawrence has made all the errors the young novelist is prone to, from over-writing to difficulties in the management of point of view, from inconsistent characterization to piece-meal attacks on social institutions. But at the same time he has successfully produced a book whose overall social criticism is sound and sure. And by and large this effect is produced through the writing itself. Metaphor and symbol, dialogue and plot have all had their part in presenting Lawrence's picture of the world. What is amazing is the degree to which he has succeeded in making real and vital and meaningful the contrast between the cultured and the non-cultured, the pub and the farm, the city and nature.

Lawrence has marvelously suggested the vitality and the gaiety of youth in both the educated classes and in the lower classes. Lettie's Christmas party and the 'Tempests' picnic in the fields catch much of the charm which the young invest in their lives through wit and literary allusion. They have read of life, but they have little experience of it and so they can be merry, sing and dance without care. Though the scenes themselves are used in some degree to criticize the behavior of these young intellectuals, Lawrence has nevertheless

captured the heedless, irresponsible fun, the lively, animated conversations, and the bright hopes of the young. As Anthony Beal points out, Lawrence does an even better job of presenting this mood when he describes George and Meg's wedding day.⁴ This section, beginning with George's arrival at The Ram to pick up his bride-to-be and ending with their evening at the opera in Nottingham, is written with a freshness, humor, and tenderness which is as good as anything Lawrence was to write later. One of the enduring joys of this book is to come upon these rich and rewarding passages in which the artistry of the young D.H. Lawrence is manifestly evident.

Indeed, The White Peacock is remarkably valuable for this very reason. It is a work of anticipation. We can see where Lawrence came from and where he was going. His earliest interests are literary, yet his solid achievements, even here in his first novel, are rooted in his experience. We can see the literary person at work, notice the imitations of favorite authors -- the Brontes, Eliot, and Hardy -- and squirm slightly at the quotations, allusions, and references to traditional works. These influences are patently obvious. At the same time, however, we are aware of Lawrence's originality and power to create the real and viable out of himself and the world he knew at first hand. Home life in the lower classes -- the scenes at The Ram, at Annable's cottage

in the woods or his widow's in the town -- show us the natural abilities Lawrence had and preview the eventual culmination of these powers in Sons and Lovers. In that book he will finally come to grips with his own experience and translate it into fiction. Yet the author of Sons and Lovers did not appear upon the literary scene fully formed with all his powers intact. He was first of all the extremely sensitive, well-read young man who wrote The White Peacock with George Eliot consciously in mind and who inadvertently revealed his own original genius.

Footnotes: Chapter I.

¹Richard Aldington, "Introduction" to D. H. Lawrence, The White Peacock (London, 1961), p. 9. All subsequent page references are to this Penguin edition.

²Graham Hough, The Dark Sun (New York, 1959), p. 24.

³Keith Sagar, p. 10.

⁴Anthony Beal, D. H. Lawrence (New York, 1961), pp. 7-8.

II.

The Rainbow

The first period of Lawrence's writing comes to a fruitful close with Sons and Lovers, a novel in which Lawrence established himself as a writer of great skill. He tells a moving story of a young man's escape from the confines of the society into which he was born. There are similarities between this work and The White Peacock, but in almost every instance Sons and Lovers is a better made book, a more highly polished creation. The prose, the characterization, the plot, all show the mark of the competent craftsman. The ideas and themes introduced in The White Peacock are fully realized in Sons and Lovers, but still within the framework of the traditional novel. Lawrence made no attempt to change the

form of the novel which he inherited from Eliot and Hardy. As modern as it is in its psychological perceptions, Sons and Lovers is a traditional realistic presentation of events in a recognizable character's life set within a specific social situation.

With The Rainbow (1915), however, Lawrence moves on to something new. His concerns remain the same -- the realization of the self, the alienation of the individual in a modern industrial society, etc. -- but the form of the novel is decidedly different. Lawrence develops a new kind of novel, a startlingly new approach to characterization with which to dramatize his vision of the world. Indeed, that which is ordinarily meant by "plot" is also somewhat different as a result of the new attempt in characterization. To be sure, there is a story, and a certain degree of suspense is generated. We still ask the question as we read, "What's going to happen next to character so-and-so?" But the changing and fluctuating interaction of the characters with each other and the dynamic pulsations which occur within each character as a result of that interaction constitute the bulk of the "plot." Therefore since Lawrence's social criticism is couched in this new sense of character, the concept will be analyzed in detail.

It is, of course, arbitrary to single out one device in a book and then say, this is how its social criticism is made clearer and sharper. All the various elements of a novel combine to create the total effect

of the book. In Lawrence's case, however, some elements may not work as well as others to reinforce, to strengthen, to give force to the social criticism. Thus, for the purpose of analysis, distinctions have to be made. To show the advances made by Lawrence in his treatment, we shall first look at examples of the prose and then turn to the characterization and then finally the narrative.

By now, Lawrence's descriptive powers have taken on a new sense of sureness. He is able to capture concretely the physical state of nature he wishes to describe, and at the same time, by careful selection of images, invest that state with a feeling, an aura which appears to be an integral part of nature and not merely a response of the human mind to the scene. In the following passage we are made to see very clearly the natural surroundings, and yet at the same time feel the "spirit" of the place which Lydia Lensky feels as she walks by the sea. There is no artificial projection of human feelings onto the scene.

Very strange was the constant glitter of the sea, unsheathed in heaven, very warm and sweet in the graveyard, in a nook of the hill catching the sunshine and holding it as one holds a bee between the palms of the hands, when it is beheaded. Grey grass and lichens and a little church, and snowdrops among coarse grass, and a cupful of, incredibly warm sunshine.

This effect is consciously produced. Lawrence

chooses commonplace details -- grey grass, lichens, snow-drops -- to surround his central simile with the illusion of meaningfulness. In reality, however, this simile -- in which the sunlight caught in the nook of the hill is compared to a benumbed bee in the palm of the hand -- is rather outrageous. It is as awkward as a 16th century metaphysical conceit, and yet the disparity goes unnoticed because it lies within the context of the concrete objects enumerated. The sun is even caught in a cup, a rather "poetic" comparison, and yet the feeling transmitted by the passage is one of sharp, hard, clear outlines, the outlines of the objects themselves -- the bee, the cup, the church. This combination of objective description and poetic conceit allows the feeling, the aura, the mood of the place to come through so that we may sense the feeling of being held in the hand, as Lydia feels held, secure in the little churchyard in the glittering light from the sea.

In the following lines, the passage of time is handled with a new economy and force.

The year drew on, in the
hedges the berries shone
red and twinkling above
bare twigs, robins were
seen, great droves of birds
dashed like spray from the
fallow, ~~the~~ ~~rocks~~ appeared,
black and flapping down to
earth, the ground was cold
as he pulled the turnips,
the roads were churned
deep in mud. (p. 67)

There are no overly romantic images about nature here: everything is apprehended objectively, in high focus, with a fierce immediacy.

Though the birds are no longer^{er} personified, Lawrence has not abandoned the idea that inanimate and animate nature have a quality of life, a certain interdependence with the humans of the world. Throughout the book these objects are used to amplify or reflect the states of feeling which exist in the characters. For instance, when Lawrence presents Baron Skrebensky, he is described not only physically but also in terms of his dwelling.

Anna loved to watch him.
She liked the big, new, rambling vicarage, desolate and stark on its hill. It was so exposed, so bleak and bold after the Marsh. (p. 94)

The Baron is also "bleak and bold"; to put it in other terms, there is a close, living relationship between the characteristics of his environment and his character.

In literary terms we see easily how a description of a house can aid in delineating the personality of a fictional character, but for Lawrence this was more than a literary device. It was also a corollary to his views on life in the real world. The products of man's technology, his house, his appliances, his factory, though originally shaped by man, in turn shape the men who live with them. That is, though living men created the factory and the timetable, the men who are born into an existence

which is predicated on the factory and timetable will be changed in their essential natures. It may be that the Baron was bleak and bold and therefore chose a house to fit his personality. Men can do this if they are able to make a choice. When they are forced, however, to live in squalid ugly houses because those are the only kinds of homes that the colliery owners feel obliged to provide, then the process will work the other way. The men will soon become ugly and squalid. When they reorder their lives to fit the demands of the great mechanical mistress, the colliery, they in turn live mechanical lives. The description of the colliery town that Tom Brangwen, the younger, lives in demonstrates the point.

Then the great seam of coal had been opened. In a year Wiggiston appeared, a great mass of pinkish rows of thin, unreal dwellings of five rooms each. The streets were like visions of pure ugliness; a grey-black macadamised road, asphalt causeways, held in between a flat succession of wall, window, and door, a new-brick channel that began nowhere, and ended nowhere. Everything was amorphous, yet everything repeated itself endlessly.

The place had the strange desolation of a ruin. Colliers hanging about in gangs and groups, or passing along the asphalt pavements heavily to work, seemed not like living people, but like spectres. The rigidity of the blank streets, the homogeneous

amorphous sterility of the whole suggested death rather than life. There was no meeting place, no centre, no artery, no organic function. There it lay, like the new foundations of a red-brick confusion rapidly spreading like a skin-disease. (p. 344)

Even Tom's own house shows not only his personality, but also the factors of industrial life that have formed it.

His house was simply, but well furnished. He had taken out a dividing wall, and made the whole front of the house into a large library, with one end devoted to his science. It was a handsome room, appointed as a laboratory and reading room, but giving the same sense of hard, mechanical activity, activity mechanical yet inchoate, and looking out on the hideous abstraction of the town, and at the green meadows and rough country beyond, and at the great, mathematical colliery on the other side. (p. 345)

"Science," "mechanical," "mathematical" -- these are the dehumanizing elements Lawrence sees as the most pernicious enemies of man's life. Here in simple physical description Lawrence cites the connection between the concrete and the emotional. He points out the insidious manner in which these given elements change personality, making people less than whole human beings.

Lawrence has also developed his skill in dialogue. In a lengthy conversation, Tom Brangwen, the mine manager,

Winifred Inger, the emancipated school teacher, and Ursula Brangwen, Tom's niece, talk about the town of Wiggiston and the lives of the miners. Ursula and Winifred have come to Wiggiston for the first time to visit Tom. Ursula asks him about the miners she has observed in the street.

"Why are the men so sad?"

"Are they sad?" he replied.

"They seem unutterably, unutterably sad," said Ursula, out of a passionate throat.

"I don't think they are that. They just take it for granted."

"What do they take for granted?"

"This -- the pits and the place altogether."

"Why don't they alter it?" she passionately protested.

"They believe they must alter themselves to fit the pits and the place, rather than alter the pits and the place to fit themselves. It is easier," he said. (p. 346)

Tom goes on to reveal that pit life is very bad. "...The men die of consumption fairly often. But they earn good wages." (p. 347) A servant enters while the conversation goes on. Her entrance and exit naturally draws forth a comment from Ursula and Tom replies:

"She is a widow. Her husband died of consumption a little while ago." Brangwen gave a sinister little laugh. "He lay there in the house-place at her mother's, and five or six other people in the house, and died very gradually. I asked her if his death wasn't a great trouble to her. 'Well,' she

said, 'he was very fretful towards the last, never satisfied, never easy, always fret-fretting, an' never knowing what would satisfy him. So in one way it was a relief when it was over -- for him and for everybody.' They had only been married two years, and she has one boy. I asked her if she hadn't been very happy. 'Oh, yes, sir, we was very comfortable at first, till he took bad -- oh, we was very comfortable -- oh, yes -- but, you see, you get used to it. I've had my father and two brothers go off just the same. You get used to it.'" (p. 347)

In addition to showing the callous attitude towards one's fellow creatures displayed by the mine manager -- a necessary part of the job -- the dialogue also reveals the reasons why the condition exists. "It's easier." "But they earn good wages." "You get used to it." Lawrence believes that to earn good wages, people become immune to the kind of human suffering which "earning good wages" entails, even though the initial motive for higher pay is certainly the reduction of human misery, not its increase.

In The Rainbow Lawrence offers no positive solution to this paradoxical situation. Through Ursula's reactions to Wiggiston he suggests that the only answer must begin with an awareness that a problem exists. Neither Tom nor the miners see the system as a problem. But mere recognition is not enough; Ursula's subsequent involvement with the industrial life -- school teaching and Skrebensky -- includes a great amount of

hardship and suffering. Indeed, recognition by a sensitive soul of the disparities between possible human fulfillment and the actual satisfactions provided by the modern world is in itself perhaps a guarantee of unhappiness.

Nevertheless, it is to this end that Lawrence writes. To make people aware of social problems, Lawrence employs in The Rainbow all the power and skill in descriptive prose and dialogue he has gained since The White Peacock. In addition, he experiments with a new idea of characterization in order to more amply demonstrate the thesis that a man's actions and thoughts, his actual being, his total self is intimately involved with the social structure of which he is a part.

Above, it was stated that Tom Brangwen, jr. was in some way formed into a servant of the great mechanical mistress by the very conditions of modern life. But to see specifically how this process works both

as a literary technique and also as an aspect of Lawrence's view of human development, we must turn our attention to the "new" characterization which Lawrence evolved.

Lawrence saw himself reaching new depths in The Rainbow. In a letter to Edward Garnett (11 March 1913) he said, "It's new...so new, so really a stratum deeper than I think anybody has gone in a novel." ² He states in another letter to Garnett (5 June 1914) that he is interested in the reactions of a woman per se, not in a particular woman's feelings.

You mustn't look in my novel
for the old stable ego of the
character...Again I say,
don't look for the development
of the novel to follow the
lines of certain characters:
the characters fall into the
form of some rhythmic form,
as when one draws a fiddle-
bow across a fine tray delicately
sanded, the sand takes lines
unknown. ³

This sounds very much like simple personification. The fictional character, a particular man or woman in a particular social setting, acts as though he were representative of all men. Something like a modern Everyman. But in Lawrence the process is much more complex and the psychology perhaps more accurate than such a simple definition might imply.

A close look, a perceptive look at one's self often reveals an ego that is not a stable thing. It is

amorphous; it never holds still. It is constantly being formed and changed by new experiences which induce changes in feeling which in turn produce statements of value that affect the meaning of subsequent experiences. And, indeed, these alternations of states may occur with devastating rapidity and range from one extreme to another. At one moment, the self may find security, a sense of well-being, as its most important need. All thoughts, desires, and judgements will be based on this need. But the very next moment, or the next day, or the next year, sometimes without any specific stimulus, the self may feel antagonistic towards the idea of security, yearn for new avenues of self-expression, even if there are risks involved.

If at any one point we are asked to describe ourselves, we will come up with a certain description: A or B or C. We like to think of ourselves as consistent beings. But to be accurate, any of these statements, are, at best, only true for the moment. They are fixed abstractions, but the reality is an endless flow. The true self, unless dead, seems always to be in a state of motion, constantly acting and reacting to the changing environment. D.H. Lawrence wants to reproduce the dynamics of character, not the boundaries by which we define it.

The characters in The Rainbow find themselves coming up against the fact that they can never find

their true selves. Years go by, during which they feel they are content, that they have "found" themselves, but then they realize that they are not completed, they are not finished. Tom Brangwen, the elder, Lydia Lensky's husband, middle-aged, annoyed at the prospect of his step-daughter Anna's forthcoming marriage, in one moment finds satisfaction, counts his life as good, in the "long, marital embrace with his wife!" (p. 124) And in the next breath, he realizes that there is a Tom Brangwen who is unsatisfied, who wanted to go forward with his step-daughter as she moves onward.

What weariness! There was
no peace, however old one
grew! One was never right,
never decent, never master
of oneself. (p. 125)

Later at the wedding, he asks the same question.

Brangwen was staring away
at the burning blue window
at the back of the altar, and
wondering vaguely, with pain,
if he ever should get old, if
he ever should feel arrived
and established. ...He was
still as unsure and unfixed
as when he had married him-
self. His wife and he! With
a pang of anguish he realised
what uncertainties they both
were. He was a man of forty-
five. Forty-five! In five
more years fifty. Then sixty --
then seventy -- then it was
finished. My God -- and one
was still so unestablished!
(pp. 130-1)

His answer is that one never feels "established." The self never stands still.

Although this form of characterization is not an entirely original idea -- we can find the flexible, ever-changing, dynamic inner flow in other novelists such as Henry James, Hardy, George Eliot, and Dostoevsky -- Lawrence lays an enormous amount of emphasis on this quality in his characters. It is necessary for the purposes of the novel as well as the social criticism. Through this form of characterization, Lawrence gives his created beings a largeness, a magnitude, an extensiveness which seems to encompass all aspects of the world. Other authors, like Tolstoy, achieve this sense of largeness through an immensity of plot and the sheer numbers of characters; Lawrence does it with characterization.

At the same time, because they are never finished, never complete, the characters in The Rainbow can approach a wide variety of experience without preconceptions. This is particularly true in Ursula's case, for if her character had been set and defined by her upbringing or her first formative experiences, she could not have continued the search for better and more satisfying experiences as she moves through life. And since Lawrence wants to examine a good deal of life through Ursula's reactions, she must continue the search.

Though this kind of characterization is just as

much a literary convention as any other, it does add a certain quality of verisimilitude to the story. The reader tends to recognize the dynamics of the characters as somewhat similar to his own experience of life. While recognizing the artificial manipulation of the characters as they move from flesh and blood people to symbolic representations of universal principles and back again, he also senses the reality of the inner life of the characters which Lawrence continually presents.

One of the effects of this method is that Lawrence can show, as he has indicated he wants to show, the universals which lie beneath individual behavior. In the following passage, we will see not only the rapid alternations of states of feeling, but also a change in the individual characters, Lydia and Tom, who become representative of man and wife and then of the male and female principles. Notice how the description of the immediate surroundings, the room, the light, the sewing, the background, gradually disappears and we are left almost entirely within the field of an emotional interaction. This interaction tends to be less specifically related to Tom and Lydia Brangwen, a nineteenth century well-to-do farm couple; it is not merely these two unique individuals who are having the experience. It is an experience which occurs to husbands and wives, men and women, in general.

They were silent. She sat watching him. He could not move, his soul was seething and chaotic. She turned to her sewing again. But the sight of her bent before him held him and would not let him be. She was a strange, hostile, dominant thing. Yet not quite hostile. As he sat he felt his limbs were strong and hard, he sat in strength.

She was silent for a long time, stitching. He was aware, poignantly, of the round shape of her head, very intimate, compelling. She lifted her head and sighed. The blood burned in him, her voice ran to him like fire.

"Come here," she said, unsure.

For some moments he did not move. Then he rose slowly and went across the hearth. It required an almost deathly effort of volition, or of acquiescence. He stood before her and looked down at her. Her face was shining again, her eyes were shining again, like terrible laughter. It was to him terrible, how she could be transfigured. He could not look at her, it burnt his heart.

"My love!" she said.

And she put her arms round him as he stood before her, round his thighs, pressing him against her breast. And her hands on him seemed to reveal to him the mould of his own nakedness, he was passionately lovely to himself. He could not bear to look at her.

"My dear!" she said. He knew she spoke a foreign language. The fear was like bliss in his heart. He looked down. Her face was shining,

her eyes were full of light,
she was awful. He suffered
from the compulsion to her.
She was the awful unknown.

There was that in him which
shrank from yielding to her,
resisted the relaxing towards
her, opposed the mingling
with her, even while he most
desired it. He was afraid,
he wanted to save himself.

There were a few moments
of stillness. Then gradually,
the tension, the withholding
relaxed in him, and he began
to flow towards her. She was
beyond him, the unattainable.

His blood beat up in waves
of desire. He wanted to come
to her, to meet her. She was
there, if he could reach her.
The reality of her who was
just beyond him absorbed him.
Blind and destroyed, he press-
ed forward, nearer, nearer,
to receive the consummation
of himself, he received with-
in the darkness which should
swallow him and yield him up
to himself. (pp. 89-90)

The whole passage moves from "characters" in the
traditional sense to "beings," embodiments of the male
and female principles, to natural forces.

When Lawrence reaches the level of natural forces,
however, we feel that we are in the presence of the
purely Lawrencian cosmos. It is difficult, of course,
to portray principles or forces in any concrete way
which will be recognized by all readers as the way it
really is. Thus we become aware from time to time that
we are listening to Lawrence himself trying desperately

to make us aware of these realities which are in a sense mystically apprehended and which no words can fully render.

Lawrence's voice is not as intrusive here in the section dealing with Tom and Lydia as it will be occasionally in the sections covering Anna and Will and Ursula and Skrebensky. At this point he is able to maintain the illusion of giving us clear representations of the "awful unknown." He has kept the emotional reactions within the scope of his characters.

This technique takes on a further generalizing function when we see the male and female principles being re-enacted by subsequent couples in the novel, who though new and different people, nevertheless go through the same experiences with each other. Actions, drives, desires, satisfactions, feelings that are displayed by Tom and Lydia are also displayed by Anna and Will, and Ursula and Skrebensky. Lawrence shows the underlying natural forces which make a man a man or a woman a woman no matter what the differences caused by the passage of historical time.

As each of the couples acts out certain consistent primordial patterns, they also react to the historical changes going on around them. Thus Lawrence is able to show the gradually widening gap between the two and point to this as one of the flaws of the modern world.

This is a major aspect of Lawrence's social criticism. But this aspect of the novel is most clearly brought out in the movement of the plot, the actual unfolding of the story. To be sure, the shifting, fluctuating characterization will work throughout; the descriptions and the dialogue will all be employed. But it is the slow and ~~p~~ainful emergence of the changes wrought in each of the succeeding generations as the world moves from an agricultural to an industrial economy that fully and explicitly demonstrate Lawrence's social vision.

As mentioned earlier in the discussion of The White Peacock, the totality of a novel reveals Lawrence's social criticism. Though Lawrence will often have his characters muse, argue, or state certain propositions in regard to their world, the real effect of such pronouncements is the way in which their lives are affected by the social forces being talked about. They may criticize the modern school system, but it is the lives of the teachers and the students held up for examination which reveal the actual debilitating effects of that system.

As opposed to the earlier works which covered only one generation, the plot of The Rainbow is extensive, encompassing the life of three generations, spanning the time from the introduction of the railroads into

the country -- about 1850 -- up to World War I.

Lawrence's plot, however, is a variation on the traditional family romance. Though the genre is flexible -- think of the differences among Scott's Old Mortality, Bronte's Wuthering Heights, and Butler's The Way of All Flesh -- Lawrence adds a new dimension. His concern is not with the members of the family and their rising and falling fortunes within a given social context, but with the changing social context and its effects on the individuals.

Because Lawrence's particular form of characterization includes the sense of the general as well as the specific, the plot can be read as the story of mankind's movement from a simple agrarian culture to a complex industrial one. Though Lawrence presents us with real characters in specific settings he is also presenting, at least on one level, the story of Man and the Industrial Revolution.

He begins with a pastoral reality: hard-working families who live close to the earth just as their ancestors have for countless centuries before them. They are secure in themselves and in their position in the universe. They live whole lives, in tune with the rhythm of nature. In the first paragraphs of the book, Lawrence establishes the Brangwen men's sense of powerful fulfillment and rich warm satisfaction in passages like the following.

They knew the intercourse
 between heaven and earth,
 sunshine drawn into the
 breast and bowels, the rain
 sucked up in the daytime,
 nakedness that comes under
 the wind in autumn, showing
 the birds' nests no longer
 worth hiding. Their life
 and interrelations were such:
 feeling the pulse and body
 of the soil, that opened to
 their furrow for the grain,
 and became smooth and supple
 after their ploughing, and
 clung to their feet with a
 weight that pulled like de-
 sire, lying hard and unre-
 sponsive when the crops were
 to be shorn away. The young
 corn waved and was silken,
 and the lustre slid along
 the limbs of the men who
 saw it. They took the udder
 of the cows, the cows yield-
 ed milk and pulse against
 the hands of the men, the
 pulse of the blood of the
 teats of the cows beat into
 the pulse of the hands of
 the men. They mounted their
 horses, and held life be-
 tween the grip of their
 knees, they harnessed their
 horses to the wagon, and,
 with hand on the bridle-
 rings, drew the heaving of
 the horses after their will.

(p. 2)

In this kind of world a man can feel the pulse of
 nature physically in the pulse of the cow's udder, yet
 he is taking something from that nature. The cow is a
 part of domesticated nature, not nature in its untamed
 form. Man feels life in the grip of his knees, but
 the horse must do man's bidding. The connection here is

close and physical. But it is necessarily bound up with man's mastery over nature.

For Lawrence this is to be preferred to those later examples of man's mastery over his environment: the mine, the canal, the railroad. For in those instances, man no longer feels the pulse of blood, he no longer feels life between his knees as he controls it. Instead he hears the mechanical clang of machinery, the clickety-clack of iron wheels on rails, the grating of cogs. He is mastering nature, but he is also separated from it. The sense of pride that man has in making nature do his bidding is diluted when he cannot "feel" the sensation. Perhaps this is the real fall which Lawrence is describing in this book. The loss of pride which men undergo when they fail to know instantly every moment that they are dominating nature, forcing on to the irrational and chaotic a semblance of order. Perhaps we can today as men take pride in Man's conquest of nature, but this pride is both collective and remote and is not the same as feeling an individual pride and mastery at first hand.

In The Rainbow Lawrence creates a world of the not too distant past. Like the world of Strelley Mill farm in The White Peacock, it is not primitive or anarchic; it is cultivated and ordered -- the order is supplied by the smoothly balanced harmony between ex-

ternal nature and the inner nature of man. Man responds to the rhythms of nature and is content.

There is only one irritant in this world. There seems to be a faint stirring of interest in something beyond, some life which is larger, more fulfilling than the simple life of the farmer. Significantly enough, Lawrence sees this desire as the woman's concern. She seems to be the one who looks for a change, moving in the direction of the "finer" things in life. Lawrence associates this with the religious impulse or at least with the attempt by women to refine the brute out of man.

But the woman wanted another form of life than this, something that was not blood-intimacy. Her house faced out from the farm-buildings and fields, looked out to the road and the village with church and Hall and the world beyond. She stood to see the far-off world of cities and governments and the active scope of man, the magic land to her, where secrets were made known and desires fulfilled. She faces outwards to where men moved dominant and creative, having turned their back on the pulsing heat of creation, and with this behind them, were set out to discover what was beyond, to enlarge their own scope and range and freedom; whereas the Brangwen men faced inwards to the teeming life of creation, which poured unresolved into their veins.

(p. 3)

The Brangwen women aspire to some sort of higher knowledge. It is ironic that Lawrence sees the woman as the spur which sets man moving towards progress because he constantly criticizes the actual form of that progress. Whereas the women are in Lawrence's view looking for a spiritual, metaphysical progress, men, moved by that impulse, have translated it into the idea of material progress. In The Rainbow, the women serve as critics of man, the specific men and Man in general, because they have not brought back what they were sent for. It is as if the woman has said, "I have this yearning for some deeper, more satisfying knowledge, but I cannot go out and get it myself. That is not my function. You must go out and bring it back for me." But when the man returns with his steamships and railroads and computers and offers them to her, she says, "That's not what I meant at all."

As the couples act out their lives, the women serve as critics of the man's world. In the earlier time they have less to criticize. But as the narrative comes closer to modern times, the women criticize more, become more important in the scheme of the novel, until we arrive finally at Ursula's total rejection of Skrebensky.

But in that lovely agricultural world of not so long ago there is peace and harmony despite the

yearning for higher things which the women have. This peace and harmony is interrupted when the life of the independent farming communities is penetrated by the apparatus for unearthing coal: the railroad, the colliery, and the canal.

About 1840, a canal was constructed across the meadows of the Marsh Farm, connecting the newly-opened collieries of the Erewash Valley. (p. 6)

Slowly the lives of the people begin to change. Just as the canal has separated the Marsh Farm from the town of Ilkeston, it has begun the job of separating the Brangwen men from their roots in the soil. But in the first generation the schism is so slight as to produce scarcely a ripple.

As they worked in the fields, from beyond the now familiar embankment came the rhythmic run of the winding engines, startling at first, but afterwards a narcotic to the brain. Then the shrill whistle of the trains re-echoed through the heart, with fearsome pleasure, announcing the far-off come near and imminent.

As they drove home from town, the farmers of the land met the blackened colliers trooping from the pit-mouth. As they gathered the harvest, the west wind brought a faint, sulphurous smell of pit-refuse burning. As they pulled the turnips in November, the sharp clink-clink-clink-clink-clink of empty trucks shunting on the line, vibrated in their

hearts with the fact of
other activity going on
beyond them. (p. 7)

Industry and farming go along side by side. There is even the thrill of wonder at the far-off, the large world without. The desire of the women for some "other form of life" seems more possible of fulfillment. Tom Brangwen of the first generation marries Lydia Lensky, a widowed Polish émigré. He has felt the urge to something larger and has found in this strange dark-complexioned foreign-speaking wife the "far-off come near and imminent."

It may seem surprising that Tom Brangwen, a male, has the desire for new experience which Lawrence originally assigns to the Brangwen women. There are, however, several indications that Tom's attitudes towards life have been shaped in some unconscious way by his mother and sister. He is the youngest son and the mother's favorite. She had a great wish to make him a gentleman and sent him to Grammar school, which proved a failure. After his father's death when Tom was seventeen, the care of the farm fell upon his shoulders, but "his mother remained as centre to the house." (p. 13) Lawrence also mentions Tom's "innate desire to find in a woman the embodiment of all his inarticulate, powerful religious impulses." (p. 14) Thus, when a short time later Tom is thrilled and excited by his

meeting with the foreign gentleman who provides an immediate contact with the far off and unknown, it is not really hard to understand why he sets his mind upon Lydia Lensky.

In this marriage between the blond English farmer and the dark-haired Polish woman, Lawrence demonstrates a fusion of the two forces he has identified. There is the force which looks to the earth, to the immediate, the practical; there is the force which presses forward and upward, towards the spiritual, the metaphysical, to the unknown. Tom Brangwen finds in his wife both qualities and she in turn finds in him the same. They move between the two poles of identity and loss of identity; they fluctuate between states of serenity and passion; they act as characters and as forces.

Throughout their portion of the narrative, though the relationship is never a static one, the reader becomes aware of a great sense of fulfillment and satisfaction. But then this is early in the development of the plot. Historically speaking, the influence of the machine has not spread to the Marsh. Tom Brangwen still has a footing in both worlds. He plants his corn and harvest the hay;

he finds the unknown in his wife. This whole first section of the book, the description of life before the machine and the individual marriage relationship of Tom and Lydia, was created to exist in the reader's mind as a contrast to what follows. It is that state of innocence (though the term seems slightly) inappropriate to describe the sensual reality of the early Brangwen's existence) from which Lawrence will show the fall. When we see Will Brangwen acting with Anna or Skrebensky with Ursula, we will compare their behavior, their existences with Tom's. Lawrence will portray these later examples of the male animal as progressively inferior. And we will see how the changes in the conditions of life have made it impossible for them to be like Tom. They no longer feel "life between the grip of their knees."

This process is one of the chief features of The Rainbow's construction. To give Lawrence credit for attempting to follow through on his idea of characterization, we might say that what he has done is to give us in three generations the story of three couples, but at the same time it is the story of one couple, one marriage which spans three generations. It is the same man

in each situation, it is the same woman. Tom Brangwen is transformed into Will Brangwen who becomes Anton Skrebensky. Lydia Lensky is Anna Brangwen who is Ursula Brangwen. The male principle or force, changing, modifying, reacting as the given social conditions change; the female principle or force, seeking to emerge, to grow, to find some ultimate satisfaction as each new opportunity appears.

Before going on, perhaps it would be wise to bring up the image of the rainbow in this context. It is the most important symbol in the book for which it supplies the title. It fits into the present discussion of the plot because the rainbow represents the fusion of seemingly disparate categories; it is the synthesis in Lawrence's theory of opposites. Like the yin and yang drawing in Oriental mythology, both parts interacting are necessary to make the whole. The male and female, though antagonistic, are necessary to each other. A rainbow, like an arch, has its two ends in different places and yet it connects these two ends to form something which is grand, beautiful, and inspiring. A rainbow implies hope, and for Lawrence it is the hope of reconciling the opposites: the self and society, the practical and the ethereal, the body and the mind.

Lawrence shows us that for the most part the first couple with whom we deal, Tom and Lydia, have

found the essential harmony which the rainbow represents. But this is not a stagnant situation; it is dynamic. Lawrence interchanges the rainbow and the arch at will in the narrative. When he is particularly concerned with the dynamic interaction of his opposites, the arch seems more appropriate. In the late months of Lydia's first pregnancy, she withdraws from Tom Brangwen. He feels "like a broken arch thrust sickeningly out from support." (p. 60) Tom turns to Lydia's child Anna, his step-daughter, for support. After their first child is born, however, Tom and Lydia move back together. The broken arch is repaired, yet as we all know from basic physics, an arch remains intact because of the pressure of two equal and opposite forces.

She [Anna] played between the pillar of fire and the pillar of cloud in confidence, having the assurance on her right hand and the assurance on her left. She was no longer called upon to uphold with her childish might the broken end of the arch. Her father and her mother now met to the span of the heavens, and she, the child, was free to play in the space beneath, between. (p. 92)

For Lawrence this is not an ideal solution for mutual satisfaction in life; it is a fact. He does not seek to eliminate strife or conflict, for he sees these as inevitable givens in the nature of man. But the con-

flict must take place between equal forces. If the balance is tipped from some outside source in one direction, the arch will fall. And it is the subsequent introduction of industrialization into man's life which changes the balance.

In the next couple, Will and Anna, the man begins without an inner arch of his own. Recall that Tom Brangwen had his practical down-to-earth side satisfied in his work, his farming; his other and opposite needs, his desire "to find in a woman the embodiment of all his inarticulate, powerful religious impulses" (p. 14) are satisfied in his relations with Lydia. But Will Brangwen does not have the opportunity to make this balanced combination the cornerstone of his life. It is no longer possible for the majority of people to have a life connected with the soil; the factories and collieries need workers. Will takes a job in a textile factory. And for the remainder of his life, or at least until he is much older, the time spent on the job is a nullity. He strives to hang all his needs on Anna and his connection with Christianity, but in a long and complicated process of conflict he loses his religion and constructs some sort of life with Anna.

Anna and Will bridge the gap between the predominantly agricultural world of the 19th century and the predominantly industrial world of the 20th century. Their story is a paradigm of the movement of the novel,

a smaller version of the whole. Anna and Will have a history of their own which begins deeply rooted in the rhythms of elemental nature and ends in the violent conflict of wills generated by their inability to come to terms with their more modern situation.

Even at the outset of their story, in the sheaving scene, there are indications of the changing context of life. Anna has grown up on the farm; she is a part of nature. Will on the other hand has not; he grew up in the town. When the magic of the moon moves Anna to rhythmical patterns -- what can be described as a slow courtship dance -- Will does not respond. He does not flow with the movement of the dance. Instead he tries to will their meeting at the stack. This appears to be the chief consequence of Will's separation from nature: he is not responsive to the rhythms of nature and must therefore insist upon his will as a means of achieving his goals. It is not until much later that Will learns to relax and accept his life, something which Tom Brangwen did automatically because he had an organic connection with the rhythms of nature. A farmer learns to submit to the weather; he knows he cannot "will" it to be other than it is.

When Will and Anna finally kiss, however, on that moonlit night, Will discovers the dark unknown:

All the night in his arms,
darkness and shine, he possessed
of [sic] it all! All the night
for him now, to unfold, to

venture within, all the
mystery to be entered,
all the discovery to be
made. (p. 119)

In the above passage Will appears to be like Tom Brangwen, seeking in the woman the "embodiment of all his inarticulate, powerful religious impulses", but he is also like Skrebensky in that he is forced to pursue the woman with his will. This pursuit can only end in failure, for the object of pursuit -- in this case Anna, in Skrebensky's Ursula -- will fight to prevent being trapped by another's will.

We must, however, recognize that it is not the fight or conflict which precludes the possibility of success. In his own way Tom Brangwen maintained a certain pressure towards Lydia and she towards him, and that tension supported the arch of their marriage. But both Will and Skrebensky are doomed to failure in this particular conflict, for they have nothing of their own to fall back on. That is, when Tom's will and desire for Lydia is thwarted, he can go out into the barn as he does with Anna when Lydia is giving birth. He is sustained and nourished by his daylight side, the farm and the animals. Will, however, has no daylight life. He gets no sustenance from his job in the lace factory. Therefore, when he exercises all his powers of concentration on overpowering his wife's soul, he is doomed to lose; Anna's soul is her own

because she has another life. She has both the inner sense of a connection with the Unknown and a firm hold upon the daily, particular existence. And she hangs on to this sense of self long enough to break Will. Only then is she content to give up the Unknown.

One should also be aware of the different characteristics that Tom and Will seek in their women. Will's darkness is a secure, womblike darkness whereas Tom's contains the exhilaration of the "far off" come near. This is made clear in the honeymoon scenes in which Will revels in the timeless quality of his new situation. He has immersed himself in the eternal "darkness" of the sensual relationship and he doesn't want to come back to the world of change. In other words, he does not have the "societal instinct" which Lawrence was later to say was the most important by-product of sex activity. What Will originally wants and finds in Anna is exactly the same as what he wants from the cathedrals.

In church, he wanted a
dark, nameless emotion,
the emotion of all the
great mysteries of passion.
...The verity was his
connection with Anna and
his connection with the
Church, his real being
lay in his dark emotional
experience of the Infin-
ite, of the Absolute.
(p. 155)

But to be a whole, well rounded individual, a person must have a viable inner arch, supported by

equal connections with the Particular and the Infinite. Will has no connection with the Particular. It is not until he ceases trying to force his will upon the world that he is even able to recognize the existence of the daylight world.

In the Anna and Will chapters, Lawrence continues to provide strange and swift alternations of character as the conflict develops. Anna, the female, though she definitely wants something more from life than her "social duty," cannot stand Will's mysticism. She opposes it with a cynical, practical, down-to-earth rationalism which seems somewhat inconsistent with the fact that she has her own form of desire for the beyond. In the scene at Lincoln Cathedral she is so rationally critical of Will's mystical, soaring, but contained ecstasy, that she crushes his ability to make a connection with the Church. Yet when she is pregnant, she can dance in blissful nakedness about the room.

Big with child as she was,
she danced there in the bed-
room by herself, lifting her
hands and her body to the
Unseen, to the unseen Crea-
tor who had chosen her, to
Whom she belonged. (p. 179)

And yet, though Anna has the initial desire to serve the Lord, the unknown, she eventually gives up the search. She relaxes into the physical world of childbearing. She becomes relatively content.

Will, on the other hand, must give up his overwhelming dependency on Anna in order to find himself. In a sense it is accomplished when he gives up his mystical attachment to the arch of the cathedral. Then he is able to find some connection with everyday particular life. After his recognition that the arch of the cathedral which before appeared to contain the ultimate unity, the closed, timeless, changeless state, was in reality a false enclosure which did not include the myriad aspects of the outside world -- "something free and careless and joyous" (p. 203) -- he finds himself capable of working on minute everyday tasks, and finding himself as a craftsman and artisan.

He relaxed his will, and
 let everything go. What
 was between him and his
 wife was a great thing,
 if it was not everything.
 She had conquered, really.
 Let him wait, and abide,
 wait and abide. She and
 the baby and himself,
 they were one. The organ
 rang out his protest-
 ation. His soul lay in
 the darkness as he
 pressed the keys of the
 organ. (p. 204)

He relaxed his will to achieve a certain peace. Anna, in turn, need no longer fight him and she too relaxes in her mindless breeding state. There is a certain balance, an equilibrium to their lives. But in a very real way it comes at first from shutting out

the Industrial World -- not by coming to terms with it.

And yet, for his own part, for his private being, Brangwen felt that the whole of the man's world was exterior and extraneous to his own real life with Anna. Sweep away the whole monstrous superstructure of the world of to-day, cities and industries and civilisation, leave only the bare earth with plants growing and waters running, and he would not mind, so long as he were whole, had Anna and the child and the new, strange certainty in his soul.

(p. 190)

Later, however, Will finds in himself a sense of social purposiveness; Lawrence's portrayal of Will shows the influence of Ruskin whose ideas of the craftsman and artisan were certainly familiar to him. One can detect that Lawrence approves of Will's actions, especially when, in a later passage, Lawrence praises him for finding a connection with the everyday world and his change of craft.

Brangwen embraced sincerely the idea of handwork in schools. For the first time, he began to take real interest in a public affair. He had at length, from his profound sensual activity, developed a real purposive self.

(p. 235)

Though Lawrence praises Will's new purposive self, the self released by sensual activity, the marriage as a whole must be seen as less successful than Tom and Lydia's. It had taken Will years of frustration and anguish to reach the point where he could make contact with both the everyday world of purposive activity and the night time world of passionate ecstasy. And, in the process of reaching this point, Anna has lost her desire to reach the unknown. She has not brought her conflicting desires into harmony. Her inner arch, the one which should connect the body and the soul, has both ends rooted in the body alone as she proceeds to bring forth a continuous stream of children. She becomes a breeding animal and no more. Yet she passes on to her offspring, at least to Ursula, the desire to build a new arch better than the old.

With satisfaction she relinquished the adventure to the unknown. She was bearing her children.

There was another child coming, and Anna lapsed into vague content. If she were not the wayfarer to the unknown, if she were arrived now, settled in her builded house, a rich woman, still her doors opened under the arch of the rainbow, her threshold reflected the passing of the sun and moon, the great travellers, her house was full of the echo of journeying.

She was a door and a threshold, she herself. Through her another soul was coming, to stand upon her as upon the threshold, looking out, shading its eyes for the direction to take.

The child who stands upon that threshold is Ursula Brangwen. It is through her that Lawrence will present his view of the modern world. Yet how modern is modern? How relevant are Ursula's experiences to us? In order to make the novel more general and less specific, Lawrence does not explicitly give dates for the births, deaths, and marriages in The Rainbow. We can, with a bit of investigation however, uncover the information that Ursula is sixteen when the Boer War breaks out in 1899 and conclude that the novel covers her life from 1883 to just before World War I. But these facts do not intrude in the narrative; they must be searched for. The reader is not kept informed of the passage of historical time in any definite way. Thus, even though Ursula's experiences take place primarily after 1900, the social criticism made evident through those experiences seems applicable to the 19th century as well as the early 20th.

It is one of Lawrence's notable achievements in The Rainbow that he can relate a symbolic, generalized story and yet keep it rooted in the concrete. We are constantly struck by the sense of reality which the characters exude even when they are representing universal abstractions. This has been mentioned before in connection with Lawrence's characterization, but the same principle applies to the resulting social criticism.

For instance, when Ursula is upset by the town of Wiggiston she is moved by real mines and real miners in a particular town. This occurs in a specific setting, her uncle's house, during a particular conversation. But with all this sense of reality there is also the feeling that Ursula's reactions are typical and general. They are the reactions which any sensitive, intelligent soul would have to any large industrial complex anywhere in which human beings are treated as mechanisms in a vast process. Thus the effect of the scene is to arouse the reader's sensibilities not merely to the evils of the Wiggiston situation but to the evils of the industrial system, anywhere, at any time. Thus the social criticism is not merely valid for Lawrence and his time, but it can be valid for our time too.

The timeless quality of Lawrence's social criticism does have its limitations, however. One has to accept the ideological-moral frame of the novel in order to apply the main point of Lawrence's social criticism to today's world. Lawrence's equation is simple: industrialization = dehumanization = evil. I don't think anyone can argue against the latter part. Dehumanization is obviously an evil, but the first part of the equation may not be absolutely valid. Nevertheless it is the assumption which Lawrence accepts as true, not only in this book, but in all his other works as well. Undoubt-

edly his own experience and his observations of others' experience have led him to this belief.

But just because Lawrence's experiences brought about this belief does not make the equation axiomatic. It is very possible, for example, that the worker is a lot better off today, both in material terms and in the possibilities of self-realization, than he ever would have been in some bucolic, agriculturally based community several generations ago. One can find even in the novels of Hardy and Eliot examples of ignorant, suspicious peasants and farmers; from other historical evidence it is most likely that the average man who worked the soil was as "dehumanized" as any industrial worker ever could be. What seemed an axiomatic equation to Lawrence -- that industrialization always produces dehumanization, that it does not offer any advantages over the life it superceded -- is to us not such a simple black and white matter.

The difficulty in evaluating the accuracy of Lawrence's social criticism then becomes apparent. It all depends on the point of view. The idealistic, romantic reader would probably accept Lawrence's ideological-moral equation. And then agree with Lawrence's social criticism as he would agree with all the 19th and 20th century critics of Industrialism from Carlyle to Paul Goodman. For this type of reader, social criticism in The

Rainbow will be as pertinent today as it was sixty years ago. The forces of capitalism, the octopus of bureaucracy, the power of the computer, the mass media seem as ready as ever to crush the vital spark of life out of the individual.

Yet the reading of a novel of social criticism creates a problem of perspective, one which does not occur in other kinds of novels. It is the problem of application of the social criticism in the novel to the actual life and society of which the reader is a part. When reading Sir Walter Scott, for instance, the reader falls readily away from a consciousness of his own society. He enters the world of long ago. But the reader of Lawrence's novels cannot help but be aware of the conditions of his own time as well as of the conditions of the world Lawrence knew and revealed in his work. If the conclusions made by Lawrence about the world in his novels do not agree with the conclusions the reader makes about his own world then some sort of adjustment must be made in evaluating the applicability of the social criticism in the novel to the world of the reader.

Lawrence continues in the romantic tradition of the 19th century to state that industrialism dehumanizes people involved with the factory system. He also implies, as did Carlyle and Ruskin and even Marx^X, that everyone in a modern industrial society is connected in this process, this loss of human values

caused by our form of economic production. Nevertheless, the reader must test this conclusion by his own experience, not merely the experience contained in the novel. Though one can certainly make a case for Lawrence's point of view -- both to its accuracy in his time as well as in ours -- one can also make a case for the opposite view.

As Raymond Williams explains in detail in his book Culture and Society, there is a long tradition of social criticism developing from the time of the American and French Revolutions and continuing right up to the present which repeats the moral judgement: the organic is good, the mechanical is bad. There can be no compromise. Williams quotes Ruskin on the matter.

"You are put to stern choice in this matter. You must either make a tool of the creature, or a man of him. You cannot make both. ...It is verily this degradation of the operative into a machine, which, more than any other evil of the times. ...is the chief cause of all our social ills." 4

This idea is not ^{always} ~~unquestionably~~ true; ~~it is~~ it is not an absolute. A man can be an operative of a machine, and still be a human being.

I do not wish to oversimplify the matter, to say that there are no valid subjective responses to man's situation in a machine age. But if one looks objectively at the working man today, if one actually looks at individuals, what does he find? They appear

remarkably like human beings. They are fathers, sons, brothers. They partake of social relationships not based on "cash nexus". They do not seem to be mere automatons. The Romantic critic of society may look at them as they drink beer with their friends, watch television, mow the lawn, drive their cars to work, in short participate in all manner of human experiences, and he may decry the "quality" of these experiences, perhaps with some justification when measured according to the highest standards of cultural attainment. But does this prove that the ordinary man is less human than he was? And, in particular, does this prove he is less human than he would have been in a pre-Industrial society? I think not. I find it hard to believe that a man who had to work from sun up to sundown would have had time to develop his total personality -- his humanness -- let alone the inclination.

This is not to argue that the modern industrial society automatically produces more humane individuals than did previous eras in history. Industrialism has its flaws which are pernicious, complex, and difficult to overcome. Yet there has been progress made in rectifying many of the early abuses of the system. And perhaps we are indebted to men like Carlyle, Cobbet, Ruskin, and William Morris for their timely social criticism which, though it called for the abolition of the system in its entirety, may have led more moderate men to achieve practical, more realistic changes.

It does seem, however, that real progress towards a better society is hindered by an unquestioning acceptance of an ideological maxim which by now must seem an outworn generalization which does not often fit the facts of everyday experience.

If the reader questions, as I do, the absolute nature of the ideological frame, if at times it appears as very standard stuff, even cant, then one has to approach The Rainbow not as a book which carries a pertinent social message for today, but a novel which brilliantly carries out Lawrence's purposes. That is, when the general application of the social criticism fails to agree with what we know and understand about our world today, we can still appreciate the validity of the specific social situation and the way it affects the characters.

This is where Lawrence's marvelous ability to keep The Rainbow operating on two levels simultaneously saves the book. For example, when Ursula finds herself going under to the demands of school teaching in a lower class elementary school, we may not be able to transfer that specific criticism of education to our own time -- though undoubtedly ghetto school conditions in our larger cities are similar, many of this country's elementary schools no longer feature regimentation and rote learning -- yet we can empathize with the sufferings of Ursula Brangwen there in Standard Five. We can see, know, and understand the realities of pre-World War I

teaching conditions in England. Those scenes, like so many in Lawrence's works, carry the stamp of real experience. It is a real experience which the reader can share.

Thus, with a few exceptions⁵, the ideological-moral framework of the novel does not intrude upon the form and substance of the book. As far as the characters are concerned that ideological-moral framework is a reality. All of Ursula's experiences, for instance, prove the point. Everywhere she goes she finds that industrialization dehumanizes everyone who comes in contact with the system. Lawrence is obviously manipulating the events so that it turns out this way, but for the most part his hand goes relatively unnoticed. There are times, to be sure, especially towards the end of the novel, in the episodes of Ursula at college and her second meeting with Skrebensky when a certain dogmatic insistence on the absoluteness of his assumptions comes through. But these will be dealt with later.

It is through Ursula's eyes and thoughts and desires and needs that Lawrence makes clear his view of modern society. This view lies within the framework of his assumptions mentioned above. His specific targets are Christianity, colonialism, education, war, and industrialization. All these aspects of the world are corporate identities. In each, Lawrence sees the death of the individual in subservience to the group; he sees individual manhood going under to the demands of a machine society which can best get along, perpetuate itself, with a

mass man, one who gives up his sense of self for the larger interest. The perfect Christian, who is also a colonialist and a capitalist, is what is required and Lawrence describes him, gives him breath and substance in Anton Skrebensky, the male who must act out his role with Ursula. They are the third and last couple in this story of generations.

Even as a young girl, Ursula Brangwen has an urge to be different. She wanted to "burst the narrow boundary of Cossethay where only limited people lived."

(p. 262) She begins with books; she reads imaginative literature and generates fantasies in which she is the princess, the queen, the heroine. None of the earlier Brangwen people evolved such romantic illusions about themselves. Perhaps it occurs with Ursula because the given reality is no longer satisfying enough. She must make up better worlds for herself.

At the age of twelve Ursula goes to Grammar school. Education seems, at first, a doorway to that other world the Brangwen women have been seeking: French, Latin, mathematics -- imaginary movement in geographical and historical perspectives. Ursula imagines that the air of the Grammar school will be finer than the "smoke and confusion" of Nottingham, but she is disappointed by what she experiences in the reality of the school. Later in her life, when she tries teaching

as a profession and when she enters college, she goes through the same process. She looks forward to something fine and good; she imagines the best; she is constantly disappointed.

It is the same with her meeting with Anton Skrebensky. At first she sees in him a "splendid recklessness" which attracts her. Nevertheless, she also has the feeling that he is "going to sell himself in some way." (p. 292) This diametrically opposed initial reaction -- attraction and repulsion -- is the Lawrencean characterization in action. It is also the key to the entire relationship between this modern couple.

Ironically, Skrebensky, who will be characterized by his lack of individual identity, is an orphan. He was raised by society to be society's man. Ursula, on the other hand, derives her strong sense of self and individuality from the family. She has been influenced in her development by the former Brangwens. When asked by Ursula where home is, Skrebensky typically replies, "but my real home, I suppose, is the army." (p. 291) His home is in a system which suppresses individuality. This is the early Skrebensky, however, who can still "suppose"; he is not yet committed to society's cause. Indeed, there are times in his first appearance in the novel when he seems to be mocking the cause which he serves.

Skrebensky's appearance in Ursula's life when

she is not quite sixteen marks the beginning of a new cycle. Ursula feels a certain excitement at the introduction of this new force entering her circumscribed life. Just as Lydia came to Tom and Will appeared to Anna, Skrebensky's arrival represents the outside world, the unknown, a possible avenue to that further fulfillment.

He brought her a strong
sense of the outer world.
It was as if she were set
on a hill and could feel
vaguely the whole world
lying spread before her.
(p. 288)

As a means to that end, Skrebensky replaces the Grammar school which by now has become dull and commonplace. He, in turn, will be replaced by Winifred Inger, and then by Ursula's first job, and then her going to college.

But even though Ursula sees in the young army officer a hope for the future, a male who might possibly be her equal and opposite force, she very soon discovers that there is something missing in him. It is as if her personality tries to form an arch or rainbow with his, but he cannot maintain his side of the structure. She recognizes his static nature, his lack of identity.

"Do you like to be a
soldier?" she asked.
"I am not exactly a
soldier," he replied.
"But you only do things
for wars," she said.
"Yes."
"Would you like to go
to war?"

"I? Well, it would be exciting. If there were a war I would want to go."

A strange, distracted feeling came over her, a sense of potent unrealities.

"Why would you want to go?"

"I should be doing something, it would be genuine. It's a sort of toy-life as it is."

"But what would you be doing if you went to war?"

"I would be making railways or bridges, working like a nigger."

"But you'd only make them to be pulled down again when the armies had done with them. It seems just as much a game."

"If you call war a game."

"What is it?"

"It's about the most serious business there is, fighting."

A sense of hard separateness came over her.

"Why is fighting more serious than anything else?" she asked.

"You either kill or get killed -- and I suppose it is serious enough, killing."

"But when you're dead you don't matter any more," she said.

He was silenced for a moment.

"But the result matters," he said. "It matters whether we settle the Mahdi or not."

"Not to you -- nor me -- we don't care about Khartoum."

"You want to have room to live in: and somebody has to make room."

"But I don't want to live in the desert of Sahara -- do you?" she replied, laughing with antagonism.

"I don't -- but we've got to back up those who do."

"Why have we?"

"Where is the nation if we don't?"

"But we aren't the nation. There are heaps of other people who are the nation."

"They might say they weren't either."

"Well, if everybody said it, there wouldn't be a nation. But I should still be myself," she asserted brilliantly.

"You wouldn't be yourself if there were no nation."

"Why not?"

"Because you'd just be a prey to everybody and anybody."

"How a prey?"

"They'd come and take everything you'd got."

"Well, they couldn't take much even then. I don't care what they take. I'd rather have a robber who carried me off than a millionaire who gave me everything you can buy."

"...What do you fight for, really?"

"I would fight for the nation."

"For all that, you aren't the nation. What would you do for yourself?"

"I belong to the nation and must do my duty by the nation."

"But when it didn't need your services in particular -- when there is no fighting? What would you do then?"

He was irritated.

"I would do what everybody else does."

"What?"

"Nothing. I would be in readiness for when I was needed."

The answer came in exasperation.

"It seems to me," she answered, "as if you weren't anybody -- as if there weren't anybody there, where you are. Are you anybody, really? You seem like nothing to me." (pp. 308-9)

Skrebensky is no different than the loaders that Tom

Brangwen, jr. spoke of in Wiggiston. John Smith was a loader, a man who was his job, not a whole man with wide ranging interests. These modern men -- the factory workers as well as the managers -- are "a meaningless lump -- a standing machine, a machine out of work" (p. 346) when they are not on the job. Skrebensky carries this same emptiness about him like a millstone. He exists theoretically only for the greatest good for the greatest number, and as Lawrence sees it, this makes it impossible for him to exist for himself.

Skrebensky, preparing to leave Ursula to fight in the Boer War, justifies himself.

What did a man matter personally? He was just a brick in the whole great social fabric, the nation, the modern humanity. His personal movements were small, and entirely subsidiary. The whole form must be ensured, not ruptured, for any personal reason whatsoever, since no personal reason could justify such a breaking. What did personal intimacy matter? One had to fill one's place in the whole, the great scheme of man's elaborate civilisation, that was all. The Whole mattered -- but the unit, the person, had no importance, except as he represented the Whole. (p. 326)

All this interaction takes place between the two before Ursula passes her sixteenth birthday. Yet even in this first encounter, the lines are laid down for their

subsequent meeting six years later. She is the moving, groping, becoming figure, the example of the individual who will not take refuge in the easy way, who will not give up the search. His life is elsewhere. It does not exist in interpersonal relationships. "... -- the centre of his life was not what she would have. She was different -- there was a breach between them. They were hostile worlds." (p. 329) Ursula represents the demands of the individual for fulfillment; Skrebensky represents the demands of society. Somehow these two demands, Lawrence shows us, have become inimical. They are now two disparate forces which can no longer harmonize. Within the context of modern society, Ursula finds she cannot find expression of herself.

After Skrebensky departs for the war, Ursula tries to find herself within the scope offered to her by modern times. Women are now free to leave the home, to earn their livings, to be free of the old familial responsibilities that have encumbered woman's progress for centuries. She prepares to face the man's world. In Ursula, Lawrence traces the development of the modern woman.

Ursula's education in this respect is furthered by a close intimacy with her school mistress, Winifred Inger, a fully developed example of the modern woman. In private talks, the two women dispose of traditional philosophy and religion, citing the ancient super-

stitutions which have now been disproved by modern scientific rationalism. Winifred Inger introduces Ursula to her circle of intellectual avant-garde friends and for a time Ursula is swept up in the excitement of their talk. But when she introduces Winifred to her uncle Tom, the mine manager, she sees in them a similar characteristic. They both "worshipped the impure abstraction, the mechanisms of matter." (p. 349) It is the great death wish of modern society -- to deaden the feelings, to achieve the numbness of numbers. Only in the machine, Winifred recognizes about herself, "was she free from the clog and degradation of human feeling." (p. 349)

Here Lawrence attacks the faith in science and rationalism by showing the terrible effects upon Tom and Winifred. But this does not mean that Lawrence wants to uphold the opposite extreme as the correct course either. Ursula, his spokeswoman, his seeker after the rainbow, has expressed her disgust with her mother's animality, the submergence in a sensual life of child bearing, household tasks, and gossip. Later in the book she meets an extremely attractive young man, Anthony Schofield, who is reminiscent of George in The White Peacock. He is a vigorous happy animal. But when he asks her to marry him, Ursula refuses.

She turned away, she
turned round from him, and
saw the east flushed strangely
rose, the moon coming yellow
and lovely upon a rosy sky,
above the darkening, bluish

snow. All this so beautiful, all this so lovely! He did not see it. He was one with it. But she saw it, and was one with it. Her seeing separated them infinitely. (pp. 416-7)

Anthony does not have the bi-polar internal reality which Ursula has: the desire for the rational and the irrational, the particular and the infinite. He was an animal. "He had no soul," Ursula realized. What she wants, the answer she seeks must lie somewhere between the two extremes -- the abstraction, the pure mind of Tom and Winifred and the pure physicality, the pure animal of Anthony or the later Anna. The rainbow and all that the symbol implies continues to be the touchstone of Ursula's sense of values.

Ursula passes her matriculation and looks for a job as a school teacher. As Lawrence traces Ursula's progress in achieving her goals -- the immediate ones of personal and economic independence -- he presents a devastating picture not only of modern education, but also of the process of dehumanization which takes place as an individual attempts to adjust to the limitations, the compartmentalizing effect of modern life.

The teachers to whom Ursula writes for references all praise her intention of joining the work force. Still filled with 19th century reverence for the ideal of progress, one tells her that her greatest satisfaction will be to help the great body of humanity move forward. This sounds like Skrebensky's self-justification

and it dismays Ursula. Another high school teacher tells her that economic freedom is the important one for the emancipation of women. But this also sounds "cold and dreary."

Nevertheless, Ursula secures a position as a teacher in a lower class grade school in nearby Nottingham. She becomes a commuter. None of the earlier Brangwens lived so far away from their jobs that they had to commute. This aspect of the modern world, the separation of "job" and "life," the suburban syndrome, Lawrence finds appalling.

Often, oh often the tram
seemed to stop, and wet,
cloaked people mounted and
sat mute and grey in stiff
rows opposite her, their
umbrellas between their
knees. The windows of the
tram grew more steamy, opaque.
She was shut in with these
unliving, spectral people.
Even yet it did not occur
to her that she was one of
them. The conductor came
down issuing tickets. Each
little ring of his clipper
sent a pang of dread through
her. But her ticket surely
was different from the rest.
(p. 368)

Even on her first trip to the school, Ursula feels compelled to assert her self, her difference, her uniqueness, in the face of the grim sameness which surrounds her.

One of Lawrence's consistent complaints against

modern society is its ugliness. The school is no exception.

She was walking down a small, mean, wet street, empty of people. The school squatted low within its railed, asphalt yard, that shone black with rain. The building was grimy, and horrible, dry plants were shadowily looking through the windows. (p. 369)

Lawrence objects to the separation of man and nature. And in the school, the weather doesn't exist.

In the gaslight and gloom and the narrowness of the room, all seemed unreal.

"Isn't it a nasty morning," she said.

"Yes," he said. "it's not much of weather.

But in here it seemed that neither morning nor weather really existed.

(p. 369)

The only connection with nature is the dried-out plants on the window sill. The process is emphasized in the following passage as Ursula travels to work leaving the country behind.

She came to school in the morning seeing the hawthorn flowers wet, the little, rosy grains swimming in a bowl of dew. The larks quivered their songs up into the new sunshine, and the country was so glad. It was a violation to plunge into the dust and greyness of the town.

(p. 408)

Ursula soon recognizes that the school is a prison for the teachers as well as the pupils.

This prison of a school was reality. Here, then, she would sit in state, the queen of scholars! Here she would realise her dream of being the beloved teacher bringing light and joy to her children! But the desks before her had an abstract angularity that bruised her sentiment and made her shrink. She winced, feeling she had been a fool in her anticipations. She had brought her feelings and her generosity to where neither generosity nor emotion were wanted. And already she felt rebuffed, troubled by the new atmosphere, out of place.

(p. 373)

The children enter in rows, marching. It is a reflection of society's need to make people conform, to stay in line; it is reminiscent of Skrebensky and the army. The loss of individuality. Here was Ursula, dreaming of offering her personal self to the children, when in reality they are a collective, inhuman thing. She has a class of sixty waiting for her commands.

A great dread of her task possessed her. She was Mr. Brunt, Miss Harby, Miss Schofield, all the school-teachers, drudging unwillingly at the graceless task of compelling many children into one disciplined, mechanical set, reducing the whole set to an automatic state of obedience and

attention, and then of
commanding their accept-
ance of various pieces
of knowledge. (p. 382)

The class must be welded into a machine and the teacher must become a driving machine in turn or else the whole system will not work. The process of education is guilty of using command and obedience to force unwanted bits of knowledge down the throats of the children.

The task of removing the self from her personality is difficult for Ursula, but through anguished effort, driven in her own way by the spectre of failure, she finally extinguishes her self. Ursula disappears and Miss Brangwen, Standard Five Teacher takes her place. Like the colliers in Wiggiston, she feels reduced to an abstraction. She is no longer a person; she is the job.

The frightening aspect of what occurs to men in modern society when they are not allowed to be whole men is most clearly seen in Lawrence's description of Mr. Harby, Ursula's head-master at the school. Lawrence catches the psychological reality, the frustration and hostility lurking behind the apparently calm surface of everyday life, when a man's basic nature is held down by the necessity of "earning a living."

Mr. Harby stood so strong,
and so male, with his black
brows and clear forehead,
the heavy jaw, the big over-
hanging moustache: such a
man, with strength and male

power, and a certain blind, native beauty. She might have liked him as a man. And here he stood in some other capacity, bullying over such a trifle as a boy's speaking out without permission. Yet he was not a little, fussy man. He seemed to have some cruel, stubborn, evil spirit, he was imprisoned in a task too small and petty for him, which yet, in a servile acquiescence, he would fulfil, because he had to earn his living. He had no finer control over himself, only this blind, dogged, wholesale will. He would keep the job going, since he must. And this job was to make the children spell the word "caution" correctly, and put a capital letter after a full-stop. So at this he hammered with his suppressed hatred, always suppressing himself, till he was beside himself. Ursula suffered, bitterly as her stood, short and handsome and powerful, teaching her class. It seemed such a miserable thing for him to be doing. He had a decent, powerful, rude soul. What did he care about the composition on "The Rabbit"? Yet his will kept him there before the class, threshing the trivial subject. It was habit with him now, to be so little and vulgar, out of place. She saw the shamefulness of his position, felt the fettered wickedness in him which would blaze out into evil rage in the long run,...

(p. 387)

Ursula, who has gone through the same process of reduction as Mr. Harby, laments to herself, "Oh, why, why, had she leagued herself to this evil system where she must brutalize herself to live?" (p. 405) She will escape the system eventually, but through her Lawrence has demonstrated what he feels happens to men in the modern world. Mr. Harby, Mr. Brunt, Skrebensky -- all have knuckled under to the brutalizing forces of modern society.

But again, though Lawrence here is merely concentrating on the world of education, he intends this example to stand for all men in modern society. It is just one more example in the wide range he touches upon: the collier, the mine manager, the school teacher, the army man. All the same, they are only half men -- or perhaps, hollow men. None of them seems to have the sense of self of the original Tom Brangwen. He is almost of heroic stature in comparison. These are lesser men cramped into small spaces from which they cannot escape, suffering from the frustrations of limitation, cut off from their basic natural instincts, their natural needs. And, as Lawrence points out, this produces a great deal of hostility which has to erupt somewhere.

The chief problem of these "half men" seems to be that they are not expressing themselves in a way

which is unique and individual. They all give up, like Skrebensky, the unique and individual in favor of the group and its demands. Will Brangwen, now getting on in years, still achieves some measure of personal growth after Ursula has gone on to teach. He is one of the few males in the last part of the book who is shown in a favorable light. But then it is obvious that he represents not the most contemporary generation of men, but a mid-point between Tom Brangwen and Anton Skrebensky.

For twenty years he
had gone on at this
office as a draughts-
man, doing work in
which he had no in-
terest, because it
seemed his allotted
work. The growing
up of his daughters,
their developing re-
jection of old forms
set him also free.
Slowly, blindly,
gropingly, with what
initiative was left
to him, he made his
way towards individ-
ual expression and
individual form.

(p. 354)

If Lawrence were working within the old mode of characterization, Ursula would have become a cynic by this time from the series of disillusionments she has experienced. But since the character is not set to begin with, it is flexible enough to flow, to continually reaffirm hope after despair, to revitalize

itself, over and over again. In a way it is the Phoenix symbol, Lawrence's personal favorite. There is always a death, but out of that death -- of the illusion or of the spirit -- a new illusion, a new hope arises. It is only in the light of this cycle that the last chapters of the book can be understood. For here, Ursula goes on to college with the very same hopes she had before entering Grammar school, the same quality of hope she had before she went into teaching. Again she will suffer disillusionment. Anton Skrebensky will return to her life and again he will seem to be capable of carrying her off, out and upward to that place she has been seeking. But he will fail her. He has not changed. One may ask, what is wrong with Ursula, why hasn't she learned her lesson? The answer to that question involves Lawrence's feeling that the key to life is the continual search, the continuous cycle. He will point to Skrebensky as the one who cannot go through the process and who therefore is as good as dead. Life for Lawrence is a never-ending dynamic movement, a fluctuating, alternating process of growth. It may be only an illusion that the grass is greener on the other side of the hill, but the act of believing in that illusion and making

the effort to move toward that greener grass characterizes the highest value Lawrence sees in life. The idea is basically romantic, stemming from the activism of Goethe's Faust. Life is the pursuit of the nameless spiritual something -- or it is mere motion. And as Lawrence describes Ursula's life in these terms, shows us her movement towards expression, he is also able to portray those elements of modern life which he sees as curbing and restraining this spiritual search.

And yet there seems to be an insistence on Ursula's experiences which harms the book as a whole. It is obviously important for Lawrence to spend most of his time on Ursula. Her relationship to the world is the closest to his own and to the audience for which the book was intended. She is the modern woman in the modern world. Through her Lawrence can criticize his contemporary milieu. Because he is not writing an historical novel, the sections on Tom Brangwen and Anna and Will must be shorter. These sections presumably serve as the backdrop for the present, Ursula's and Lawrence's present.

There are certain features about the first part of the book, however, which create a certain density that Ursula's section doesn't have. Her

life, spread over 236 pages of the 495, about one half of The Rainbow, is random and chaotic. Unlike the first two parts which are clearly defined in one area of human relationship -- courtship and marriage -- Ursula's section is only partially concerned with her emotional conflict with Skrebensky. She has to deal with education, the working woman, Christianity, Lesbianism, colonialism, mechanization, mining, and the Boer War. The very extensiveness of her experience weakens the narrative. It appears picaresque in comparison with the earlier parts.

The power and strength of the earlier sections is easily grasped when we think about the book as a whole. We remember sharply and clearly Tom and Lydia at the farm; we can picture the honeymoon of Anna and Will in their little cottage. The scene of Tom Brangwen's death in the flood comes quickly to mind as does Anna and Will's visit to Lincoln Cathedral. Though these parts of the book take up far fewer pages, they are crammed with an emotional intensity and a sense of objective reality which Ursula's portion lacks.

For example, though Lawrence has said nearly everything necessary to show his attitude toward Christianity in the Anna and Will section, he has Ursula

as a child and as an adolescent go through scenes of involvement with religion which seem to reveal the same attitude. They offer nothing striking or new because she goes through the process alone; there is no drama. The loss of belief in Will, however, is brought about by an interaction between two people in a vital battle of wills. There is an emotional tautness in that episode which is not present in Ursula's slowly unfolding disbelief. Will's involvement in religion brings on a crisis situation; Ursula's never does.

Though Lawrence carries out the idea of cyclic flow in his characterization of Ursula, the last chapters of the book suffer for it. Because the scenes change so often and because there are so many things that must be covered, there is a thinness to this part of the book as well as a sense of repetition. The mode of characterization often seems like a convenient device upon which to turn the plot so that more subjects of social criticism can be covered.

Having fully documented Ursula's experiences as a student in Grammar school and as a teacher in Elementary school, Lawrence might conceivably have kept Ursula from entering college. Yet he has some things to say about higher education and so she must move on.

When Ursula first goes to college, she views it

as a temple of learning. In her mind are visions of the Medieval University; the professors are priests of knowledge. But this illusion is slowly dispelled and she is full of despair.

This was only a little side-show to the factories of the town. Gradually the perception stole into her. This was no religious retreat, no perception of pure learning. It was a little apprentice-shop where one was further equipped for making money. The college itself was a little, slovenly laboratory for the factory.

A harsh and ugly disillusion came over her again, the same darkness and bitter gloom from which she was never safe now, the realisation of the permanent substratum of ugliness under everything. (p. 435)

Ursula asks herself, is this all that life has to offer? "Everything went to produce vulgar things, to encumber material life." (p. 436) And she knows, at least for the moment, that her needs are not merely material. They are not spiritual in the accepted theological sense either. She is searching for herself, but "that which she was, positively, was dark and unrevealed, it could not come forth." (p. 437) Ursula recalls her past, the many bright and shining doorways which led only

into another ugly yard, dirty and active and dead. Always the crest of the hill gleaming ahead under heaven: and then, from the top of the hill only another sordid valley full of amorphous, squalid activity.

No matter! Every hill-

top was a little different, every valley was somehow new. Cossethay and her childhood with her father; the Marsh and the little Church school near the Marsh, and her grandmother and her uncles; the High School at Nottingham and Anton Skrebensky; Anton Skrebensky and the dance in the moonlight between the fires; then the time she could not think of without being blasted, Winifred Inger, and the months before becoming a school-teacher; then the horrors of Brinsley Street, lapsing into comparative peacefulness, Maggie, and Maggie's brother, whose influence she could still feel in her veins, when she conjured him up; then college, and Dorothy Russell, who was now in France, then the next move into the world again!

(pp. 436-7)

Thus, it is not with much surprise that we see Ursula welcome Skrebensky back into her life six years after their first meeting. She is feeling extremely low and he appears to be another one of those hills from the top of which she will, perhaps, this time see something more than the usual squalid activity. But when she first hears from him, "the chief effect was pain." (p. 439) The old knowledge that they were two different worlds

has not left her. But Lawrence demonstrates in Ursula's behavior one of his favorite dichotomies. She has two reactions: the mental versus the emotional. Her will seizes upon Skrebensky. He is to be her lover. It is the same sort of effort that Ursula was required to make to succeed as a teacher; the same effort that keeps Mr. Harby in his position. The will has to beat down the natural impulses, the impulses to tenderness and love, as well as the impulses to hate and destroy.

She knew a great difference in him. The kinship was there, the old kinship, but he had belonged to a different world from hers. It was as if they had cried a state of truce between him and her, and in this truce they had met. She knew, vaguely, in the first minute, that they were enemies come together in a truce. Every movement and word of his was alien to her being. (p. 442)

Skrebensky is like the school, something hard and rigid that demands hardness and rigidity in return. He is like the hard, rigid mechanisms of Twentieth Century life.

The same iron rigidity, as if the world were made of steel, possessed her again. It was no use turning with flesh and blood to this arrangement of forged metal.
(p. 443)

It is almost as if Ursula were getting back at the school, paying back this man for what the man's world

has done to her. In a way she is using the tactics which she learned there. It was the school which taught her that there is a certain pleasure in subduing the natural spontaneous reactions, and so she closes off her heart and soul's reaction to Skrebensky, insists on having her will with him and leads him to a fall. For in the end she has to accept her real feelings about him.

Lawrence obviously uses Ursula and Skrebensky's relationship at this point in the book to further his social criticism. Skrebensky's character as society's man, previously sketched in outline, is filled in now with copious detail. But if the actions of the novel are to appear plausible in their own terms, Ursula must have a reason for her involvement with Skrebensky.

We have already mentioned his arrival at a particularly low point in Ursula's cycle. There is also the flux of emotions which underlies all of Ursula's conscious existence, her formative experiences as a school teacher and the resultant development of her will. But the most logical answer is the one which Ursula gives us.

It had been decided in her
long ago, when he had kissed
her first. He was her lover,
though good and evil should
cease. Her will never re-
laxed, though her heart and
soul must be imprisoned
and silenced. (p. 444)

Ursula wants to enter into the darkness, the full sexual

relationship. She has to experience for herself the sense of animal fecundity which she has often criticized in her mother in order that she may understand it. But even as Skrebensky gives her entrance to that dark world, he expresses the desire to tame it. He speaks of the darkness of the nights in Africa and how frightening they are. He is the bearer of civilization's light to the underdeveloped regions of Africa and India.

For the moment, however, Skrebensky is a part of the animal, the non-social world. He has returned to Nottingham on leave and has six months before his next assignment to India in which to do as he pleases. He pleases to throw off the uniform of his role as a servant of society.

He had no longer any necessity to take part in the performing tricks of the rest. He had discovered the clue to himself, he had escaped from the show, like a wild beast escaped straight back into its jungle. (p. 449)

And yet time and again, as his leave approaches its end, he reminds us of his ties with the world. He recognizes that his affair with Ursula is only an interlude, a small interruption of the basic pattern of his life.

To make public their connection would be to put it in range with all the things which nullified him, and from which he was for the moment entirely dissociated. If he married he would have to as-

sume his social self, And the thought of assuming his social self made him at once diffident and abstract. If she were his social wife, if she were part of that complication of dead reality, then what had his under-life to do with her? One's social wife was almost a material symbol. Whereas now she was something more vivid to him than anything in conventional life could be. She gave the complete lie to all conventional life, he and she stood together, dark, fluid, infinitely potent, giving the living lie to the dead whole which contained them.

(p. 453)

Skrebensky cannot escape the fact that he is of the ruling class, that he is going to India to keep up the "better idea of the state." He is thoroughly conventional in that he must accept the definition of a wife which his social position dictates. He is not strong enough to forge an individual relationship, unique and personal, within the confines of the social structure.

It is important to point out that throughout this last part of The Rainbow, Lawrence has avoided the obvious pitfall of intruding with his own voice. Though there are exceptions -- Ursula's strange moods with Skrebensky, her mystical experience while looking through the microscope, her romantic desire to "become a strong mound smooth under the sky" (p. 463) so that she might have intercourse with the sky -- they are relatively controlled. Lawrence was fortunate in choosing a woman for his key character. The romantic longings and spirit-

ual desires, the choked-up vagueness and occasional hysteria seem more appropriate to a woman like Ursula than to other characters who appear in subsequent books. In The Rainbow Lawrence himself is present, but muted. When he wants hysteria he allows a character to express it as Ursula does in the following argument with Skrebensky, in which she exposes his position and expresses Lawrence's criticism of colonialism, capitalism, and democracy.

Once she said, with heat:
 "I shall be glad to leave England. Everything is so meagre and paltry, it's so unspiritual -- I hate democracy."

He became angry to hear her talk like this, he did not know why. Somehow, he could not bear it, when she attacked things. It was as if she were attacking him.

"What do you mean?" he asked her, hostile. "Why do you hate democracy?"

"Only the greedy and ugly people come to the top in a democracy," she said, "because they're the only people who will push themselves there. Only degenerate races are democratic."

"What do you want then -- an aristocracy?" he asked, secretly moved. He always felt that by rights he belonged to the ruling aristocracy. Yet to hear her speak for his class pained him with a curious, painful pleasure. He felt he was acquiescing in something illegal, taking to himself some wrong, reprehensible advantages.

"I do want an aristocracy," she cried. "And I'd far rather have an aristocracy of birth than of money. Who are the aristocrats now -- who are chosen as the best to rule? Those who have money and the brains for money. It doesn't matter what else they have: but they must have money-brains, -- because they are ruling in the name of money."

"The people elect the government," he said.

"I know they do. But what are the people? Each one of them is a money-interest. I hate it, that anybody is my equal who has the same amount of money as I have. I know I am better than all of them. I hate them. They are not my equals. I hate equality on a money basis. It is the equality of dirt."

Her eyes blazed at him, he felt as if she wanted to destroy him. She had gripped him and was trying to break him. His anger sprang up, against her. At least he would fight for his existence with her. A hard, blind resistance possessed him.

"I don't care about money," he said, "neither do I want to put my finger in the pie. I am too sensitive about my finger."

"What is your finger to me?" she cried, in a passion. "You with your dainty fingers, and your going to India because you will be one of the somebodies there! It's a mere dodge, your going to India."

"In what way a dodge?" he cried, white with anger and fear.

"You think the Indians are simpler than us, and so you'll enjoy being near them and being a lord over them," she said.

"And you'll feel so righteous, governing them for their own good. Who are you, to feel righteous? What are you righteous about, in your governing? Your governing stinks. What do you govern for, but to make things there as dead and mean as they are here!"

"I don't feel righteous in the least," he said.

"Then what do you feel? It's all such a nothingness, what you feel and what you don't feel."

"What do you feel yourself?" he said. "Aren't you righteous in your own mind?"

"Yes, I am, because I'm against you, and all your old, dead things," she cried.

She seemed, with the last words, uttered in hard knowledge, to strike down the flag that he kept flying. He felt cut off at the knees, a figure made worthless.

(pp. 460-1)

It is very difficult in a passage like this one not to agree with Ursula's condemnation. It is delivered with an emotional intensity that tends to sweep all before it. Skrebensky, the character, hasn't a chance to defend his position with logic or reason even if Lawrence, the author, might have allowed that such a defense existed. Skrebensky is a straw figure for Lawrence's social criticism. But he is consistent as a character for he knows in himself that his way of life could not possibly satisfy Ursula's demands for spiritual fulfillment. As readers, however, we may question whether any form of life, including that of the early Brangwen's, could ever satisfy Ursula's needs.

Ursula sees England as a blind steam engine, going no where. And she weeps. But we know that Ursula opposes the squalid activity and that she will never give in to it. The real tragedy is that Skrebensky also sees the futility of the system he serves, but he cannot break from it.

He too realised what England would be in a few hours' time -- a blind, sordid, strenuous activity, all for nothing, fuming with dirty smoke, and running trains and groping in the bowels of the earth, all for nothing. A ghastliness came over him. (p. 465)

Skrebensky is able to escape his feeling of despair only in the "darkness" of his relationship with Ursula in which he doesn't have to think. He need only sink into the state of the "undifferentiated male"; his personality need not come into play. It is only when Ursula withdraws from him that he realizes that there is nothing of value in himself outside of the darkness of the sex relationship, that in the world in which he must live there is only sterility and death.

He was as if mad. The horror of the brick buildings, of the tram-car, of the ashen-grey people in the street made him reeling and blind as if drunk. He went mad. He had lived with her in a close, living, pulsing world, where everything pulsed with rich

being. Now he found himself struggling amid an ashen-dry, cold world of rigidity, dead walls and mechanical traffic; and creeping, spectre-like people. The life was extinct, only ash moved and stirred or stood rigid, there was a horrible, clattering activity, a rattle like the falling of dry slag, cold and sterile. It was as if the sunshine that fell were unnatural light exposing the ash of the town, as if the lights at night were the sinister gleam of decomposition.
(p. 456)

Though Ursula has withdrawn her support from Skrebensky on the emotional level, she is still faced with a choice. He wants to marry her now and take her with him to India almost in desperation. He feels her presence will save him from his sense of nothingness. Ursula knows this will not happen; it could never be the same married and living in India, but what else can she do.

She was now up against her own fate. It was for her to choose between Mrs. Skrebensky, even Baroness Skrebensky, wife of a lieutenant in the Royal Engineers, the Sappers, as he called them, living with the European population in India -- or being Ursula Brangwen, spinster, school-mistress.
(p. 474)

Both choices look equally grim; there seems to be no way out. It is a choice between two kinds of death.

She cannot make a positive decision. She only knows she can't go on with Skrebensky. They separate just before his departure for India.

Lawrence at this point in the novel appears to fall into difficulties. He has written nearly five hundred pages and traced the development of the impact of industrial society on three generations of Brangwens. His story obviously has no ending; there is no twist, no secret to unveil. But at the same time, the novel needs some kind of closing effect. Lawrence decides to make Ursula pregnant. Because he has throughout presented Ursula as a modern woman of keen intelligence, one who has participated in lively discussions of all the latest ideas, it seems somewhat surprising that she should find herself in such a predicament. Surely, somewhere in her education she must have come across information about birth control. We suspect at first -- probably because contraceptive devices are so common with us today -- that Lawrence is merely manipulating his story.

And yet, for a woman to become pregnant after a six month affair in the period of time before the first World War is not completely improbable, even though the risks were not mentioned in the book itself. It also forces Ursula to make her decision, her final decision about Skrebensky, from a new vantage point. Being

pregnant with his child is as good a justification as any to give up her search for self-development, to re-

treat into motherhood, just as her mother had done before her, to relax in indolent ease, at the same time congratulating herself for doing the socially correct thing. In remorse and humility, Ursula considers her life.

What did the self, the form of life matter? Only the living from day to day mattered, the beloved existence in the body, rich, peaceful, complete, with no beyond, no further trouble, no further complication. She had been wrong, she had been arrogant and wicked, wanting that other thing, that fantastic freedom, that illusory, conceited fulfilment which she had imagined she could not have with Skrebensky. Who was she to be wanting some fantastic fulfilment in her life? Was it not enough that she had her man, her children, her place of shelter under the sun? Was it not enough for her, as it had been enough for her mother? She would marry and love her husband and fill her place simply. That was the ideal. (pp. 483-4)

She leans towards acceptance of her biological role; she thinks she will give up the search.

During this whole last chapter, "The Rainbow," Lawrence has introduced a clumsy bit of dramatic irony. All the while that Ursula contemplates going out to join Skrebensky in India, to accept marriage and have his child, we know that he has married his Colonel's daughter. But since Ursula doesn't know this, it does not detract from the sincerity of her thought

about her choices. But it does not seem to serve any novelistic purpose either, for we know that if she chooses to go to India, it will be impossible in fact.

Nevertheless, she decides to do just that. She writes to Skrebensky asking him to take her back. She erroneously judges herself to be at the "depths of herself. This was her true self forever." (p. 485) But her "true" nature is not static. In a way, we know from what has come before that it can never stand still. After posting the letter, Ursula has a great feeling of peace. But it doesn't last long. She becomes aware of a gathering restiveness in her. It is as if her true nature, the moving, fluctuating, growing nature deep down within her, cannot be satisfied by any such patently simple answers as childbirth and motherhood.

And yet, how is this unconscious welling-up of the internal realities to make itself known? In one of his most powerful symbolic passages, Lawrence represents these inner forces as the horses which block Ursula's passage across the meadow. Feeling restless, she slips out of the house to walk in the October rain. Passing through the woods, she feels "splendid, free and chaotic." (p. 486) But at the same time she begins to panic.

She turned under the shelter
of the common, seeing the great

veils of rain swinging with slow, floating waves across the landscape. She was very wet and a long way from home, far enveloped in the rain and the waving landscape. She must beat her way back through all this fluctuation, back to stability and security. (p. 486)

She wants to get back to security and stability, the ordered world of man, the world of Skrebensky. She heads through the gathering downpour towards a gate in the high hedge where she could pass out into "the smaller, cultivated field, and so out to the highroad and the ordered world of man." (p. 488) But a knot of horses, barely visible in the gloom of the meadow, mass before her. They prevent her from going through that gate, from taking the ordinary path. The horses are powerfully described:

She went on, drawing near. She was aware of the great flash of hoofs, a bluish, iridescent flash surrounding a hollow of darkness. Large, large seemed the bluish, incandescent flash of the hoof-iron, large as a halo of lightning round the knotted darkness of the flanks. Like circles of lightning came the flash of hoofs from out of the powerful flanks. (p. 487)

This powerful energy of the horses is symbolically the deep powerful reserve of energy in Ursula, the energy which will not let her take the easy way out. She has

to climb over the hedge, she cannot use the gate.

Naturalistically, running about in the cold rain in terror can only lead to illness and in this case, miscarriage. She has thrown off entirely any possible connection with Skrebensky by losing the child. She is delirious for days, but as she begins to recover, she gains a feeling of a "dull firmness of being, a sense of permanency." (p. 490) With the loss of the child, she has thrown off the weight of Skrebensky's world, the aching, cramping bondage of his life. She also has the feeling that she has cast off her old selves and that she is ready to begin anew.

Watching from her window, the convalescent Ursula looks at the world with hope. She sees even in the degradation and ugliness of the present a possible foothold for one end of the rainbow.

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

church-tower standing up in hideous obsolescence above raw new houses on the crest of the hill, the amorphous, brittle, hard edged new houses from Lethley, the houses of Lethley advancing to mix with the houses of Hainor, a dry, brittle, terrible corruption spreading over the face of the land, and she was sick with a nausea so deep that she perished as she sat. And then, in the blowing clouds, she saw a band of faint iridescence colouring in faint colours a portion of the hill. And forgetting, startled, she looked for the hovering colour and saw a rainbow forming itself. In one place it gleamed fiercely, and, her heart anguished with hope, she sought the shadow of iris where the bow should be. Steadily the colour gathered, mysteriously, from nowhere, it took presence upon itself, there was a faint, vast rainbow. The arc bended and strengthened itself till it arched indomitable, making great architecture of light and colour and the space of heaven, its pedestals luminous in the corruption of new houses on the low hill, its arch the top of heaven.

(p. 494)

It is one of the last great outpourings of faith in humanity by Lawrence for a long time. He did not write in this manner again until the last years of his life when such works as Lady Chatterley's Lover and The Man Who Died display a renewal of this faith. The Rainbow, though filled with social criticism, is also shot through with the belief that man can and will change. In his later works Lawrence's view of the

future is dimmed by his personal experiences of frustration and suppression. But here he is still able to believe that through an awakening of the spirit, brought about by an increased awareness of the inadequacies of the modern industrial world, man might create a better life.

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

(p. 495)

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Footnotes: Chapter II.

¹D. H. Lawrence, The Rainbow (New York, 1966), pp. 47-8. All subsequent page references are to this Compass edition.

²The Collected Letters of D. H. Lawrence (New York, 1962), ed. Harry T. Moore, Vol. I., p. 193.

³Collected Letters, Vol. I., p. 282.

⁴Raymond Williams, Culture and Society (New York, 1959), p. 152.

III.

Kangaroo

In November 1915 the British authorities suppressed the publication of The Rainbow. A victim of war hysteria and the over-zealous sense of morality which was a by-product of war abroad, the book was labeled obscene. In addition to having his novel banned, Lawrence lived under the constant threat of harassment from the authorities because he was married to a German. The officials seemed convinced that he and Frieda were spies. The whole terrifying experience of the war years is related in what is perhaps the best and most moving chapter of Kangaroo.¹ This chapter, "Nightmare", goes a long way to explain why the series of novels written by Lawrence after the war -- the so-called "political" or "leadership"

novels: Aaron's Rod (1922), Kangaroo (1923), The Plumed Serpent (1926) -- display such unmitigated hostility to democracy.

It is apparent that Lawrence's attack on democracy stems directly from these personal experiences and not from a reasoned, arguable point of view. He desired revenge for the indignities he had suffered; he lashed out at the world, but failed to substantiate his criticism with completely credible examples. This obviously presents difficulties in assessing Lawrence's social criticism in this novel. If we hope to sympathize with or understand the points made in Kangaroo, if we are trying to find in Lawrence legitimate diagnoses of social problems, it will be difficult to do so under these circumstances. We have every right to expect an author who is concerned with social problems to analyze those problems from a broad base of common understanding. If he approaches the situation from a personal prejudice as Lawrence seems to do in Kangaroo, we must ask if the conclusions he has drawn and the solutions he implies are valid for society as a whole or merely for the author himself. In this novel Lawrence fails in his task of communicating to the reader the precise nature of society's ills, because he is speaking mostly from a personal bias.

There are some aspects of the social criticism in this book, however, that go beyond the personal. One can surely appreciate Lawrence's depiction of the

psychological effects of the war on Jack Callcott. Callcott had learned to kill and found he enjoyed it. Lawrence's characterization of Callcott is an implicit criticism of war. There are enough examples of social criticism presented in this fashion -- social judgments objectified in description, character, or narrative -- to make the novel worthy of careful study.

There are three main themes of social criticism in Kangaroo, none of them fundamentally new with Lawrence, but in this work given prime importance. Richard Lovat Somers, as Lawrence's spokesman, is critical of democracy, the Christian love ethic, and the possibilities of meaningful action in the world of politics. All of these themes are inter-related; Somers' negative attitude is supposedly justified by his experiences during the war and his observations of the post-war world. His experiences have sufficiently changed his vision of life. Lawrence gropes tentatively for an alternative to the present system but the important aspect of the book is Lawrence's criticism of the basic underlying assumptions of Western culture: the ideal of equality, the ideal of self-sacrificing love, the ideal of political action as a means of bettering man's condition. Nevertheless, his implied solutions in a novel so obviously concerned with social criticism must be taken into consideration.

The chapter "Nightmare" is an accurate, moving depiction of Somers' war time experiences, rich in de-

tail, situation, and dialogue. Lawrence points out most forcibly the horrible effects of the war on those who stayed at home. His implication is that the corrosive effect on the people at home, turning normal, friendly human beings into monsters of suspicion and hate, was the worst part of the war. The chapter containing the war experiences is a flashback to the action of the story in Kangaroo, yet it is seminal to the structure of the ideas and themes which comprise the book.

"Nightmare", which stands out from the rest of the material in the quality of its writing and the unity of its construction, could be taken independently as a short story. Every action that Somers takes in Kangaroo, from leaving Europe to arriving in Sydney, every judgment he makes about the Australians and their political schemes, is derived from the experiences related in this chapter.

But as John Harrison points out in The Reactionaries, the actual situations presented in "Nightmare" do not give Somers a claim to moral superiority.² Nor do the experiences in Lawrence's life necessarily make valid all the criticisms of democracy in Kangaroo. It may well be that there is something terrible in the effects the war had on the people of England, but it can not be proved that these effects are due entirely to the political system. In fact Lawrence would have probably been treated in much the same way had he been living on the coast of Germany under the non-democratic

regime of Kaiser Wilhelm during the war.

Unquestionably Somers' antagonism towards democracy stems mainly from his experiences in Cornwall when he and Harriet were hounded, without any evidence, as German spies. Yet there are other reasons which are hinted at in the chapter, which would apply to Lawrence as well as to Somers. One cannot help but notice the emphasis placed on the physical examinations. Was this merely some kind of Puritan squeamishness about the body? Or has Somers transposed the real reason for his hatred of the authorities to something other than the actual cause? Lawrence goes out of his way in the chapter to say that he is not condemning the war itself. Somers says: "Yet he had no conscientious objection to war." (p. 216) What Somers doesn't like is the war spirit -- "the vast mob-spirit, which he could never acquiesce in." (p. 216) We cannot help but see this as a partial reflection of Lawrence's antagonism towards the authorities who suppressed The Rainbow in November of 1915. This is even more evident on the following page where Somers mentions the "humiliation" he had suffered "trying to earn a living." Significantly enough, Lawrence says:

It was in 1915 the old world ended. In the winter 1915-1916 the spirit of the old London collapsed; the city, in some way,

perished, perished from
 being a heart of the
 world, and became a
 vortex of broken passions,
 lusts, hopes, fears, and
 horrors. The integrity
 of London collapsed, and
 the genuine debasement
 began, the unspeakable
 haseness of the press
 and the public voice,
 the reign of that bloated
 ignominy, John Bull.
 (p. 220)

Somers was a writer, but the actual sources of the "humiliation" connected with his "earning a living" are not specified in the novel. His anger is vaguely wrapped up in vehemence against bureaucratic forces in general and the induction examinations in particular. In a blind desire to strike back at the war-spirit and the vast mob, Somers, like Lawrence, identifies this spirit with industrialism, commercialism, patriotism, and democracy. There may truly have been a connection between these elements in England during the First World War, but merely by substituting "Prussianism" for "democracy" almost the same thing could be said about Germany. Lawrence has wrapped everything up in one bundle and asserted guilt by association. He has taken a particular antagonism towards a cultural reality -- censorship of literature -- and attached it to the whole socio-economic-political whole of which it is only a part. ~~██████~~

~~There is a case of poor judgment.~~

Indeed, Somers shows a similar lack of clear thought. He is so incensed at the industrial, patriotic, democratic complex that he says:

How had they tried, with
their beastly industrial
self-righteousness, to
humiliate him as a separate,
single man? They wanted to bring him to heel even more than the German militarist did. And if a man is to be brought to any heel, better a spurred heel than the heel of a Jewish financier. (p. 217)

But neither Somers nor Lawrence explains why it would be better to be brought to heel by a militarist than a financier. After our knowledge of Hitler, it would be impossible to agree with Somers' statement. In fact, we have every reason to suspect that in a democracy there is a greater possibility of preserving the "separate, single" self so dear to Somers and to Lawrence. Lawrence's inability to straighten out the paradox of his desires -- he wants both the fully realized individual and the autocratic state at the same time -- weakens the effect of the social criticism in Kangaroo.

Though probably the best of the three novels of this period, Kangaroo is marred by other, more obvious flaws. There is a lack of consistent tone,

there are many repetitions, and there is a lot of talk about the "Dark Gods" which gives the impression that Lawrence was tired of the tale and looking forward to the next book, The Plumed Serpent, in which the idea of a resurgence of primitive religion is thoroughly explored. In addition there are many sections which move so far away from the thread of the narrative that they must be called essays. At times they amplify the point Lawrence is trying to make, but far more frequently they serve to show how much better, how more sound and convincing he can be when he is presenting his view through the novelistic techniques at his disposal than when he is writing pure essays. Not only are the essay-like sections often dull and repetitious, but they tend to stand out from the texture of the novel as extraneous material.

For example, following the chapter "Nightmare", Lawrence inserts a chapter called "'Revenge!' Timotheus Cries" which is merely a recapitulation in essay form of the ideas in "Nightmare". Lawrence has to get three-fourths of the way through the chapter before he returns to the characters of the novel. To be sure, the chapter is ostensibly the thought process of the main character, Richard Lovat Somers, and there are points of reference which link the chapter with the rest of the

book. In contrast to the narrative passages of the previous chapter, however, this chapter seems lifeless. This is not to say that pages of exposition can not have a place in novels. But they must be integrated into the framework of the book. For the most part Lawrence has failed to perform this necessary operation in Kangaroo and he is aware of this fact.

Lawrence's curiously old-fashioned use of the omniscient narrator who casually addresses the reader from time to time betrays his doubts about the efficacy of the interpolations. Following a rather long presentation of Somers' vacillating thought processes, Lawrence feels impelled to apologize for not sticking to the narrative.

Now a novel is supposed
to be a mere record of
emotion-adventures, floundering in feelings. We insist that a novel is, or should be, also a thought-adventure, if it is to be anything at all complete.
(p. 285)

He does the same thing later in an author's aside, again in reference to one of the many long reflective passages of R.L. Somers:

He preached, and the record
was taken down for this
gramophone of a novel. (p. 286)

It is as though Lawrence is aware of the main fault of his own work: the didactic essays are not

sufficiently integral with the force and movement of the narrative. He knows he is telling us how things ought to be and now^t showing us how they really are.

And yet with all the faults, Kangaroo remains an achievement. Lawrence's ability to depict the actuality of a particular place and a particular time is displayed with force as he portrays Australia in the early Twenties. He is able to capture the ambience created by climate and terrain which is peculiarly Australia. ³

At the beginning of the story, Richard Lovat Somers and his wife Harriet arrive in Sydney from Western Australia. They had left Europe because it was "done for, played out, finished." Traveling by way of India, they had spent some time in Adelaide and Melbourne. It was there on one moonlit evening, walking out in the bush, that Somers had felt the "spirit of the place."

But the horrid thing in the bush! He schemed as to what it would be. It must be the spirit of the place. Something fully evoked tonight, perhaps provoked, by that unnatural West-Australia moon. Provoked by the moon, the roused spirit of the bush. He felt it was watching, and waiting. Following with certainty, just behind his back. It might have reached a long black arm and gripped him. But no, it wanted to wait. It was not tired of watching its victim. An alien people -- a victim. It was biding its time with a terrible ageless watchfulness, waiting for a far-off end, watching the myriad

intruding white men. (p. 9)

Somers feels uncomfortable in Australia. He wants very much to return to Europe. He compares Sydney with London to the benefit of the capitol of the Empire.

The train ran for a long time through Sydney, or the endless outsides of Sydney. The town took almost as much leaving as London does. But it was different. Instead of solid rows of houses, solid streets like London, it was mostly innumerable detached bungalows and cottages, spreading for great distances, scattering over hills, low hills and shallow inclines. And then waste marshy places, and old iron, and abortive corrugated iron "works" -- all like the Last Day of creation, instead of a new country. (p. 73)

Later, however, Somers fluctuating in his allegiance, learns to love the rickety, unstructured fag ends of town.

"I like it," said Harriet.
 "It doesn't feel finished."
 "Not even begun," he laughed.
 But he liked it too: even the slumminess of some of the bungalows inside their wooden palings, drab-wood, decrepit houses, old tins, broken pots, a greeny-white pony reminding one of a mildewed old shoe, two half-naked babies sitting like bits of live refuse in the dirt, but with bonny, healthy bare legs: the awful place called "The Travellers' Rest -- Mrs. Cuddy's Boarding House" -- a sort of blind, squalid, corner-building made of wood and tin, with flat

pieces of old lace-curtain
nailed inside the windows,
and the green blinds hermetically drawn. What must it have been like inside? Then an open space, and coral trees bristling with red crest-flowers on their bare, cold boughs: and the hollow space of the open country, and the marvellous blue hills of the distance.
(pp. 278-9)

The descriptions of the surroundings are most effective when they are integrally related to the characteristic qualities of the people. Because the predominant tone of Australia is democratic, out-going, and tolerant, the buildings are low to the ground.

"In Rome," said Somers, "they piled up huge houses, vast, and stowed them away like grubs in a honeycomb."

"Who did the stowing?" asked Jack sarcastically.

"We don't like to have anybody overhead here," said Kangaroo. "We don't even care to go upstairs, because we are then one storey higher than our true, ground-floor selves." (p. 107)

Even the lay-out of small towns and villages reflects this life style.

Murdoch Street was an old sort of suburb, little squat bungalows with corrugated iron roofs, painted red. Each little bungalow was set in its own handbreadth of ground, surrounded by a little wooden palisade fence. And there went the long street, like

a child's drawing, the
 little square bungalows
 dot-dot-dot, close to-
 gether and yet apart,
 like modern democracy,
 each one fenced round
 with a square rail fence.

(p. 5)

Every man's house is his castle in the new equality of Australia. But there is no sense of community. Everything is split, separate, individual. It is the logical end of the process which destroyed the communal life available to the early Brangwens in The Rainbow.

Somers sees the Australians as outer-directed people. They have no inward life, no sense of the inner soul. This is reflected in what they read.

"But," said Somers, as he
 and Harriet went off with a
 Mary E. Mann and a George A.
 Birmingham, "I don't wonder
 they can't read English
 books, or only want Nat Gould.
 All the scruples and the em-
 otions and the regrets in
 English novels do seem a waste
 of time out here."

"I suppose," said Harriet,
 "if you don't have any inside
 life of your own it must seem
 a waste of time." (p. 193)

Like Australia itself which has little or no settlement in its monstrous center, civilization existing only on the outer edge of the continent near the sea, its people live only on the outside, only on the surface. In a brilliant choice of image, Somers compares the people and the life of Sydney to a baked apple, all soft on the

inside.

Richard bought himself a big, knobbly, green, soft-crusted apple, at a Chinese shop, and a pretty mother-of-pearl spoon to eat it with. The queer Chinese, with their gabbling-gobbling way of speaking -- were they parasites too? A strange, strange world. He took himself off to the gardens to eat his custard apple -- a pudding inside a knobbly green skin -- and to relax into the magic ease of the afternoon. The warm sun, the big, blue harbour with its hidden bays, the palm trees, the ferry-steamers sliding flatly, the perky birds, the inevitable shabby-looking, loafing sort of men strolling across the green slopes, past the red poinsetta bush, under the big flame tree, under the blue, blue sky -- Australian Sydney, with a magic like sleep, like sweet, soft sleep -- a vast, endless, sun-hot, afternoon sleep with the world a mirage. He could taste it all in the soft, sweet, creamy custard apple. A wonderful sweet place to drift in. (pp. 313-4)

There are many passages such as this in which Lawrence makes Australia come alive. He is constantly demonstrating through description and dialogue the connection between the land and the people.

After seeing how well Lawrence establishes this connection, it is disappointing to note how easily he forgets it. If the people are what they are because they live in Australia, then the political forms should follow suit. And the political "fable" -- Somers' in-

volvement with the benevolent fascism of Kangaroo and the communistic socialism of Willie Struthers -- is definitely not Australian. As Richard Aldington suggests in his introduction to Kangaroo, Lawrence has superimposed upon the Australian setting of this novel what he knew of Italian politics during his short stay there in the early Twenties. (p. ix)

During his stay in Italy (1920-22), Lawrence witnessed the conflict between the socialists and the fascists. Scenes of political unrest evident in Italy at the time were inserted in Aaron's Rod (1922), although the theme of practical political activity is not an important structural element in that novel. The political scenes serve as a back drop for the exploration of the problems of personal power. By the time Lawrence reached Australia, however, he was deeply interested in conveying his thoughts and judgements about involvement in the practical politics of his time. Yet he was in Australia ^{being} influenced by the spirit of the land and the people which ^{necessarily} motivated the writing of an Australian novel. The two interests -- thoughts about European politics and Australia's presence -- combine to shape Kangaroo. Though historically inappropriate, this blend could be made to work in imaginative terms, but there seems to be a conflict in the novel between the indigenous Australian mat-

erial and the European political material. As Keith Sagar points out, "the political scheme could have given Aaron's Rod a backbone, in a European setting." ⁴ But projected onto Australian life it creates problems of credibility. It does not seem to fit the Australian society which is so convincingly portrayed.

Perhaps it is necessary that a country must have a tradition of autocratic authority, preferably going back in an unbroken line to the Middle Ages, to supply the necessary background ~~the~~^{of} feelings for the existence of strong mass support for either communism or fascism. Italy and Spain had the Catholic church, Germany Prussian barons, and Russia the Czars. But Lawrence has repeatedly emphasized the lack of this sense of traditional authority in Australia.

This is ~~another~~^{an} example of muddled thinking and it has the effect of weakening much of the criticism Lawrence makes of Australian democracy. He wants us to believe that it is the vagueness, the lack of direction of that political system which produced the movements headed by Kangaroo and Willie Struthers. They presumably arise to fill the vacuum created by democracy's lack of strong leadership. Then, when he criticizes and finally rejects these movements for what they are, we are to understand that he is also

criticizing the ground from which they have sprung. But since these political movements did not actually gain a foothold on the same scale in countries like Australia, America, and England whose traditions of democracy extend back to the Magna Carta, the criticism of democracy per se as the spawning ground of fascism and bolshevism appears as a false analogy.

Because he could not help observing accurately, Lawrence has inadvertently presented the reader with some of democracy's good points. That is to say, if we look only at the Australian part of the novel and not at the super-imposed politics, Australian life is not all that bad. It may lack spiritual direction, but it has a large measure of tolerance. It may be littered with tin cans, but it is full of possibilities. The Australians do not need police or police state measures to keep things under control. They appear out-going, friendly, and helpful and completely lacking in social intrigue or deception. They are not suspicious, or stiff and formal like Somers. And these are all positive social values which Lawrence chooses not to recognize.

Lawrence's main concern in the novel, however, is the imposed political fable, not the actuality of Australian politics. Lawrence had a desperate need to fulfill what he called the "societal impulse." He wanted to help society, to change things for the better, yet

there seemed to be no room for the novelist to participate in real politics. Communism and fascism did not ordinarily seek out novelists to lead their movements; they wanted politicians and generals. Thwarted by the real world, Lawrence creates in Kangaroo two movements which correspond roughly to the communist and fascist political groups of his time: with one major exception. These groups seek out the artist -- in this case Richard Lovat Somers -- to be one of their front ranking leaders. But as though to punish these groups for their hostility in the real world to the artist as leader of men, Lawrence's fictional hero finds these groups woefully lacking. Because the real world politicians and revolutionaries have failed to take advantage of the talents of the artist, Lawrence can in the fictional world say, "Your groups are not really worth leading, anyway! Even if you were to ask me, I wouldn't join."

This is another example of Lawrence's personal vindictiveness. And it is this spite, this intense desire to attack things at any cost which so often blinds him to the real deficiencies of such systems as communism or fascism. The reasons why Somers rejects the offers made by Kangaroo and Struthers are important. If the rejection is based on real flaws in the social programs of the groups or their methods,

then we will have good social criticism. If the rejection occurs on personal or non-objective, theoretical grounds, then the social criticism will be less than useful. In this novel the latter appears to be the case.

Then the question must be asked, "What about the novel as a novel? Are there sufficient grounds to accept Somers' motivations for rejection as a character involved in a real situation or does the fable interfere with the narrative?" As mentioned before, the narrative is often lost sight of when Somers has a "thought adventure." Since these thought adventures are most often connected with the fable and not with the situations existing between recognizable people in recognizable circumstances, the only conclusion is that the fable interferes with the novel as a novel. In this book Lawrence has not grafted the two elements as well as he had in The Rainbow or even as he will in Lady Chatterley's Lover where the mixture of the fable and the real are more closely integrated.

The fable in Kangaroo, since it is so central, must be examined carefully. Somers, an outsider, a European writer with no roots in the land, is looked upon by the various factions in Australia as a man they need to help forward their causes. The possibilities of violent political overthrow create a heady atmosphere in which Somers yearns to take part. Yet he is ambivalent.

While talking to the Cornishman, Jaz, about the possibilities of changing the world by a revolution, he states his position:

"I know. Sometimes I feel I'd give anything, soul and body, for a smash up in this social-industrial world we're in. And I would. And then when I realise people -- just people -- the same people after it as before -- why, Jaz, then I don't care any more, and feel it's time to turn to the gods."
(p. 162)

Somers' feeling that nothing will change mankind is one of the chief threads of the story. On one hand Somers desires commitment, he wants to be a leader of men; on the other hand he wants to turn to the dark gods for a resurrection of some primordial religious spirit latent in man.

Somers' revelation of his apolitical position so early in the novel (the conversation with Jaz occurs even before he meets Ben Cooley, the leader of the Diggers) is a flaw in the construction of the novel. After all, if we know well in advance that Somers cannot possibly throw himself whole-heartedly into any political movement, there is a certain amount of suspense lost in having him go through all the conversations with Kangaroo and Willie Struthers in which they attempt to woo him to their movements. Lawrence never really abandons his treatment of character as a flexible, flowing reality, but where Ursula in The Rainbow seemed to be moving forward in

some kind of progression, Somers appears to be going around in circles.

Somers is a complex individual who fluctuates from one position to another. He goes around and around in mental circles trying to understand himself, trying to find out what it is that makes him feel dissatisfied with the world, what it is he wants. But after a while, the reasoning process becomes repetitious and dull.

The following selections found throughout the book are examples of this tendency. In each case they are part of a thought passage which contrasts the desire to help men and the desire to leave them alone. The passages are long and eventually end up at the same spot: Somers' realization that he is a fool for wanting to enter the political arena.

These were his feelings now. Mankind! Ha, he turned his face to the centre of the seas, away from any land. The noise of waters, and dumbness like a fish. The cold, lovely silence, before crying and calling were invented. His tongue felt heavy in his mouth, as if it had relapsed away from speech altogether.

He did not care a straw what Kangaroo said or felt, or what anybody said or felt, even himself. (p. 124)

This first instance describes Somers' revulsion to the world of man. It clearly communicates his feelings. But the same idea appears again and again.

Why did the mass of people not want this stillness and this peace with their own being? Why did they want cinemas and excitements? Excitements are as nauseous as sea-sickness. Why does the world want them?

It is their problem. They must go their way. But some men, some women must stay by their own inmost being, in peace, and without envy. And there in the stillness listen, listen, and try to know, and try to obey. From the innermost, not from the outside. (pp. 156-7)

That was now all he wanted: to get clear. Not to save humanity or to help humanity or to have anything to do with humanity. No--no. Kangaroo had been his last embrace with humanity. Now, all he wanted was to cut himself clear. To be clear of humanity altogether, to be alone. To be clear of love, and pity, and hate. To be alone from it all. (p. 271)

Telepathy! Think of the marvellous vivid communication of the huge sperm whales. Huge, grand, phallic beasts! Bulls! Geldings! Men! R.L. wished he could take to the sea and be a whale, a great surge of living blood: away from these all-too-white people, who ought all to be called Cellu Lloyd, not only the horse-mange man. (p. 284)

"Let me get back to my own self," he panted, "hard and central in the centre of myself. I am drowning in this merge of harmlessness, this sympathetic humanity. Oh, for heaven's sake let me crawl out of the sympathetic

smear, and get myself clean again."

Back to his own centre -- back -- back. The inevitable recoil. (p. 285)

Indeed, the last two passages are taken from a thought adventure which lasts four pages in length.

Somers had come to Australia with high hopes that here in a new country, he would find something vital, something spiritually uplifting. It is a new continent, a new country. All the mistakes, the evils, the heavy weight of time honored traditions of Europe with which he had become so disgusted after his war experiences would no longer hang over him! But his first impression of the place is that there are not enough traditions, there is not enough stability, there are no "responsible" people.

In the first incident described in the book, Somers is overcharged by the taxi man. He makes a comment against the free country.

"He rooked me. But there you are, in a -- free country, it's the man who makes you pay who is free -- free to charge you what he likes, and you're forced to pay it. That's what freedom amounts to. They're free to charge, and you are forced to pay."
(p. 4)

If we take this as an instance of Lawrence's

social criticism, a statement about freedom, it seems pretty shallow. If we take it as shallow criticism by a pompous, stuffy character, a somewhat prissy European writer newly arrived in Australia, it could conceivably be a first step in delineating such a character. This brings up another of Lawrence's problems with this novel. Is Somers a character or is Somers Lawrence himself, thinly disguised? How do we take Somers' statements? Are they all definitive opinions of Lawrence himself or are they part of a characterization? It is almost impossible not to see Somers as Lawrence, and this forces us to conclude that Lawrence is a "pompous, stuffy, indignant, petulant fool."

This certainly goes a long way to make the reader unsympathetic to Somers' statements concerning social evils. It also makes the reader unsympathetic to Lawrence's points of view as expressed by Somers. The only things which relieve this reaction to Somers/Lawrence are Somers' frequent discoveries in his thought-adventurer life that he is a fool. In a way, through his treatment of Somers Lawrence is laughing at himself.

"I am a fool," said Richard Lovat, which was the most frequent discovery he made. It came, moreover, every time with a new shock of surprise

and chagrin. Every time he climbed a new mountain range and looked over, he saw, not only a new world, but a big anticipatory fool on this side of it, namely himself.
(p. 285)

This passage shows the change in tone which Lawrence has adopted since The Rainbow, a novel in which climbing each new mountain only meant optimistic delight for Ursula. For Somers it is not quite the same.

Harriet's role in the novel also displays Lawrence's sense of irony. She is often the voice of reality pulling Somers down off his messianic tower, bringing him up short in his enthusiasms for revolutions, power, brotherhood, and reminding him that he is frequently a pompous ass. When asked why he is finally leaving Australia, Somers replies:

"I don't know. I feel it's my fate to go now."
"Ha, your fate!" said Harriet.
"It's always your fate with you. If it was me it would be my foolish restlessness." (p. 293)

Harriet reminds Somers of his own words when he begins to churn himself up into a state where he can leap into the political arena.

"...Conservatives or bolshevists or Labour Party -- they're all alike: they all want to grab and have things in their clutches, and they're devilish with jealousy if they haven't got them. That's politics. You've said thousands of times that politics

are a game for the base people
with no human soul in them.
Thousands of times you've said
it. And yet now---" (p. 97)

She even accuses him of being just like all the others:
power mad.

"Am I disinterested?" he
asked.

"Not" -- she hesitated --
"not when you want just power."

"But I don't want just pow-
er. I only see that somebody
must have power, so those should
have it who don't want it sel-
fishly, and who have some natural
gift for it, and some reverence
for the sacredness of it."

"Ha! -- power! power! What
does it all mean, after all!
And especially in people like
Jack Callcott. Where does he
see any sacredness. He's a
sentimentalist, and as you say
yourself, nothing is sacred
then." (p. 98)

The tediousness of this novel is somewhat mitigated
by Lawrence's ability to see himself as Somers in an
ironical light. Harriet is the most convincing, real
character in the book and the scenes which take place
between her and Somers are often sharply defined, examples
of Lawrence's best writing. When he forgets his polemic
and concentrates on the characters and the situations
he makes real social criticism -- in this case satir-
izing the over-zealous, messianic individual who is merely
masking his desire for personal power under the guise
of aiding mankind. It is too bad that Lawrence did not
concentrate more on this aspect of the book.

Certain qualities which Ursula displayed in The Rainbow are present in Somers, but there is a deep and pervasive difference^{ce} in attitude caused by the war. As Somers says:

"Since the war burst my
bubble of humanity I'm a
pessimist, a black pessimist
about the present human
world." (p. 36)

What little tension exists in the novel arises not in the suspense of the plot, but in the vacillation Somers maintains between two poles of thought: (1) the idea that society can be helped through some sort of political action, that the world is worth saving and the possibility of saving it exists, and (2) the idea that there is nothing that can be done, that the best thing is to withdraw into the primordial past or else blow it all up. But because these two poles of thought are for the most part not embedded in the narrative action of the novel -- they are revealed in static conversations or long passages devoted to Somers' reflections -- the novel has little tension. The inner dynamics which made Ursula a forceful character are not present in Somers. Opposing ideas can only come to life in vigorous narrative; there is far too little of that in the novel.

Somers' vacillations not only demonstrate his ambivalent character, but also the inconsistency of Lawrence's position towards democracy. Comparing Australia

with England, Somers finds England more satisfactory.

Now Somers was English by blood and education, and though he had no antecedents whatsoever, yet he felt himself to be one of the responsible members of society, as contrasted with the innumerable irresponsible members. In old, cultured, eithical England this distinction is radical between the responsible members of society and the irresponsible. It is even a categorical distinction. It is a caste distinction, a distinction in the very being. It is the distinction between the proletariat and the ruling classes. (p. 16)

Lawrence indicates that there are no "ruling classes" in Australia and that this is a fault of democracy. What he fails to see or point out is that the England he prefers is not a feudal aristocracy. It is the middle class in Commons which rules, not merely the House of Lords. The average Englishman may have a sense of his place in society -- the Cockney would never place himself socially on a level with a baronet -- yet he considers himself "as good as any man" and a member of a democratic political system based on representational government.

To be accurate, Lawrence should direct his criticism, not at democracy in general, but at Australian democracy, if that is what he objects to. As the book progresses, however, he criticizes democracy no matter what form it takes, conveniently forgetting that he has

in effect praised English Constitutional rule. Lawrence's mistake is in not clearly defining the subject he wishes to attack; he does not make a distinction between political forms on the one hand and social and cultural patterns on the other.

"Somers was English by blood and education", but so are the Australians. Their political system is modeled on England's. The real difference between life in Australia and England lies not in the political system, but in the totally different approach to life necessitated by the conditions -- geographical, social, economic, etc. -- of the newer country. Again Lawrence with his understanding of the "spirit of place" should have recognized this.

Like many of the intellectuals of the 20's, Lawrence had serious doubts about the democratic process. Many intelligent people, both in and out of the arts, were dissatisfied with democratic governments. As John Harrison points out ⁵, nothing seemed to be getting done, nothing but interminable speeches. The real pressing social problems of post World War I Europe seemed unlikely to be solved by delegations and committees and senates and parliaments which could only argue and never agree on a course of action. Yeats, Eliot, Pound, and others looked toward some sort of autocratic and/or aristocratic form of government which would supply not only political direction, but also place an emphasis on the elevated role of the "artist" as one of the most important figures in

society. They associated democracy with the spread of low standards of literary taste which would eventually create a situation in which the artist would not receive the high level of respect he felt he deserved.

Though we can say that Lawrence's reaction to democracy was similar to that expressed by his contemporaries, this does not supply a thoroughly adequate explanation for the extensive, almost exhaustive criticism of democracy which appears in the "leadership" novels. Lawrence was deeply concerned with spiritual values, however, and he reacted strongly to what appeared to be a lack of such values in Australia or in any country which was "democratic." There seemed to be too much "freedom" and no one seemed to know what to do with it.

All the descriptions of Australia serve to emphasize this view. The tin cans strewn about, the ambling pattern of streets and houses, the people standing around watching sporting events. Random chances, no directions. Things, like Topsy, just grow. There is no inner meaning to it all. It just seems to go on.

But what then? The vacancy of this freedom is almost terrifying. In the openness and the freedom this new chaos, this litter of bungalows and tin cans scattered for miles and miles, this Englishness all crumpled out into formlessness and chaos. Even the heart of Sydney itself -- an imitation of London and New York, without any core or pith of meaning. Business going on full speed:

but only because it is the other end of English and American business.

The absence of any inner meaning: and at the same time the great sense of vacant spaces. The sense of irresponsible freedom. The sense of do-as-you-please liberty. And all utterly uninteresting. What is more hopelessly uninteresting than accomplished liberty? Great swarming, teeming Sydney flowing out into these myriads of bungalows, like shallow waters spreading, undyked. And what then? Nothing. No inner life, no high command, no interest in anything, finally. (pp. 21-2)

Lawrence later made the same objections to life in America and England. Too many people intent on going nowhere fast, motion and movement without direction. The "Flaming Youth" of the 20's in their mad rush for physical experiences were neglecting the search for spiritual values. Lawrence's whole being reacted violently against this. Everything was splitting apart, fragmenting, as each person used his new found "freedom" just to get his "kicks." Each individual moving farther and farther away from that sense of unity, of belonging to a community. How much freedom, how much liberty can an individual have before the society crumbles? If democracy aims at the maximum freedom for the individual, we can always ask: Freedom for what? It is one of the questions Lawrence asks in Kangaroo.

Somers senses the inherent lack of unity which an individualistic culture produces. Lawrence's picture of life in Australia, the description of the land and the people and the way in which they live, if nothing else, raises questions concerning a complacent acceptance of the ideals of "freedom" and "democracy." It is hard to read this book and not feel that Lawrence has indeed made some pertinent criticism of the quality of a life in which there is no unifying element to give meaning to existence.

Perhaps the yearning for some form, some way to give expression to the innate desire of men to join together in work, in mutual endeavor, is responsible for that aspect of Somers' character which drives him on to politics. There is, however, in Somers a split between the head and the heart, much as we have seen in Ursula. His head tells him to join in with Kangaroo and Jack Callcott. But his heart refuses to respond.

Somers was silent, very much impressed, though his heart felt heavy. Why did his heart feel so heavy? Politics -- conspiracy -- political power: it was all so alien to him. Somehow, in his soul he always meant something quite different, when he thought of action along with other men. Yet Australia, the wonderful, lonely Australia, with her seven million people only -- it might begin here. And the Australians, so queer, so abstract, as it were, leaving themselves out all the time -- they might be cap-

able of a beautiful unselfish
and steadfastness of purpose.
Only -- his heart refused to
respond. (p. 91)

It is fascinating to observe here that there is no dichotomy in the others about this joining together. Mutual needs, the love of one's mate, head and heart dedicated to conspiracy are the keynotes of Jack Callcott's character. Or Kangaroo's or Willie Struther's for that matter.

Lawrence's most perceptive point, however, in his examination of the two movements in Kangaroo is that both movements are still based upon the traditional dictates of Christian Love. Kangaroo is not really representative of fascism. In actuality he is thoroughly in line with the liberal, democratic traditions of Western Europe. And it is love for one's fellow man that underlies this humanist position.

Willie Struthers, the head of the communist labor group, is also a part of this tradition. He only wishes to redefine the particular source and quality of love.

That is, you can't hold together the friable mixture of modern mankind without a new cohesive principle, a new unifying passion.
(p. 200)

His new "cohesive principle" is the love of a man for his "mate," his co-worker in the factory. But, as Lawrence

points out, it is still Love, the same kind of self-negating, self-sacrificing love which Christ left as his most pernicious gift to mankind.

Carried to an extreme, the ideal of love as self-sacrifice can eliminate the individual self from the scheme of things. Lawrence's difficulties in coming to terms with his own feelings about this matter are a continual problem in Kangaroo. On the one hand he wants to establish some kind of community; he desires less fragmentation of life and more connection between people in society. At the same time he wants the greatest measure of opportunity for self-realization. These two ideas as extremes are irreconcilable. There must be some giving in on both sides. The individual must give up something to get the benefits of society and the society must provide room for individual expression to ensure its own progress. But Lawrence never takes up this problem in any comprehensive way in Kangaroo. Instead he has Somers rushing back and forth between the two poles of thought, rejecting the love ideal as it appears in Kangaroo and Willie Struthers, ostensibly because it suppresses individuality, and then offering in its place a vague sort of mystical power ideal which if realized in practical political terms would also have the effect of suppressing individuality.

Unless one were the individual at the apex of

such a system, it must go against one's sense of individuality to advocate it. When Lawrence discusses his version of mystic fascism, he undoubtedly sees himself at the top. He says as much in "Why the Novel Matters."

And being a novelist, I
consider myself superior to
the saint, the scientist, the
philosopher, and the poet,
who are all great masters of
different bits of man alive,
but never get the whole hog. 6

But merely claiming this sort of superiority for the novelist does not necessarily make it so. Granted that the novelist is most qualified to talk about "man alive" in novels, that there is a certain comprehensiveness found in novels that exists no where else, this still does not make the novelist a "leader of men" in the real world. For Lawrence to put forth as a real possibility a political system in which blood sacrifice would play a part is pernicious and demonstrates immediately the fallacy of his thesis. There is nothing in history or in literature to substantiate the claim that the novelist by virtue of his profession would make the best political leader.

Though often far from the mark when talking about himself and politics, Lawrence could be an accurate observer of the way people react to one another. He may have made an error in suggesting that any attempt to build a world or community order with Christian love at

its heart must result in failure. Nevertheless he can make clear in Kangaroo how "love" operates in real situations, as it appears between Harriet and Somers, as it flows from Ben Cooley, as it exists in Willie Struthers. Indeed Somers' rejection of Kangaroo's "love" illustrates many of the problems already mentioned concerning Lawrence's social criticism in this novel. When they first meet, Kangaroo tells Somers of his plan to seize power and rule the country in a benevolent tyranny.

"...I want to keep order. I want to remove physical misery as far as possible. That I am sure of. And that you can only do by exerting strong, just power from above. There I agree with you."
(p. 109)

In the next paragraph, Cooley tells Somers that he doesn't believe in education for the masses, that for the most part they don't need it and that it does more harm than good. One would think that Somers, speaking for Lawrence, would agree with Cooley's plans (indeed, later in the novel Somers develops his own ideas about the flow of power from above and frequently criticizes rationality as a hindrance to happiness); on the contrary, he is sceptical.

Cooley then recites his theories about the soul and man's deepest urges, which in syntax and rhythm sound exactly like Ursula or even like Somers when he is talking about obeying his inner gods, and yet Somers as Lawrence's spokesman is critical of the following which

sounds like good D.H. Lawrence philosophy.

"But most men bruise themselves to death trying to fight and overcome their own new, life-born needs, life's ever-strange new imperatives. The secret of all life is in obedience: obedience to the urge that arises in the soul, the urge that is life itself, urging us on to new gestures, new embraces, new emotions, new combinations, new creations. It is a subtle and conflicting urge away from the thing we are." (p. 110)

Kangaroo goes on to say that what man needs is a father, an authority figure.

"Man again needs a father -- not a friend or a brother sufferer, a suffering Saviour. Man needs a quiet, gentle father who uses his authority in the name of living life, and who is absolutely stern against anti-life." (pp. 110-1)

The emphasis on life as opposed to anti-life again sounds very similar to the statements of earlier Lawrencian heroes. Where then does Kangaroo go wrong? How is he able to sound like Lawrence without being applauded for his remarks? Perhaps it is in his attempt to take away from the individual the right of self-determination. As he says about man:

"And he needs to be relieved from this terrible responsibility of governing himself when he doesn't know what he wants and has no aim towards which to govern himself." (p. 110)

And though it may be true that the mass of men don't really want the responsibilities of choice, Lawrence prefers to see men take responsibility for their own lives. Here again is the paradox of Lawrence's contrary views. Somers at this point cringes at the idea of giving up any part of his right to govern himself, yet later he will consider as a possibility a rigid sort of ~~facism~~^{elitism} in which no one but the ultimate ruler will have that right.

Nevertheless, Somers cannot stop and rationally, intellectually reject Kangaroo's appeal. He cannot refuse him absolutely. Somers is torn between his desire to do something about the state of the world and his conviction that this is impossible, particularly in the form that Kangaroo offers.

Kangaroo wants Somers to join up with his group of "generous, passionate" men. But Kangaroo's judgement of his followers is not very accurate. His blinding desire to "love" everyone and everything in one overwhelming surge of emotion prevents him from accurately appraising even Jack Callcott, one of his lieutenants. Somers, however, discerns in Jack something more than a generous passionate nature. There appears on his face from time to time a look, a glow, a transport which is at once "exalted and dangerous." When he talks about the

possibility of a smash, a big blow-up, Jack's face takes on a "slight ecstasy." It is obviously the desire to vent his brutish instincts in violence. That same look appears on his face after the actual battle in which he brags about having killed someone in the brawl.

"Cripes, there's nothing bucks you up sometimes like killing a man -- nothing. You feel a perfect angel after it."

Richard felt the same torn feeling in his abdomen, and his eyes watched the other man.

"When it comes over you, you know, there's nothing else like it. I never knew, till the war. And I wouldn't believe it then, not for many a while. But it's there. Cripes, it's there right enough. Having a woman's something, isn't it? But it's a flea-bite, nothing, compared to killing your man when your blood comes up."

And his eyes glowed with exultant satisfaction.

(p. 326)

But Somers at the time that he is being wooed by Kangaroo to join the Diggers cannot possibly foresee this conclusion, although he does sense the same transport, the same urge to power in Kangaroo. The only difference between the two men is that Kangaroo has his rationale for his urge to dominate, he has his plans for the good of the people after the big smash, while Jack is in the game for the smash itself.

The suffocating quality of Kangaroo's love is graphically revealed to Somers in the scene in which Kangaroo, the big fat man with the long nose, looking ever so much like a real kangaroo, trying to stuff the world into his marsupial pocket to save it, to protect it, clasps Somers, the small, thin wiry man to his breast. Kangaroo pleads with Somers not to turn against him. He croons to the little man, "I love you so." But Somers reacts perversely.

In those few moments when he was clasped to the warm, passionate body of Kangaroo, Somers' mind flew with swift thought. "He doesn't love me," he thought to himself. "He just turns a great general emotion on me, like a tap. I feel as cold as steel, in his clasp -- and as separate. It is presumption, his loving me. If he was in any way really aware of me, he'd keep at the other end of the room, as if I was a dangerous little animal. He wouldn't be hugging me if I were a scorpion. And I am a scorpion. So why doesn't he know it. Damn his love. He wants to force me."

(p. 212)

Kangaroo's all-encompassing emotion is an insult to the personal, individual nature of man. There is an underlying attempt to coerce a response. Somers must love him. Everyone must love Kangaroo all of the time. He cannot accept the spontaneous flow of emotion which Somers

sees as the essential reality of human emotions. The ferocity which underlies Kangaroo's love is only too apparent in one of the final scenes of the novel. "Wounded in the riot, Kangaroo lies dying in a Sydney hospital. When Somers comes to visit him, Kangaroo holds him responsible for his death because he would not say, "I love you."

"Say you love me, Lovat," came the hoarse, penetrating whisper, seeming even more audible than a loud sound.

And again Lovat's face tightened with torture.

"I don't understand what you mean," he said with his lips.

"Say you love me." The pleading, penetrating whisper seemed to sound inside Somers' brain. He opened his mouth to say it. The sound "I ----" came out. Then he turned his face aside and remained open-mouthed, blank.

Kangaroo's fingers were clutching his wrist, the corpse-face was eagerly upturned to his. Somers was brought to by a sudden convulsive gripping of the fingers around his wrist. He looked down. And when he saw the eager, alert face, yellow, long, Jewish, and somehow ghoulish, he knew he could not say it. He didn't love Kangaroo.

"No," he said. "I can't say it."

"You are a little man, a little man, to have come and killed me," came the terrible, pathetic whisper. But Richard was afraid of the face, so he turned aside. He

thought in his mind, "I haven't killed him at all."

"No, I haven't killed you. I'm only awfully sorry--"

"You have! You have!" shouted Kangaroo, in the loud, bellowing voice that frightened Richard nearly out of the window. "Don't lie, you have ---"

(pp. 343-4)

Kangaroo tries desperately to force Somers to say the words or else be burdened with guilt. He cannot tolerate anyone resisting his love. If they do, they must be punished in some way.

What Lawrence shows extremely well in his entire depiction of the relationship between Kangaroo and Somers is the utter perverse form that love often takes. It is obvious that Kangaroo's love is an instrument of power which forces people to submit to his will.

Somers sees in the love expressed by Kangaroo an absolute, that great generalized emotion -- "I love humanity!" -- which can only end in disaster.

Human love, human trust, are always perilous, because they break down. The greater the love, the greater the trust, and the greater the peril, the greater the disaster. Because to place absolute trust on another human being is in itself a disaster, both ways, since each human being is a ship that must sail its own course, even if it go in company with another ship.

...Is love then just a horror in life?

Ah no. This individuality which each of us has got and which makes him a wayward, wilful, dangerous, untrustworthy quantity to every other individual, because every other individuality is bound to react at some time against every other individuality, without exception -- or else lose its own integrity; because of the inevitable necessity of each individual to react away from any other individual, at certain times, human love is truly a relative thing, not an absolute. It cannot be absolute.

(p. 201)

Thus Somers must reject Kangaroo's position because the underlying assumption is that love is an absolute, an absolute power which will cure the world of all its troubles. As Lawrence recognizes and demonstrates in his characters, even here in Somers, there takes place continually in a person an ebb and flow of like and dislike, of love and hate. Love is a part of life, but when it becomes a ruling absolute, an ideal, Lawrence sees it as anti-life, primarily because the Ideal of Love does not allow room for the expression of hostility which is also a part of life.

Willie Struthers' Communist-like labor group

seems to Somers infinitely preferable to Kangaroo's organization.

"Bolshevism is at least not sentimental. It's a last step towards an end, a hopeless end. But better disaster from an equivocal nothingness, like the present. Kangaroo wants to be God Himself, and save everybody, which is just irritating, at last. Kangaroo as God Himself, with a kind marsupial belly, is worse than Struthers' absolute of the People. Though it's a choice of evils, and I choose neither. I choose the Lord Almighty."

(p. 310)

Somers' decision is to choose neither.

As Socrates said, the penalty for not taking an interest in politics is to be ruled by someone of inferior capabilities. Somers is presumably a man of intelligence who nevertheless decides to let others do it. He abdicates his political responsibilities.

As mentioned before, Lawrence shows Somers as a man torn between a desire to participate in the affairs of men and a recognition that man can only save himself from within by listening to his own "inner gods," leaving everyone else to his own fate. The vacillation between these two poles takes some extreme expressions. Some of Lawrence's best descriptive passages are unfortunately in support of the ideal of non-involvement. In revulsion from the mentality of man which has brought

us to the point of mass destruction and mob violence,
 Somers longs to be cold and unfeeling as a fish.

As for loving mankind, or
 having a fire of love in
 his heart, it was all rot.
 He felt almost fierily cold.
 He liked the sea, the pale
 sea of green glass that
 fell in such cold foam. Ice-
 fiery,, fish-burning, He went
 out on to the low flat rocks
 at low-tide, skirting the
 deep pock-holes that were
 full of brilliantly clear
 water and delicately-
 coloured shells and tiny,
 crimson anemones. Strangely
 sea-scooped sharp sea-
 bitter rock-floor, all wet
 and sea-savage. And stand-
 ing at the edge looking at
 the waves rather terrifying
 rolling at him, where he
 stood low and exposed, far
 out from the sand-banks,
 and as he watched the gan-
 nets gleaming white, then
 falling with a splash like
 white sky-arrows into the
 waves, he wished as he had
 never wished before that he
 could be cold, as sea things
 are cold, and murderously
 fierce. To have oneself ex-
 ultantly ice-cold, not one
 spark of this wretched warm
 flesh left, and to have all
 the terrific, icy energy of
 a fish. To surge with that
 cold exultance and passion:
 of a sea thing! Now he under-
 stood the yearning in the
 seal-woman's croon, as she
 went back to the sea, leaving
 her husband and her children
 of warm flesh. No more cloy-
 ing warmth. No more of this
 horrible stuffy heat of human
 beings. To be an isolated
 swift fish in the big seas,
 that are bigger than the
 earth; fierce with cold, cold

life, in the watery twilight before sympathy was created to clog us.

(pp. 123-4)

Somers, forced by his own ambivalent nature, moves through some very difficult mental states in this process of discovery. At one extreme he rejects humanity, human feelings, human community: the ice-cold fish, the primordial non-thinking, non-feeling brute becomes his goal. But he also thinks:

Yet one cannot live a life of entire loneliness, like a monkey on a stick, up and down one's own obstacle. There's got to be meeting: even communion. Well, then, let us have the other communion, "This is thy body which I take from thee and eat," as the priest, also the God, says in the ritual of blood sacrifice. The ritual of supreme responsibility, and offering. Sacrifice to the dark God, and to the men in whom the dark God is manifest. Sacrifice to the strong, not to the weak. In awe, not in dribbling love. The communion in power, the assumption into glory. La gloire.
(p. 289)

Somers flows back in sympathy to the group. He moves from his position of being an isolated individual, not caring what happens to the vulgar mass, back to communion with the group. It is as though he has recognized that man is, for better or worse, a social animal, and that he must play his part. And yet, he must reject the love ethic which has been the basic

underlying assumption behind all social organization, all community in the western world for so many centuries. What then? How can he seek to aid man, what new form can he come up with, what is left if love is no longer suitable? The answer is power. Recognition of inequality, awe and respect to the strong, submission by the weak.

But Somers, like Lawrence, is too intelligent not to recognize the possibility of tyranny inherent in a system based on individual power alone. He envisions a form of "elitism", though it is not exactly the same thing that Mussolini, Hitler, and Franco came up with in the real world. The ordering and the ranking of the strong and the weak should not simply be made up on the basis of who has the most guns.

What Richard wanted was some sort of a new show: a new recognition of the life-mystery, a departure from the dreariness of money-making, money-having, and money-spending. It meant a new recognition of difference, of highness and of lowness, of one man meet for service and another man clean with glory, having majesty in himself, the innate majesty of the purest individual, not the strongest instrument, like Napoleon. Not the tuppenny trick-majesty of the Kaisers.

(p. 309)

We are offered no clues, however, as to how we can make the distinction between the "high" and the "low" be-

tween who is fit for service and who for glory on a practical basis. Ordinarily these evaluations are subjective ones. It is most likely that in the real world this ranking and ordering would take place on the basis of "who has the most guns."

This is where Lawrence's prescriptions undercut the social criticism in the novel. If he cannot visualize the tyranny or chaos which his mystic aristocracy would lead to, we tend to be less sympathetic to his denunciation of those forms of government which it would replace. Obviously Lawrence is concerned with finding the answers to the problems. But if the cure he suggests appears worse than the present condition, we cannot be blamed for being sceptical of his criticisms of that condition.

Somers wants "some sort of new show", but he does not have any practical, well thought-out schemes. It is irritating to constantly come up against the vague terminology used to define "the fuller consciousness" which Lawrence sees as the goal of life. Presumably, any new political ordering of life should have as its aim the implementation of "the fuller consciousness" in all the citizens. At least Kangaroo and Willie Struthers had specific ideas about how they would go about this if they got into power; they had concrete plans to increase the well-being of their fellow humans.

Somers rejects their plans but offers nothing specific in turn.

A novelist of social criticism does not necessarily have to define his alternatives. He need merely raise questions about the present social conditions, hoping others will come up with the answers. But Lawrence bases his criticism of the present on a vision of a better life. Though we can give Lawrence credit for attempting to reveal the dimensions of his vision -- it takes a certain kind of courage to claim for oneself the role of social prophet, to take the risk of making a fool of one's self -- we must at the same time be critical when he fails to clarify his ideas.

As Kangaroo draws to its close, Lawrence is obviously looking forward to The Plumed Serpent. In that book he invents a situation in which his vague ideas on the nature of mystic aristocracy are given concrete realization in a novelistic structure. The presentation of this idea in concrete terms, a specific setting, with recognizable characters, is repugnant. Even in Kangaroo where it appears only as an idea that occupies much of Somers' thought adventures, it is reprehensible. To give expression to a belief that a religion based on blood sacrifice is the answer to the world's social problems does little to alleviate the problems. Despite our understanding of all the

personal disappointments and frustrations which undoubtedly led Lawrence to take up these opinions, we must criticize him for countenancing such unprincipled statements. For an author whose avowed concern is the "self-responsible consciousness in man", Lawrence does little honor to his own consciousness or that which exists in his fellow men by proposing ideas so inimical to the foundation of society's structure.

Was Lawrence then an "enemy of civilization"? Just before leaving Australia for America Somers answers that question.

"I won't give up the flag of our real civilised consciousness. I'll give up the ideals. But not the aware, self-responsible, deep consciousness that we've gained. I won't go back on that, Jaz, though Kangaroo did say I was the enemy of civilisation."

"You don't consider you are, then?" asked Jaz, pertinently.

"The enemy of civilisation? Well, I'm the enemy of this machine civilisation and this ideal civilisation. But I'm not the enemy of the deep, self-responsible consciousness in man, which is what I mean by civilisation. In that sense of civilisation, I'd fight for ever for the flag, and try to carry it on into deeper, darker places. It's an adventure, Jaz, like any other. And when you realise what you're doing, it's perhaps the best adventure." (p. 356)

Lawrence knew himself to be the enemy of "machine civilisation" and of "ideal civilisation." What he failed to recognize was that in a book like Kangaroo he was also the enemy of that spirit of community, that bond of understanding which keeps men working together to build a society, which he so often searched for and believed in. In the sense that Kangaroo reveals a Lawrence who seems lacking in generous human sympathy, it reveals a Lawrence who was indeed the enemy of civilization. It was only toward the end of his life in such works as "The Man Who Died" and Lady Chatterley's Lover that Lawrence was able to recover some measure of sympathy for the lot of common humanity, though it never reached the proportions evident in the early works. As Somers said about himself: "Since the war burst my bubble of humanity I'm a pessimist, a black pessimist about the present human world." (p. 36) This is a true expression of Lawrence's attitude when he wrote Kangaroo.

Footnotes: Chapter III.

¹D. H. Lawrence, Kangaroo (New York, 1960). All subsequent page references are to this Compass edition.

²Harrison, p. 167.

³Mark Schorer, "Lawrence and the Spirit of Place," A D. H. Lawrence Miscellany (Carbondale, Illinois, 1959), p. 289.

⁴Sagar, p. 134.

⁵Harrison, "Introduction."

⁶D. H. Lawrence, Selected Literary Criticism (New York, 1966), ed. Anthony Beal, p. 105.

IV.

Lady Chatterley's Lover

After completing The Plumed Serpent, Lawrence turned away from the question of political leadership. From 1926 to his death in 1930 Lawrence was primarily concerned with the individual's response to the forces of the modern industrial world. In Lady Chatterley's Lover (1928) ¹, the reactions of two individuals, Constance Chatterley and her lover Oliver Mellors, are portrayed as they watch with horror and dismay the encroachment of industrialization on the once beautiful Midlands of England.

It is not the ugliness per se which Lawrence and his characters find so appalling as the defect in human character which causes it to happen and allows it to exist. In Lawrence's view it is a lack of rever-

ence for life, that pulsating, indescribable essence which we share with other creatures on this planet for such a short time and which modern society has the power to extinguish.

As far back as The Rainbow, Lawrence was convinced that the sexual relationship of a man and a woman had a bearing upon the way each functioned in the world outside of the sexual union. Because Lawrence believed the "sexual instinct" and the "societal instinct" were dependent upon one another, a novel about modern society will of necessity deal with both. In Lady Chatterley's Lover Lawrence uses sex and the sex act as a means of revealing his view of the world. The attitudes and actions of the characters when they are involved with sexual matters manifest their degree of wholeness, their sanity, or their social awareness, as measured on Lawrence's scale of values. Sex is not an end in itself for Lawrence, but an emblem of something larger -- the metaphysical relationship of men to life.

Though the novel describes in detail a love affair between a high-born lady and a servant on her estate -- a story which has been told since feudal times in ballads and folklore -- it is primarily a picture of the early Twentieth Century in which Lawrence examines modern art, literature, industry, religion, love, and the class structure. Throughout

the novel Lawrence develops one major point: the forces of modern society are trying to destroy the possibilities of individual fulfillment. Modern society seems to value the group more than it does the individual, conformity more than spontaneity.

To establish this view, Lawrence pursues two themes: the relationship of men and machines and the relationship of men and women. His premise is that our machine culture creates sterile, machine-like men who in turn have sterile, machine-like sexual experiences with their women. Thus the source of vital energy -- the sex act -- no longer serves to renew the spirit for the societal life. These themes are the constants of Lawrence's social vision and are present in Lawrence's work from The Rainbow to Lady Chatterley's Lover.

Lawrence's method for achieving his end, the revelation of his view of society, is no different than that of any other novelist. He must use description, dialogue, and action to create situations and characters which will embody his vision. And at the same time the situations and characters must be sufficiently in harmony with the reader's own sense of the world so that he will accept, or at least take seriously, Lawrence's vision of life.

The question must then be asked, how well does

Lawrence succeed in embodying his vision in the narrative? In an introduction to Lady Chatterley's Lover, Mark Schorer contends that Lawrence achieved a near perfect synthesis.² He points out that Lawrence wrote three versions of the novel: the first, very naturalistic, the second, extremely lyrical and symbolic. Mr. Schorer finds the third version, the one discussed in this dissertation, a homogenous blend of the first two. It is impossible to agree entirely with this conclusion, however, because there are so many instances in the third version in which situations or characters are made less credible in order to reveal the symbolic message.

This flaw is only too obvious in the handling of Clifford Chatterley as a character, but there are other moments in the novel when we are more aware of Lawrence's message than we are of the novel as a novel. Scenes which attempt to contrast the lovers in their innocent relationship with the ugliness and crassness of the outside world often read like a fable. When Lawrence blends the two elements well, as he does in the description of Connie's journey through the mining town of Tevershall, we respond to his social criticism. Through the realism of such scenes we can see the ugliness of industrialization. But when Lawrence tries to make the love affair a symbol of sanity in a world

gone mad, he often fails to convince. At times the realism of a scene overcomes the symbolism and we are conscious of nothing more than a tawdry affair, or else the symbolic element is so present that we lose contact with the characters as human beings.

For instance, Clifford Chatterley's physical impotence makes him excellent as a symbol but difficult to accept as the cold-hearted husband caught in the particular romantic triangle pictured in the novel. It is to the credit of Lawrence's prose that Clifford seems a person in any way at all -- which he does in some scenes like the incident of the motorized chair. Yet the conflict between symbol and character is evident when we realize that we are supposed to hate Clifford as a representative of a class and hate him as much as Lawrence does, while we tend to sympathize with Clifford as a character. What can Clifford, the character, possibly do to make his wife happy? Lawrence posits that only a rich, warm, healthy sex life with satisfying intercourse can create wholeness of being. But Clifford has no choice in the matter. He is the victim of circumstance; he is not morally culpable, though Lawrence writes as if he wants us to blame him. Although we cannot help but see the symbolic overtones -- Clifford represents society, mutilated by the war which was a direct result of the

overdependence on the mental life, modern society cannot in any way reverse the process to recover the physical life, etc. -- it makes Connie's conjugal restlessness seem merely the need for physical release. Lawrence must then resort to manipulations of Clifford's character or the narrative to make her leaving him seem a moral choice and not just a physical necessity.

The introduction of Michaelis to the third version of the story illustrates that Lawrence was aware of the problem. Realizing that any criticism of Clifford's sexuality on the "character" level would be impossible because of his wound, Lawrence introduced a "Clifford" figure who was physically capable of sexual intercourse. The relationship between Clifford and Connie as far as sex is concerned must remain on a symbolic level. Clifford's wound can only represent his loss of contact with the life force. It can only represent the triumph of the intellect over the sensual, the mind over the body. But this thesis cannot be tested on the realistic level. Thus Michaelis is needed to provide such a confrontation, sexual in nature, to add realistic depth to the symbolic equation.

Some critics have pointed out that Clifford, as a character, didn't care very much for the "sex thing" even before he was wounded. They feel that

wounded or not he would still retain his lack of interest in the sensual life. Nevertheless, the confrontation with Connie would have been novelistically stronger if he had returned from the way^f physically capable but emotionally unwilling to satisfy her. That way Clifford would have been an even better example of Lawrence's view that the "mental life" had overcome the physical life because the impotent condition would have had a basis in psychological reality. Thus Clifford is the most obvious example of how the symbolic level can overshadow the real in Lady Chatterley's Lover.

On the other hand, when Lawrence tries to make his characters less symbolic and more psychologically real, he often runs into the opposite problem; in which the realistic details weaken the effect of the symbol. The presentation of a symbolic moral fable in a realistic setting is a difficult literary task and Lawrence does not always succeed in this novel.

For instance, the relationship between Connie and Mellors on the realistic level is not as pure and tender as the thesis would demand. Mellors does not kiss Connie on the lips or engage in what psychologists call foreplay. He seldom concerns himself specifically with her satisfaction. If she comes, if they come together, it is a good thing, but he does not seem to

go out of his way to create this situation. And as Eliseo Vivas and others have pointed out ³, a necessary part of Mellors' sexual life with both Connie and his first wife appears to have been anal intercourse.

These details of their love life are acceptable as aspects of a particular couple's psychological reality, but such details undoubtedly diminish the force of Lawrence's apparent claim that they represent a healthy sexuality. Mellors, on too many occasions, seems to disregard his partner's needs. Even as this may make him more "real" as a character, it makes him less forceful as a symbol of tenderness. Indeed, Lawrence must have felt a little uneasy about the success of the portrayal because he has Connie state the moral we are to gain from reading about their sex life. She tells Mellors that he has the "courage of his own tenderness." But her saying it does not make him any more tender and her example of his tenderness does not seem particularly appropriate to convey the full weight of Lawrence's vision.

"It's the courage of your own tenderness, that's what it is, like when you put your hand on my tail and say I've got a pretty tail." (p. 346)

From these few examples one must conclude that Lawrence has not fully integrated his social vision and

the fictional context. What this means is that Lady Chatterley's Lover is neither Lawrence's best novel nor does it contain his best social criticism. As stated at the outset, it is a basic assumption of this paper that Lawrence is a novelist of social criticism whose most penetrating diagnoses of the problems of the real world are to be found in his most successful fiction. His social vision appears most valid and moving in novels like The Rainbow and Women In Love. When the fiction falters as it does in Kangaroo, however, the social criticism seems at best shallow and at worst irresponsible. Lady Chatterley's Lover does not reach the heights of The Rainbow, but it is a far better book than Kangaroo.

In fact, Lady Chatterley's Lover displays remarkable novelistic technique in comparison to the "leadership" novels. For the most part, the prose is marked by a restraint and an assurance which add to the total effect. Mystical passages and flights of rhetoric are kept to a minimum. We may object to Lawrence's handling of Clifford Chatterley as a character, but we cannot claim that it is the result of Lawrence's ignorance of possible alternatives. Much of the sense of maturity and control evidenced in this novel obviously comes from the fact that it was written and rewritten many times.

The tone of Lady Chatterley's Lover is markedly different from some of Lawrence's earlier works. The sentences tend to be shorter; there is a sense of objectivity, even an ironic detachment; there are fewer portentous references to the "gods." In the following passage "strange male power" is much more restrained an epithet than the "inner gods" which appeared so often in the "leadership" novels.

In the actual sex-thrill within the body, the sisters nearly succumbed to the strange male power. But quickly they recovered themselves, took the sex-thrill as a sensation, and remained free. Whereas the men, in gratitude to the woman for the sex experience, let their souls go out to her. And afterwards looked rather as if they had lost a shilling and found sixpence. Connie's man could be a bit sulky, and Hilda's a bit jeering. But that is how men are! Ungrateful and never satisfied. (p. 42)

Early in the story, chapter endings demonstrate Lawrence's control and his sense of irony. At the end of Chapter I, he describes Clifford Chatterley's marriage to Constance and neatly sums up the years before the present story takes place. Sir Geoffrey was Clifford's father who had desperately hoped for an heir from his son's marriage.

Clifford married Connie, nevertheless, and had his month's honeymoon with her. It was the terrible year 1917, and they were intimate as two

people who stand together on a sinking ship. He had been a virgin when he married: and the sex part did not mean much to him. They were so close, he and she, apart from that. And Connie exulted a little in this intimacy which was beyond sex, and beyond a man's "satisfaction." Clifford anyhow was not just keen on his "satisfaction," as so many men seemed to be. No, the intimacy was deeper, more personal than that. And sex was merely an accident, or an adjunct, one of the curious obsolete, organic processes which persisted in its own clumsiness, but was not really necessary. Though Connie did want children: if only to fortify her against her sister-in-law Emma.

But early in 1918 Clifford was shipped home smashed, and there was no child. And Sir Geoffrey died of chagrin.

(p. 46)

The mature Lawrence seems genuinely distant. Lawrence even feels confident in mocking ironically his former excesses in regards to "gods" and "spirits."

It was just restlessness. She would rush off across the park, and abandon Clifford and lie prone in the bracken. To get away from the house... she must get away from the house and everybody. The wood was her one refuge, her sanctuary.

But it was not really a refuge, a sanctuary, because she had no connection with it. It was only a place where she could get away from the rest. She never really touched the spirit of the wood itself...if it had any such nonsensical thing.

(p. 55)

Lawrence himself is in abeyance. He can allow his characters the privilege of speaking for him because they are speaking for themselves at the same time. He can let them describe the way the Midlands appear covered with mines and factories and soot.

Connie was accustomed to Kensington or the Scottish hills or the Sussex downs: that was her England. With the stoicism of the young she took in the utter, soulless ugliness of the coal-and-iron Midlands at a glance, and left it at what it was: unbelievable and not to be thought about. From the rather dismal rooms at Wragby she heard the rattle-rattle of the screens at the pit, the puff of the winding-engine, the clink-clink of shunting trucks, and the hoarse little whistle of the colliery locomotives. Tevershall pit-bank was burning, and had been burning for years, and it would cost them thousands to put it out. So it had to burn. And when the wind was that way, which was often, the house was full of the stench of this sulphurous combustion of the earth's excrement. But even on windless days the air always smelt of something under-earth: sulphur, rion, coal, or acid. And even on the Christmas roses the smuts settled persistently, incredible, like black manna from skies of doom. (p. 47)

Seldom does Lawrence feel obliged to step in and write an essay about something to let the reader

know what is going on, as he did in Kangaroo. We recognize instantly that the characters in the novel are capable of having a mystical insight or a sense that there is more to flesh and bone than the simple chemical or psychological analyses. When Connie first sees Mellors half naked, washing his upper body, she is struck by something more than the exposed flesh. And Lawrence has chosen his words carefully to allow us to see such a thing happen. We believe it is really happening to Connie because she experiences it. Any false words, any attempt at rhetorical flourishes by the author would destroy the effect of the scene. But here, for once, Lawrence does not miss.

Yet in some curious way it was a visionary experience: it had hit her in the middle of her body. She saw the clumsy breeches, slipping down over the pure, delicate, white loins, the bones showing a little, and the sense of aloneness, of a creature purely alone, overwhelmed her. Perfect, white, solitary nudity of a creature that lives alone, and inwardly alone. And beyond that, a certain beauty of a pure creature. Not the stuff of beauty, not even the body of beauty, but a lambency, the warm, white flame of a single life, revealing itself in contours that one might touch: a body! (p. 107)

In another example of Lawrence's command of technique, Connie's feelings about motherhood come through

clearly when she visits the pheasants the gamekeeper is raising.

Outside by the clearing, he had built a low little roof of boughs and straw, a shelter for the birds, and under it stood the five coops. And, one day when she came, she found two brown hens sitting alert and fierce in the coops, sitting on pheasants' eggs, and fluffed out so proud and deep in all the heat of the pondering female blood. This almost broke Connie's heart. She, herself, was so forlorn and unused, not a female at all, just a mere thing of terrors. (pp. 159-60)

Even such a cliché as a "broken heart" has meaning in such a context. The words, the image presented, successfully carry the intended emotion. This is not to say there are no faults to be found with Lawrence's prose, but the over-all effect is one of great care and consistency.

Lawrence was very much concerned with all aspects of language when he was writing Lady Chatterley's Lover. His notion of restoring a sense of dignity to certain four-letter Anglo-Saxon words is well known. He was also concerned with the use of language as a social barrier. Mellors is of lower class origin, but he had gone farther than most in school. Having lived with army officers in India, he had refined his speech to such a degree that he could be accepted by the upper classes. When he returns to England, however, he begins to use

the Derbyshire dialect which he had learned as a child. Mrs. Bolton, Clifford Chatterley's nurse, who had known Mellors when he was a young man, makes this comment:

--For years he was gone, all the time of the war: and a lieutenant and all: quite the gentleman, really quite the gentleman! -- Then to come back to Tevershall and go as a gamekeeper! Really, some people can't take their chances when they've got them! And talking broad Derbyshire again like the worst, when she, Ivy Bolton, knew he spoke like any gentleman, really. (p. 197)

Of course for Mrs. Bolton, a member of the lower classes who no longer speaks dialect, not to speak like a gentleman when you are able to is absurd. Because if a man can speak like a gentleman he has a better chance of getting on in life. He will not be held down in the scramble for success by his rough speech. What she doesn't understand, however, is that Mellors chooses very carefully when he will use dialect and when standard English. Before he and Connie become lovers, he can spite her and make her feel uncomfortable by emphasizing the difference in class which separates them by speaking in dialect. At the same time he can cut himself off from the people of the village by speaking standard English. Dialect thus becomes a means for establishing social distance, a strategy for self-definition.

Later, after Connie and Mellors have become

lovers, Lawrence represents the dialect as a more tender means of conversation than the standard English which Clifford and his cronies use for discussing their arid, sterile ideas.

"Tha's got such a nice tail on thee," he said, in the throaty caressive dialect. "Tha's got the nicest arse of anybody. It's the nicest, nicest woman's arse as it! An' ivry bit of it is woman, woman sure as nuts. . . ." (p. 284)

"Throaty" and "caressive" describe a certain quality of tenderness Lawrence hears in the actual sound of the speech, but he is more concerned with the dialect as a symbol of tenderness. Following the line of reasoning inherited from the 19th century, Lawrence would have to say that the dialect is more tender because the ordinary speaker of dialect is closer to nature and the closer to nature one is, the more ethically pure. Undoubtedly the thoughts generally communicated in dialect by a native speaker relate to basic and natural elements of life -- weather, crops, the price of eggs, food, drink, and sex. Thus, when Mellors praises Connie's body in dialect, he is using a "more natural" form to convey "more natural" meanings. Communicating in this natural manner, Mellors cannot be other than ethically correct -- "tender" as opposed to harsh.

Lawrence is setting up an arbitrary, though somewhat traditional, dichotomy. The dialect spoken by Mellors is to be seen as the language of feeling, of human warmth and compassion, and the standard English spoken by Clifford and his friends at Wragby Hall is to be seen as the language of the intellect -- cold, empty and heartless.

It is easy to recognize Lawrence's allegorical intention -- common speech, even vulgar speech, is to be preferred to the language of the mind because of the kinds of ideas and feelings transmitted by each kind of speech. The corollary to this point of social criticism should then be: those who use vulgar speech are more tender, more sensitive, more aware of other people's feelings. But as we know in the real world, and even Lawrence knew, this is not the case. The natural speaker of dialect, the primitive, unlettered member of a society, whether rural or urban, does not ordinarily display these qualities. On the contrary, it is more often the person who is cultured, who uses abstract conceptions and verbalizations, who is more sensitive to the human values of life.

The danger in Lady Chatterley's Lover is taking Lawrence at face value in this matter. We are to see Mellors as "the natural man" when he is speaking to Connie in their intimate scenes. And yet we know that his use of the dialect is artificial and used for

effect. Mellors, like Lawrence, is no longer the natural speaker of dialect. Having learned to speak standard English, he must exercise some degree of choice in speaking one or the other and this removes him from the category of the "natural."

Lawrence obviously has a rational idea,^a concept of what the dialect should convey. This use of the dialect as a symbolic device is perfectly acceptable, but it sometimes interferes with the realistic portrayal of characters and situations.

"Tha mun come on naight ter' th' cottage, afore tha goos; sholl ter?" he asked, lifting his eyebrows as he looked at her, his hands dangling between his knees.

"Sholl ter?" she echoed, teasing.

He smiled.

"Ay, sholl ter?" he repeated.

"Ay!" she said, imitating the dialect sound.

"Yi!" he said.

"Yi!" she repeated.

"An' slaip wi' me," he said. "It needs that. When sholt come?"

"When sholl I?" she said.

"Nay," he said. "that canna do't. When sholt come then?"

"'Appen Sunday," she said.

"'Appen a' Sunday! Ay!"

He laughed at her quickly.

"Nay, tha canna," he protested.

"Why canna I?" she said.

He laughed. Her attempts at the dialect were so ludicrous, somehow.

"Coom then, tha mun goo!" he said.

"Mun I?" she said.

"Maun Ah!" he corrected.

"Why should I say maun when you say mun," she protested. "You're not playing fair."

"Arena Ah!" he said, leaning forward and softly stroking her face.

"Th'art good cunt, though, aren't ter? Best bit o'cunt left on earth. When ter likes! When tha'rt willin'!"

"What is cunt?" she said.

"An' doesn't ter know? Cunt! It's thee down theer; an' what I get when I'm i'side thee; it's a' as it is, all on't."

"All on't," she teased.

"Cunt! It's like fuck then."

"Nay, nay! Fuck's only what you do. Animals fuck. But cunt's a lot more than that. It's thee, dost see: an' tha'rt a lot besides an animal, aren't ter? even ter fuck! Cunt! Eh, that's the beauty of thee, lass."

(pp. 233-4)

The first part of this conversation seems entirely successful on the realistic level and the symbolic level. The conversation demonstrates the contagious quality of warmth and tenderness which the dialect represents as Connie begins to imitate Mellors. The dialogue appears charmingly authentic -- a lower class man finding himself in the ironical position of trying to teach his high-born lady lover the intricacies of his own difficult dialect. But at the end of the passage, when Mellors tries to define the nuances of meaning in the word "cunt", we know we are in the presence of an educated man playing with language. This break with

the charm and humor, the naturalness of the scene strikes a jarring note, ~~in an otherwise acceptable scene~~. This is not to say that it is unnatural for Mellors to indulge in fine distinctions. We know that his education qualifies him to make such statements: ~~That~~ the scene is realistically accurate. But we also know that most people who are closer to nature (speakers of dialect) are not usually capable of representing these shades of meaning. Thus, the symbolic level -- dialect is more tender because it is closer to nature -- breaks down. when we realize that the speaker in this case is really quite far from nature, indeed that he is quite sophisticated.

Another example of the difficulty Lawrence had in keeping the literal and the polemical aspects firmly wed appears in a scene early in the novel in which Connie decides that certain words no longer have meaning.

Connie went slowly home to Wragby. "Home!...it was a warm word to use for that great, weary warren. But then it was a word that had had its day. It was somehow cancelled for her generation: love, joy, happiness, home, mother, father, husband, all these great dynamic words were half dead now, and dying from day to day. Home was a place you lived in, love was a thing you didn't fool yourself about, joy was a word you applied to a good Charleston, happiness was a term of hypocrisy used to bluff other people, a father was an individual who enjoyed his own existence, a husband was a man

you lived with and kept going in spirits. As for sex, the last of the great words, it was just a cocktail term for an excitement that bucked you up for a while, then left you more raggy than ever. (p. 102)

From what we already know of Connie's history, it is possible to believe that "sex" and "home" and "husband" might not hold pleasant connotations for her. We cannot, however, simply accept her assertion that these words no longer hold any meaning for her "generation", by which she means most likely her social class. It is clearly Lawrence's opinion about that class and indeed there may be some truth to the assertion, but the novel doesn't fully demonstrate this point. Connie merely tells us that it is true and the story goes on from there as though this were an assumption all can agree on. The particular point is true for Connie, but the generalization she makes is not necessarily true for her "generation."

Lawrence does attempt to demonstrate the vacuity of speech in the upper class world, however, in the drawing room scenes at Wragby Hall. The "mental life" is shown to be the enemy of the sensual life when talk becomes a substitute for sex. Before Mellors enters the story, there are few outdoor scenes, few descriptions of nature. Instead there are pages and pages of conversations which take place in the drawing room. We are shown graphically a group of people who self-consciously make the point that talk is more important than physical relationships.

To be present in such company could be terribly boring, but ironically Lawrence makes this portion of the book fascinating by adding to the cast an intellectual who speaks Lawrence's views. Tommy Dukes, in a way, is a stand-in for Mellors. But he, like all the other intellectuals, has cut himself off from his physical life; his saving grace is that he recognizes it.

Though Lawrence is portraying the arid, sterile conversations of the upper class, he has done so with wit and charm. We see the brittle wit, sharp dialogue, and empty lives of the upper classes not as a cliché, but as a reality in the Wragby drawing room scenes. Dukes is often amusing when he is criticizing himself and his class.

"Me? Oh, intellectually I believe in having a good heart, a chirpy penis, a lively intelligence, and the courage to say 'shit!' in front of a lady."

"Well, you've got them all," said Berry.

Tommy Dukes roared with laughter. "You angel boy! If only I had! If only I had! No; my heart's as numb as a potato, my penis droops and never lifts its head up, I dare rather cut him clean off than say 'shit!' in front of my mother or my aunt...they are real ladies, mind you; and I'm not really intelligent, I'm only a 'mental-lifer.' It would be wonderful to be intelligent: then one would be alive in all the parts mentioned and unmentionable. The penis rouses his head

and says: How do you do?
 to any really intelligent
 person. Renoir said he
 painted his pictures with
 his penis...he did too,
 lovely pictures! I wish I
 did something with mine.
 God! When one can only talk!
 Another torture added to
 Hades! And Socrates started
 it." (p. 77)

It is only intellection; it is only talk. Though
 Dukes sounds like a Lawrencean hero, he is only one
 half of one, the mental half. The true figure must be
 both physically and mentally alive -- "the chirpy penis"
 and "the lively intelligence" combined.

The man who must carry the^{is} weight in the novel is
 Mellors. He is the man who must combine the head and the
 heart. But somehow in the transformation of Dukes into
 Mellors, the "chirpy" part of the penis and the "lively"
 part of the intelligence were lost. The sense of humor
 which made Dukes an engaging personality is absent from
 the dour Mellors. Nevertheless, it is striking that at
 her first sight of Mellors, the newly-hired gamekeeper,
 Connie thinks of Tommy Dukes. Though Mellors is surely
 Annable of The White Peacock resurrected, he is also
 Tommy Dukes in the round. From this point on in the
 novel there is less talk and more description of nature.
 Mellors himself is not a talkative individual; he does
 not make conversations. He lives and acts through the
 sense of touch, the sense of sight.

Lawrence's preoccupation with language in Lady Chatterley's Lover extends to the written word. Clifford in the first part of the novel is a writer. Lawrence criticizes his short story efforts because they seem to display the same lack of "contact" which Lawrence finds in all areas of society.

Still he was ambitious.
He had taken to writing
stories; curious, very
personal stories about
people he had known. Clever,
rather spiteful, and yet,
in some mysterious way,
meaningless. The obser-
vation was extraordinary
and peculiar. But there
was no touch, no actual
contact. It was as if the
whole thing took place in
a vacuum. And since the
field of life is largely
an artificially-lighted
stage today, the stories
were curiously true to
modern life, to the modern
psychology, that is.

(p. 50)

In another comment on Clifford's literary life, Lawrence seems to be critical of all the novelists from Jane Austen to Henry James and Galsworthy who dissect minute emotions.

When he was alone he
tapped-tapped-tapped on
a typewriter, to infin-
ity. But when he was not
"working," and she was
there, he talked, always
talked; infinite small
analysis of people and
motives, and results,
characters and person-
alities, till now she
had had enough. (p. 126)

Writing the novel was Lawrence's vocation, and he had this to say about the modern novel, what it could be, and what he thinks it really is.

It is the way our sympathy flows and recoils that really determines our lives. And here lies the vast importance of the novel, properly handled. It can inform and lead into new places the flow of our sympathetic consciousness, and it can lead our sympathy away in recoil from things gone dead. Therefore, the novel, properly handled, can reveal the most secret places of life: for it is in the passional secret places of life, above all, that the tide of sensitive awareness needs to ebb and flow, cleansing and freshening.

But the novel, like gossip, can also excite spurious sympathies and recoils, mechanical and deadening to the psyche. The novel can glorify the most corrupt feelings, so long as they are conventionally "pure." Then the novel, like gossip, becomes at last vicious, and, like gossip, all the more vicious because it is always ostensibly on the side of the angels. Mrs. Bolton's gossip was always on the side of the angels. "And he was such a bad fellow, and she was such a nice woman." Whereas, as Connie could see even from Mrs. Bolton's gossip, the woman had been merely a mealy-mouthed sort, and the man angrily honest. But angry honesty made a "bad man" of him,

and mealy-mouthedness made a "nice woman" of her, in the vicious, conventional channeling of sympathy by Mrs. Bolton.

For this reason, the gossip was humiliating. And for the same reason, most novels, especially popular ones, are humiliating too. The public responds now only to an appeal to its vices.

(p. 146)

Lawrence is obviously trying to justify his "unpopular" novels in this passage, for his characters are never "nice" women and "bad" men. Nevertheless, this plea for the novel as a didactic instrument which can lead the flow of sympathetic understanding into areas that need cleansing and freshening is an important statement about Lawrence's self-image as a novelist of social criticism. It shows us that he believed not only in himself as a person who knew what was wrong, but also in the power of his fiction to make things right. He also implies that the sympathetic consciousness cannot be led by means of rhetorically correct, analytical arguments.

Obviously, this contention is not a universal truth. The art of rhetoric has been cultivated for as long as man has lived in a society using language: the persuasive essay is as capable of moving emotions as it is of moving the intellect. Lawrence, however, had little faith in his own ability to use the essay in this way. True, he never stopped writing essays, and yet somehow he must have realized that his essays did not move people

to change their lives. He must have known that the effect was often the opposite of what he intended. Where he hoped to analyze difficult problems facing humanity in his essays, his readers found bizarre arguments unfounded in sense or reason. Where Lawrence was serious, his readers found humor. Thus his own belief in his fiction, specifically that his novels could lead people to a new awareness, is based partially on self-recognition, partially on wishful thinking. He knew his only hope for changing things lay in the persuasive power of his fiction. There can be no doubt that Lawrence's fiction is often persuasive, but we might profitably ask the question in the case of Lady Chatterley's Lover, "To what end?"

If the novel is to lead us to a new channeling of sympathy, exactly where does Lady Chatterley's Lover take us? When we have once learned the lesson that industrialism is bad and that a man can't do anything about it, do we not find ourselves in a position of despair? To be sure, Lawrence in Lady Chatterley's Lover wants to lead our sympathies into a reawakening of tenderness between men and women. He feels this is at least a first step in the reconstruction of a better life. And it may very well be, but what then? What about our "communal instinct," that instinct which Lawrence at one point thought even more deep and profound than the sexual one? Lady Chatterley's Lover,

if it channels our sympathies anywhere, channels them in the direction of the thoughts and reflections of the hero and heroine. And they seem to have given up on the possibility of doing anything in the social world. In point of fact, they turn their backs on it. Mellors' last letter, the final pages of the book, makes the point very clear. --

"There's a bad time coming, boys, there's a bad time coming! If things go on as they are, there's nothing lies in the future but death and destruction, for these industrial masses." (p. 373)

If we have been moved and persuaded by Lawrence's prose to sympathize with his characters, we finish reading the book in total agreement with Mellors' pronouncement on the "industrial masses." We, too, give up the search for answers because Lawrence never raises an alternative question, such as: "Given that man seeks to improve the material aspects of his life, how can he avoid the dangers to his individual fulfillment inherent in industrialization and automation?" It was not that Lawrence was blind to the existence of such questions, for in The First Lady Chatterley, he presents the possibility of a realistic answer to such a question.

At the end of that earlier version, Parkin, the gamekeeper, joins the Communist party so as to be closer to his mates in the Sheffield steel works. Thus, a

glimmer of hope is suggested for action in the real world. But in the third version, Mellors gives up; he withdraws from the realm of active possibilities. Thus Lawrence's final solution to society's greatest single problem -- the lack of human warmth and sympathy -- is not a "social" one, but an individual one. He sees personal tenderness as the only means of preservation in modern industrial life. This position seems somewhat ironic in light of the book's ostensible plea for more tenderness and human understanding in the world at large. Mellors, who can so easily recognize the great lack of communal feeling in the world, cannot establish any communal feeling in himself. In that respect, he is a mirror of Lawrence who always yearned for intimate connection with his fellow men, but was never able to make that connection. In Lady Chatterley's Lover, Lawrence's frustrations with group activity are clearly visible in Mellors' ideas. The individual can only fight to move out of the main stream. Occasionally, Mellors gives thought to an idealistic plan which might work if the laborers would listen to him. But he has no real hope that they would give up their money society, put on tight red trousers and begin to live.

"But when I get a turn, I
forget it all again. Though
it's a shame, what's been
done to people these last

hundred years: men turned into nothing but labor-insects, and all their manhood taken away, and all their real life. I'd wipe the machines off the face of the earth again, and end the industrial epoch absolutely, like a black mistake. But since I can't, an' nobody can, I'd better hold my peace, an' try an' live my own life: if I've got one to live, which I rather doubt." (p..282)

Thus, one answer to the question, "To what end might this novel lead the sympathetic consciousness?" is that it can lead to a feeling of hopelessness about the possibilities of communal social action. It is again a case of irony that Lawrence who sincerely wanted social change should be perhaps guilty of convincing the sympathetic reader that change is impossible.

On the other hand one can recognize an amazingly optimistic faith in the individual potential of human beings to overcome the dehumanizing effects of industrial society. For if the world is as bad as Lawrence depicts it in Lady Chatterley's Lover -- and when reading the novel it is hard not to accept this view -- Mellors' and Connie's decision to fight their way clear of that world in an effort to achieve personal happiness displays a great deal of courage which must be applauded. The sympathetic consciousness can rejoice in their actions and take hope that personal integrity, at least, can be maintained.

There are other ends, however, which are ~~also~~ ^{also} ~~more~~ more positive. Lawrence continually attacks the "mental life" as a source of social difficulties in Lady Chatterley's Lover. Though he may err considerably in his wholesale condemnation of mental activities, he does raise questions concerning the faith in rationalism and science, a faith which is still present in society today.

In Lady Chatterley's Lover Lawrence continually attacks over-development of the rational element as one of the chief causes of society's problems. It is the mind which creates order and stability out of the chaos of the emotions, the "passional" life. But the ideal of the mental consciousness is not the sometimes erratic human mind, but the machine, the perfection of order, each part working harmoniously without conflict. And it is this mental, order-desiring faculty which creates the factory, the colliery, the computer. This part of the human psyche must forever be in conflict with the individual, organic, spontaneous part.

Lawrence criticizes individual men, like Clifford or Michaelis or Tommy Dukes, because they are individuals in whom the mental apparatus, the drive for success, and the rational means of expression have gained the upper hand. And because they have no

real sensuality in their lives they are as good as dead. They are not whole human beings. Society, cultured society at least, like these individuals, appears to Lawrence to have over-emphasized the rational, the machine-like ideal of perfection in its religious, artistic, and technical life for such a long time that it has nearly killed off its living, sensual, human part.

As Mrs. Bolton predicts: "It seems there'll be no use for men on the face of the earth, it'll be all machines." (p. 151) The danger of such a prediction coming true probably seems much more real to us than it could have possibly appeared to anyone in 1928.

Though the social criticism in Lady Chatterley's Lover can be broken down into individual components -- sex, the modern woman, language usage, class differences, industrialization -- there is one basic piece of social criticism which Lawrence sees as all pervasive. It is similar to the basic social criticism in The Rainbow -- that increased technological efficiency demands greater conformity from the individual. In Lady Chatterley's Lover, however, the charge is directed at all of history, the entire civilizing process. It is clear that socialization cannot take place without increasing the power of the restrictive, the suppressive faculty of the brain. The group must suppress individual behavior when it

threatens the order and stability of the group. It is also obvious that this ordering faculty is the rational part of the mind. To put things in order is to repress aberrations, to eliminate randomness. But although this may be a necessary fact for the establishment of society, the process can go too far. Lawrence feels that this is the major problem of our time. Science and technology which eschew randomness and uniqueness rule the world today. The human element is being left out. Objectivity is the attitude which is called for in all scientific endeavor. When they send a rocket to the moon, each man has to work like a cog in the whole process. Each man must do his little job as mechanically as possible, with the smallest variation possible, or the whole operation may not be successful.

What Lawrence fears is taking place in society today is that the mental life -- the ordering process, the drive for mechanical efficiency -- is severing the connection between man and organic nature at an ever-increasing rate. Though the advance of technology increases the material well-being of the world, there seems to be little attention paid to man's spiritual and emotional needs. Lawrence recognizes the need for wholeness, but since he feels the process has gone too far in the direction of the mental life, most of his statements denounce the mental life. In the following

speech, Tommy Dukes says that knowledge must come from the "whole corpus of the consciousness" which includes the minds as well as the emotions.

"I wasn't talking about knowledge...I was talking about the mental life," laughed Dukes. "Real knowledge comes out of the whole corpus of the consciousness; out of your belly and your penis as much as out of your brain and mind. The mind can only analyze and rationalize. Set the mind and the reason to cock it over the rest, and all they can do is criticize, and make a deadness. I say all they can do. It is vastly important. My God, the world needs criticizing to death. Therefore let's live the mental life, and glory in our spite, and strip the rotten old show. But mind you, it's like this; while you live your life, you are in some way an organic whole with all life. But once you start the mental life you pluck the apple. You've severed the connection between the apple and the tree: the organic connection. And if you've got nothing in your life but the mental life, then you yourself are a plucked apple... you've fallen off the tree. ..."

(pp. 74-5)

Lawrence does not advocate outright primitivism (Lady Chatterley's Lover is a far cry from The Plumed Serpent), but he refuses to give any real support to the uses of the intellect. For him the distinction is black and white:

the intellect can only "criticize and make a deadness." Though Dukes maintains that true knowledge makes use of the mind as well as the body in the previously cited quotation, the total effect of the novel is such that any connection with the mind appears harmful. Lawrence has taken an extreme position in his criticism of "the mental life."

Lawrence's complaint against the world is clearly defined. Whether or not it is objectively true is another question. One could just as easily argue for the opposite case: namely, that it is a disregard for the intellect and the rational which causes most social problems. But Lawrence sees in modern man's ceaseless quest for factual knowledge the ultimate loss of the sense of awe and mystery which he found an irreplaceable element in total living. In effect, Lawrence saw all of life, not merely the sexual aspect, as something to be approached with religious awe. And the post-Darwin universe hardly seems to take that attitude as its major premise.

Lawrence finds this particular attitude most prevalent in the upper classes, the educated, the professionals, and the owners; for this reason they are the most prominent figures in Lady Chatterley's Lover. But Lawrence also shows how they wreck havoc on the other half of the world. The workers and tradesmen are

seduced by the promise of higher wages and more material comforts to give up the little spark of human life they may have.

So she thought as she was going home, and saw the colliers trailing from the pits, grey-black, distorted, one shoulder higher than the other, slurring their heavy iron-shod boots. Underground grey faces, whites of eyes rolling, necks cringing from the pit roof, shoulders out of shape. Men! Men! Alas, in some way patient and good men. In other ways, non-existent. Something that men should have was bred and killed out of them. Yet they were men. They begot children. One might bear a child to them. Terrible, terrible thought! They were good and kindly. But they were only half, only the grey half of a human being. (pp. 212-3)

Because he had a didactic purpose in mind, Lawrence presents throughout Lady Chatterley's Lover a one-sided view of the world. The world which surrounds the lovers is one in which intellect has triumphed over body. Every evil of that world is attributable to the over-emphasis on the mental life which that world demonstrates. But when Lawrence creates such a world to fit the thesis he is trying to prove, he is not living up to one part of the novelist's responsibility -- that of presenting a world which is similar enough to the reader's own, so that the social message may seem

relevant. The world Lawrence presents fits the fable, but does not necessarily agree with the reader's experience of the world.

At times it seems that Lawrence makes the same error in this book as he did in Kangaroo, of failing to distinguish between several kinds of activities, which may appear together, but which are not always related. In Lady Chatterley's Lover, Lawrence makes explicit a connection between the mental life and the factory system through Clifford Chatterley. Obviously there is a certain kind of intelligence needed to set up and run a factory, but there are other forms of mental activity which are ^{thought to be} inimical to the regimentation and rigidity of the factory system -- creative writing for one. Lawrence demonstrates his lack of discrimination when he makes Clifford the symbol of all mental life, and then shows him participating in two rather disparate kinds of mental activity. He is in the first part of the book a writer; in the second, a business tycoon. Ordinarily we don't associate the two different kinds of thinking processes, though there are, of course, examples of men in real life who combine them very well like Wallace Stevens or Henry Green.

It is not the plausibility of the combination which is in question, but the probability of its occurrence in Clifford Chatterley as he is depicted in

the book. Though Lawrence goes to great lengths to convince us of the change -- Mrs. Bolton tells Clifford about the sad state of the mines, Clifford sees a chance for power in solving the problem, he finally realizes that literature is "poor emotional half-witted stuff" (p. 154) -- there exists a surrealist quality about the transition. It does not work on the realistic level. We know that Lawrence wants to condemn the mental life per se and to do this it is easier to transform Clifford into an ugly "creature, with a hard, efficient shell of an exterior and a pulpy interior, one of the amazing crabs and lobsters of the modern, industrial and financial order" (p. 156) than to develop a new character who would represent the mental life found in industry as opposed to the mental life found in intellectual circles. But the artificial quality of Clifford's change weakens our belief in him as a character. Lawrence's criticism of the mental life is less effective when we are consciously aware of the character's symbolic nature. It is hard to generate disgust or hatred for an abstraction.

Just as in Kangaroo, Lawrence blames the "mental life" for causing World War I. ^{He saw} It ~~was~~ another absurdity brought about by the over-emphasis on the

rational. One might just as easily argue that the war was caused by certain irrational factors which had little or nothing to do with the "mental life." Nevertheless, though Lawrence errs in accepting a simplistic cause in place of the undoubtedly more complex reasons for the war, he does a fine job of describing some of the actual results of the war. Even when Lawrence misses the intellectual point, he still is able to make a valid social point through his descriptions of real conditions.

The novel opens with an oblique reference to the cataclysm.

Ours is essentially a
 tragic age, so we refuse
 to take it tragically.
 The cataclysm has happened,
 we are among the ruins, we
 start to build up new
 little habits, to have new
 little hopes. It is rather
 hard work: there is now no
 smooth road into the future:
 but we go round, or
 scramble over the obstacles.
 We've got to live,
 no matter how many skies
 have fallen. (p. 37)

The prose Lawrence uses to describe the war is ironic, consistent with the tone he adopts at the beginning of Lady Chatterley's Lover.

Sir Geoffrey, Clifford's father, was intensely ridiculous, chopping down his trees, and weeding men out of his colliery to shove them into the war: and himself being so safe and patriotic; but also, spending more money on his country than he'd got. (p. 44)

The loss of Sir Geoffrey's trees, cut down for trench timber, extends well into peacetime. Clifford, paralyzed from the waist down, shuffling along in his motor chair, arrives with Connie at the edge of the wood of age-old oaks.

This was one of the places that Sir Geoffrey had cut during the war for trench timber. The whole knoll, which rose softly on the right of the riding, was denuded and strangely forlorn. On the crown of the knoll where the oaks had stood, now was bareness; and from there you could look out over the trees to the colliery railway, and the new works at Stacks Gate. Connie had stood and looked, it was a breach in the pure seclusion of the wood. It let in the world. But she didn't tell Clifford. (p. 80)

There is a breach in the woods; there is Clifford's wound; there is the bruise on the Tevershall miners. Lawrence's maturity is reflected in the moderated tone in which he refers to events which found a more violent expression in Kangaroo.

So it seemed to her everywhere. The colliers at Tevershall were talking again of a strike, and it seemed to Connie there again it was not a manifestation of energy, it was the bruise of the war that had been in abeyance, slowly rising to the surface and creating the great ache of unrest, and stupor of discontent. The bruise was deep, deep, deep...the bruise of the false inhuman war.

(p. 89)

But the war was only a symptom of the disease, a momentary outbreak of fever in an otherwise seemingly healthy patient whom Lawrence diagnoses as dying internally of consumption and being eaten alive by a dependence on the "mental life." Mellors, like Lawrence, delights in criticizing the modern world in simple generalizations: "They're all alike. The world is all alike..."

"All the lot. Their spunk is gone dead. Motor cars and cinemas and aeroplanes such that last bit out of them. I tell you, every generation breeds a more rabbit generation, with India rubber tubing for guts and tin legs and tin faces. Tin people! It's all a steady sort of bolshevism just killing off the human thing, and worshipping the mechanical thing. Money, money, money! All the modern lot get their real kick out of killing the old human feeling out of man, making mincemeat of the old Adam and the old Eve. They're all alike. The world is all alike: kill off the

human reality, a quid for every foreskin, two quid for each pair of balls. What is cunt but machine-fucking! -- It's all alike. Pay 'em money to cut off the world's cock. Pay money, money, money to them that will take spunk out of mankind, and leave 'em all tittle twiddling machines." (p. 278)

Tommy Dukes had also associated the process of "bolshevism" with the increase of mechanization and the resultant loss of respect for the individual. The term "bolshevism" describes the entire trend of Western Civilization, however, not merely the Soviets.

Then the individual, especially the personal man, is bourgeois: so he must be suppressed. You must submerge yourselves in the great thing, the Soviet-social thing. Even an organism is bourgeois: so the ideal must be mechanical. The only thing that is a unit, non-organic, composed of many different, and equally essential parts, is the machine. Each man a machine-part, and the driving power of the machine, hate...hate of the bourgeois. That, to me, is Bolshevism."

"Absolutely!" said Tommy. "But also, it seems to me a perfect description of the whole of the industrial ideal. It's the factory-owner's ideal in a nutshell; except that he would deny that the driving power was hate. Hate it is, all the same: hate of life itself. Just look at these Midlands, if it isn't plain-

ly written up...but it's
all part of the life of
the mind. It's a logical
development." (pp. 75-6)

One can hardly disagree that for the factory owner or corporation executive, the "ideal" employee is a machine. The elimination of human error, wasted motion, payroll expenses, union problems, etc., would certainly satisfy big business. The increasing use of automation is an obvious attempt to reach this "ideal." In this sense, Lawrence is correct in his social analysis. The "mental life" which designs the computer does not take into consideration the problems of human adjustment or the suffering of the jobless. The machines deal only with data, not emotions.

Despite the fact that Lawrence is not entirely successful in embodying his vision in the fiction, Lady Chatterley's Lover has the power in certain passages to arrest our attention, to lead our sympathetic understanding in useful directions. There are scenes of industrial blight that heighten our awareness of what we too often would forget. There are scenes of human emotion and love which serve to remind us of the difficulty of making successful connections with other human beings.

Mellors, though perhaps not as successful a

character as Tom Brangwen, still functions as a symbol. He represents those half-alive men who need a certain emotive experience, so hard to come by in our modern world, which will bring them to a state of total awareness of the spiritual value of life. Mellors had lived in the lower classes, he had lived among the middle classes, he had seen the upper classes at first hand. The lower classes were only interested in the "wage-squabble," the middle classes just wanted to "get on," and the upper classes were cold and indifferent. The only thing they all shared was the concern for money. That he had given up.

And what then? What did life offer apart from the care of money? Nothing.

Yet he could live alone, in the wan satisfaction of being alone, and raise pheasants to be shot ultimately by fat men after breakfast. It was futility, futility to the nth power.

But why care, why bother? And he had not cared nor bothered till now, when this woman had come into his life. (p. 193)

And the woman, this other human being, makes a difference in Mellors' life. Cynical, citter, disillusioned with humanity, Mellors is first aroused to sexual desire by his compassion for the plight of Constance Chatterley.

He turned again to look at her. She was kneeling and holding her two hands slowly forward, blindly, so that the chicken should run in to the mother-hen again. And there was something so mute and forlorn in her, compassion flamed in his bowels for her. (p. 162)

Following this scene, Mellors takes Connie into the little hut and they make love for the first time. But they are not instantly made whole. These two people with such different backgrounds merely begin an affair which grows slowly in complexity as the book progresses. It is not until Connie has returned from her trip to Italy that Mellors can fully accept the responsibility of his new state of being. She has brought him back to life. And the process of spiritual and emotional rebirth is a difficult one.

And he realized as he went in to her that this was the thing he had to do, to come into tender touch, without losing his pride or his dignity or his integrity as a man. After all, if she had money and means, and he had none, he should be too proud and honourable to hold back his tenderness from her on that account. "I stand for the touch of bodily awareness between human beings," he said to himself, "and the touch of tenderness. And she is my mate. And it is a battle against the money, and the machine, and the insentient ideal of monkeyishness

of the world. And she will stand behind me there. Thank God I've got a woman! Thank God I've got a woman who is with me, and tender and aware of me. Thank God she's not a bully, nor a fool. Thank God she's a tender, aware woman." And as his seed sprang in her, his soul sprang towards her too, in the creative act that is far more than pro-creative. (p. 348)

As Mellors says in his letter to Connie at the close of the novel, he believes in "the little flame between us." (p. 373) It is his only hope, this little flame between two people. The only answer is the individual one. It was also Lawrence's final advice to the world. Individuals need only rediscover the courage of their own tenderness, and all may still be well. Yet the actual interactions of the characters in this book show how difficult the task can be.

In the scenes between Connie and Mellors, Lawrence creates through description of sensations, sounds, sights, and smells the picture of a truly wonderful life. He also shows by constant juxtaposition the enormity of the outside world, the world of coal, iron and steel. We see clearly that the enemy of the life of tenderness is overwhelming.

The sun fell on her naked limbs through the gable window. Outside she saw the dog Flossie roaming round. The hazel-brake was misted with green, and dark-green dogs'-mercury under. It

was a clear clean morning
 with birds flying and triumphant-
 ly singing. If only
 she could stay! If only
 there weren't the other
 ghastly world of smoke and
 iron! If only he would make
 her a world. (p. 273)

At the close of the novel we see Mellors beginning that Herculean task as he waits for his divorce, fully aware of the almost insurmountable obstacles.

Above all, Lawrence wishes to show us that the relationship between Connie and Mellors is full of tenderness. It should have all the warmth and human sympathy which the other relationships in the book do not have. Through this contrast Lawrence would demonstrate the moral he wishes to teach. And except for ~~some~~ occasional lapses (as mentioned earlier in this chapter), he manages to depict a warm and sympathetic relationship which is responsible for their entry into a new life.

Lawrence is remarkably successful in this most difficult task. The previously quoted paragraph is an example of Lawrence's descriptive powers when he deals with the lovers. The scene of Connie in the cabin lying in the sun, idly watching the dog caper, is touching and real, despite the affinities the description may have with the artificial pastoral. One need only compare some of Lawrence's nature description in The White Peacock with that in Lady Chatterley's Lover to

see how much more capable he has become. Even after their night of "piercing, consuming, rather awful sensuality" (p. 313), Lawrence can convince^{us} of his proposition that Connie and Mellors have a tenderness which surpasses the ordinary.

Till his rousing waked her completely. He was sitting up in bed, looking down at her. She saw her own nakedness in his eyes, immediate knowledge of her. And the fluid, male knowledge of herself seemed to flow to her from his eyes and wrap her voluptuously. Oh, how voluptuous and lovely it was to have limbs and body half-asleep, heavy and suffused with passion!

"Is it time to wake up?" she said.

"Half-past six."

She had to be at the lane-end at eight. Always, always, always this compulsion on one!

"I might make the breakfast and bring it up here: should I?" he said.

"Oh, yes!"

Flossie whimpered gently below. He got up and threw off his pyjamas, and rubbed himself with a towel. When the human being is full of courage and full of life, how beautiful it is! So she thought, as she watched him in silence.

"Draw the curtain, will you?"

The sun was shining already on the tender green leaves of morning, and the wood stood bluey-fresh, in the nearness. She sat up in bed, looking dreamily out through the dormer window, her naked arms pushing her

naked breasts together. He
 was dressing himself. She
 was half-dreaming of life, a
 life together with him: just
 a life. (pp. 313-4)

Despite all of the many difficulties Lawrence had trying to create a believable context in which to embody his moral convictions, Lady Chatterley's Lover does reveal these convictions. It is certainly not his best novel of social criticism -- and that primarily because it is not his best novel -- yet it brings to our attention Lawrence's last thoughts about the world he lived in.

Lawrence as a social critic wrote in the tradition of those writers from Carlyle to William Morris who saw in technological progress the decline of the West; they felt that material progress was being made at the expense of the human spirit. And for them the human spirit was more important. Lawrence develops in Lady Chatterley's Lover a picture of darkness and gloom against which the feeble spark of the life-giving forces can scarcely fight. There is no room for spontaneous individuality in the modern world. The repressive will of rationality is triumphing over ^{spontaneous needs of the} the body, and once the body dies there is no more life. We watch Mellors and Connie play out their little drama of love and sex before the every-present background of the post-war world. The whistle of the

factory can be heard even in the depths of Wragby wood at the little cottage of the gamekeeper. Sylvan, simple, the cottage represents a tiny bit of respite from the madness of the outside world, the ever-increasing progress, more machines to make more machines to sell more things to more people. As Lawrence describes the world of the English Midlands it is indeed a tragic age, the thick gray dust of the Industrial system slowly spreading its pollution not only over the sky and the water, but also into the hearts and lives of human beings, turning them into automatons who are only half alive.

If this picture of life moves our sensibilities in any way, then the novel has accomplished Lawrence's purpose. Even with its flaws, Lady Chatterley's Lover can help us reawaken our sympathy for others; it can renew our awareness of the dangers of industrialization; it can force us again to question the meaningfulness of a life based on money relationships. If it does any of these things, Lady Chatterley's Lover must be considered at least a partial success for a novelist who saw himself primarily as a social critic and a defender of "man alive" against the encroachments of mechanized society.

Footnotes: Chapter IV.

- ¹D. H. Lawrence, Lady Chatterley's Lover (New York, 1959). All Subsequent page references are to this Grove Press edition.
- ²Mark Schorer, "Introduction," Lady Chatterley's Lover (New York, 1959), pp. 25-33.
- ³Eliseo Vivas, D. H. Lawrence: the failure and the triumph of art (Evanston, Illinois, 1960), pp. 133-5.

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