

## Deconstructing the Bible in *The Rainbow* by D. H. Lawrence

The principal aim of this research paper is to analyze D. H. Lawrence's treatment of religion in his novel *The Rainbow*. His religious belief is far removed from the doctrine of Christianity or any other conventional religion. This study also reveals that Lawrence has always been dissatisfied with conventional religion and morality. He brings character like Ursula, who is in the "confused heat of religious yearning" (297) and thinks religious world is an imagined world and everyday world is a matter of fact world. Writing this novel, he tries to create his own philosophy that what we think right is more valued than what gospel says right to be. This paper explores on how Lawrence revolted against the mythical and unbelievable side of Christianity.

Lawrence as a literary figure belongs to the transitional period that oscillates between late Victorian and early twentieth century England. During the time, England witnessed the widespread transformations in several fields. Especially, the occurrence of the first world war, vitally demolished the established values, practices, thoughts and beliefs. A kind of crisis affected the society. The depression, frustration, traumatic psyche, loss of faith in authority and human relation as well as almost everything in social fabric got shattered. To quote Virginia Woolf, "In around 1910 December human character changed" (2), the psychological reality surpassed the earlier material emphasis of Victorian society. One of the newly-born realities was the change in religious and social value. Hishryar Ameen Muhammed and Khorsheed Mohammed Rasheed Ahmed in thematization of power in D. H. Lawrence's *Women in Love* observe "Lawrence was not neutral and speechless in the time of booms of the new changes" (428), while some other writers started writing about the new political and social changes, Lawrence exceptionally picked up his pen on the modern concept of religion in Victorian society.

As a result of new industries and economic boom, life had faced dramatic changes in the new century. At the advent of modernism new issues and problems had been raised in the society. As a witness to the rapid overturn of England from pre-industrial and industrial age, Lawrence recorded the evolving spirit of people as a modernist critic. This period found women not only questioning the marriage but other social institution like religion, ethics norms and morality as well, as seen in Anna and broadly, Ursula. His advocacy of change in his individual character echos the individual ethos of modernism as a cultural and literary movement for the progress and change; "make it new" (Ezra Pound). Poplawsky writes in his essay "The Twentieth century" that "Consonant with the 1890s' rebellious insistence on all things 'new' (the new woman, the new unionism, the new realism, the new spirit) the new century saw a continuing reaction against what we perceived (rightly or wrongly) as deeply entrenched Victorian values and attitudes, especially in religion and morality" (577). For him, it includes the "detailed reflections on religion, thus directly represents its historical context and its experimental modernist style" (577). Hence Lawrence grasped the new spirit on these fundamental changes.

D. H. Lawrence's novel *The Rainbow* is a work of religious documentary where religion is treated from different angles. However, it retained its artistic significance as the modernist literature. This present research paper tries to make a modest attempt to discover how Lawrence is influenced by the concept "Death of God" in different characters, especially Ursula who is seeking freedom from religion. Reading this novel from the perspective of Lawrence's notion of religion, this research concludes that Lawrence is not underestimating Christianity nor rejecting its doctrine but he is defining religion from modernist concept and creating his own philosophy for this religion. It is portrayed through the discussion of religious world where people have declining faith on religion.

D. H. Lawrence's novel *The Rainbow* was initially condemned as the work of obscenity and pornography. This is one of the sequels between *Son and Lovers* and *Lady Charlotte's Lover* that deals with the issue of sexuality. Lawrence has developed his own innovative modern writing with new pattern of gender perspective which belongs to early period of modernism. His presentation of female characters, especially Ursula reflects the changing phenomenon of women's role in the contemporary society of England. It further sheds light on Lawrence's concept of "blood consciousness" which means every individual must listen to one's wants and desire in order to live a real life. His invention of a female heroine in *The Rainbow*, Ursula, embodies his principle of "blood consciousness" whose act of non conformist gives her an agency to lead an independent and liberated life. This very concept provided the foundation for the advent of modernism.

D. H. Lawrence is an outstanding writer in the world of literature who undertakes the most difficult task in an extremely successful way. He follows the philanthropic attitude which is derived from his mind and soul. He gives shape to the new mode of writing in the new period called the period of modernism. He manages to use different modern impact in order to create a wonderful plot. This novel reveals his awareness and understanding the nature of society. The social scene and its protagonist is not the essential aspect of Lawrence's criticism, but his purpose is to manifest the fragment of living universe. The subject matter of this novel itself is anti-materialistic which stresses intense and complex reality of the world.

*The Rainbow* offers a wide range of experiences about religion. It deals with the chain relationship between three generations from 1840 to the beginning of twentieth century basically dealing with the idea of religion. It takes up the industrial revolution in the collieries, the factories, the sprawling growth of villages into towns and towns into cities, the coming of the canals, railways and the appearance of the motorcar. It is also accompanied by a decline of religious values, a steady diminution of the significance and the meaning in the church and a corresponding growth of scientific materialism. The novel includes in its range all these revolutionary moments that radically changed the tenor of life in England and projects its author's specific attitude towards them. Lawrence is not against the prosperity and the great scope for freedom that comes with industrial revolution, he is horrified by the sprawling ugliness and appalled by the possibility of people losing the sense of their own individuality. He

rejects the Christian church and tries to establish in its place, the church of genuine human relationship. Thus, the novel is securely rooted in the 20<sup>th</sup> century England.

This novel is an artistic exploration of the war between sexes and the ills of modern industrial society where the religion of the blood is the final verdict given by Lawrence in a favor of happy and positive things. *The Rainbow* is a religious and spiritual documentary of great value which contains in it a criticism of religious faith in the mouth of characters who virtually is the spokesperson of Lawrence's philosophy. *The Rainbow* also employs the central symbol of rainbow itself, which at the end of the novel, stands for the uncertain future and ray of hope for Ursula, "gradually the heaviness of her heart pressed and pressed into consciousness" (409). In turn Lawrence's dissatisfaction with Christianity and Bible is a best approach which makes new mode of thought in critiquing Christianity. Thus this novel traces the growth of skepticism and decline of religious faith; and how each generation is differently affected by these changes. In a letter that D. H. Lawrence wrote after the onset of the first world war he writes that "The War finished me: it was a spear through the side of all sorrows and hopes" (268). His language in that letter was imbued with the vocabulary of the crucifixion. However, in this same letter his language is secularized form of the biblical language of resurrection, which is developed to the final version of *The Rainbow*.

D. H. Lawrence is one of the prolific writers of the twentieth century who during the twenty years of his literary career tried his hand at different genres of literature. He was a versatile genius who could excel in many fields and also blessed with prophetic vision which he incorporated in all his writings. He did not hesitate to express his own ideas on religion through his novel *The Rainbow* which condemns modern religion as dead and formulated a new cosmology of his own. Lawrence was also impressed from his mother and her English Puritan tradition and its belief in freedom of spirit and salvation of soul. This religious training of his early life had an effect in his mind till the end of his life. Lawrence started life wholly free from any restriction of tradition, untrustworthy and deceitful guide. Thus Lawrence received his position in high rank in the treatment moral and religious matter.

Mark Kinkead characterized Lawrence as he "grew up soaked in the Bible, its stories, characters all of which he continued to draw on richly throughout his writing life" (4). He writes in his article, "D. H Lawrence: A Passionately religious man" that "Lawrence rejected the Christian creed at the age of twenty two when in university, he went on wrestling imaginatively and emotionally with the significance of Christ for the rest of his life"(2). He believes that *The Rainbow* is written in the depth of religious experience which provides constant criteria to measure the value and seriousness of his work. Kinkead maintains that defining the religion of Lawrence is complicated task because Lawrence "came to appear remarkably distinct at different time of his life" (12). So, he traces the whole complex development of Lawrence's religious experience, with the significance of the doctrine of Christianity. What I believe is that Lawrence in his novel confesses the inability to believe in god, the divinity of Christ and to experience the holy spirit of the Christian doctrine.

Furthermore, Mark Kinkead charges that “*The Rainbow* is deeply religious as the author seeks new kind of relevance to daily experience in the Old Testament and the New Testament” (9). He believes each generation is the great stories revealing new meaning for everyday lives. Kinkead further remarks that “Lawrence wrestled imaginatively and emotionally with the significance of Christ for the rest of his life” (2) and tries to show him a passionately religious person. Unlike Kinkead, I believe that Lawrence makes a vehement criticism on the church which emphasizes on the crucifixion for sin, at the expense of resurrection. This is the central religious truth happening in this novel.

Another critic Lionel Kelly states in her introduction writing, “the novel is saturated with biblical allusions and references and the idea of what constitutes religion for the individual is one of its themes” (ix). The language of this novel is similar to that of The Bible, from which different symbols are derived. Obviously, this is written in a style frequently echoing the rhythms of scriptural language. Six weeks after *The Rainbow*’s first publication on 30 September 1915, it was withdrawn from the circulation by court order on the ground of indecency and absurdity in which “sex is understood as religious mystery” (Kelly viii). Lionel Kelly writes in General Introduction of this novel, “The banning of *The Rainbow* soon after publication had a catastrophic effect on their material resources. Even so these monetary losses were as nothing compared to the spiritual desolation. And saw as a kind of Bible for a new generation” (ix). Language of this novel speaks the words of newly restored world which Kelly claims “comes not in the vocabulary of social revolution but mediated through the symbolic language of biblical revelation” (ix). However, Lawrence was a gifted story teller able to endow his characters with a way of speaking true to their personalities and situations and this is for Kelly “one of the great pleasures of the rainbow” (viii).

The language of this novel makes interpretive demand on readers which is unlike other long traditional British novel. Becket Fiona quotes in her book *The Complete Critical Guide to D. H. Lawrence*, that Lawrence institutes a personal mythopoeic style which draws, most often on old Testament” (51). So acknowledging the Rainbow’s linguistic strangeness, Lawrence himself calls it in his letters, “A novel in a foreign language” (250). Lionel Kelly, like Fiona, claims in her introduction of the book *The Rainbow* that, “the idea developed in it needs special vocabulary for their utterance.

Another critique Evelyn J. Hinz, in her article “The Rainbow: Ursula’s Liberation” ,looks at the struggle of the character Ursula Brangwen in a metaphysical, spiritual light. She claims that “Ursula’s journey to discover herself is also a journey to understanding her spiritual beliefs” (28). Ursula cannot see the physical God whom she passionately desires to see, as a result, for Hinz “Her schizophrenic accommodation of the Bible can no longer be sustained, she will reject religion altogether” (10). Making a point of departure I am going to prove that Ursula does not reject religion as a whole but the myth of Christianity in particular. And finally Ursula becomes a freed one.

This study emphasizes how Lawrence tries to create a modern religious belief by making point of departure from holy Bible of Christianity. He defines religion from logical point of view, not from how traditionally people used to have faith on it and consequently he condemns religion for its impractical aspect. This paper revolves around these modern concepts and tries to show loss of faith in religion and spirituality which results the material emphasis of Victorian society.

Lawrence is heavily influenced by Nietzsche and his philosophy of 'God is Dead' in particular governs the characters of the female heroine in *The Rainbow*. His philosophy soared up to challenge the established fundamental and traditional concept of morality. As quoted by Richard Ellman and Charles Feidelson, in their book *The Modern Tradition* "The philosophy 'God is Dead' challenges the deeply rooted religious faith" (905). They found that the religion, especially Christianity, exercises the rules and rituals as an instrument to satisfy their needs without hearing the individual's desire. Lawrence, in his letter, expresses his belief that, "When we die, like a rain drops falling back again into the sea, we fall back into the big simmering sea of unorganized life which we call God" (256) of unorganized life. So Ellmann and Feidelson call "Christianity is the religion of pity" (905). Nietzsche's philosophy of 'God is Dead' exchanges proximity to the philosophy of existentialism. This idea celebrates the free expansion of one's impulse without caring for any other morality and religion. Thus Nietzsche and Lawrence equivocally advocate the religious declination and vitalism of individualism.

Lawrence critiques the Christianity for it is a dualistic approach. For him it only invites the perpetual conflict between mind and the spirit which kills a person's power for creativity. He suggests in his book *The Letters*, "one must live quite apart, forgetting, having another world, a world as yet uncreated" (344). His philosophy of "Blood Consciousness" conveys the similar message which opposed the idea of "mental consciousness." Mental consciousness refers to one's knowledge of the established morality, science, religion and other intellectual dimensions of the society. But his philosophy of "Blood Consciousness of Man and Nature" is deeply rooted to the natural world. In the replacement of Christian religion, he announced his own religion of 'Blood Consciousness' about which he writes in his letter to Earnest Colling: "my great religion is belief in the blood, the flesh, as being wiser than the intellect. We can go wrong in our minds but what our blood feels, believes and says is always true. The intellect is only bit and bridle. So what I care is knowledge" (*Collected Letters* 180). In these lines Lawrence gives more values to intellect as obvious. By believing in blood, he conveys us that each of us ought to live our life according to our own choices, desires, wills and inner impulses, instead of being enslaved to the social production of knowledge.

This novel incorporates its own social and historical survey of England of the contemporary time which begins with: "The Brangwens had lived for generation on the Marsh farm . . . Two miles away, a church-tower stood on a hill . . . Whenever one of the Brangwen in the field lifted his head from his work, he saw the church-tower at Ilkeston in the empty sky" (3). Through these lines the writer rightly presents the ethos of the people of that time and shows how the church was stood for them. *The*

*Rainbow's* Marsh farm is a place deliberately set apart from village or community, where life continued in a real isolation and it is a place where we can see many of the problems of actual farming. Lawrence is not interested in the problems of work but he is more concerned with the place, with the family, and above all with the religious faith they have. Lawrence gives a beautiful description of the Marsh farm and church. As Paul Poplawski views this novel in his essay "The Twentieth Century reminiscent of a traditional social realist novel, with its precise cause and effect presentation of external historical facts" (577). This novel rightly carries the ethos of the time of twentieth century where different changes saw in different fields like science, technology, innovation and especially in the faith of people which directly impacted on their belief of religion. Those high Church of England carries the religious stance of that contemporary time. Lawrence's concern is with its religion and social industrial impact upon the world at large where the little world centered on the Brangwen farm in the Erewash valley on the broader between Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire.

*The Rainbow*, concerns with matriarchal society where three main female characters Lydia, Anna and Ursula lives a life of domination over a family. The protagonists Lydia and Anna serve as a pretext for Ursula, the central protagonist. In the Bible, the women have been denied the access to education and social activities, so they are inferior to men both spiritually and economically. But unlike the female in Bible, women in this novel has achieved goals remaining her natural self in religion as well as in family where "the woman was the symbol for that further life which comprised religion love and morality"(13). When Ursula is young, she has also achieved the self consciousness under the influence of her grandmother. This way *The Rainbow* makes parodic interpretation of the Bible.

In the Marsh farm, women were given the position of head of the family. Hence they symbolize for love religion and morality. "In the close intimacy of farm kitchen the women occupied the supreme position . . . the woman was the symbol of love religion and morality" (13). When Tom was seventeen, his father fell from the stack and then the mother occupied the supreme position at home. The children depended on her for their stability. She was the anchor and security and became the restraining hand of god. When we look for it in the context, the turn of 20<sup>th</sup> century when Lawrence was writing *The Rainbow*, there was abrupt and fundamental social changes. Women were not confining in the house as an "angel of the house" rather they are occupying a supreme position in the society. This way Lawrence designed this novel imbued with the new spirit and these fundamental changes of that time.

Lawrence's *The Rainbow* deals directly and candidly with the question of religion, and its plot in fact incorporates its own social historical survey of England at the end of the nineteenth and the start of the twentieth century. Since this novel was written in the period of first world war, it has frequently marked the different movement of war and its impact on different characters. The novel describes: "The war went on, and soon Tom came back at his work. A darkness has come over Lydia's

mind. She walked always in shadow, silenced with a strange, deep terror having hold of her desire was to seek satisfaction in dread to enter a nunnery, to satisfy the instincts of dread in her, through service of a dark religion. But she could not" (40). Previously people used to take religion for their purification, understanding morality, uniting people, safety for life and understanding humanity. Unlike this, characters in the novel are engaging in religious activities lacking eagerness and feeling the religious service as dark and unwanted act. Hence Lawrence grasped the new spirit on these fundamental changes. Lydia takes refuge in religion in the time of dreadful moment, but she could not yet relax of it. Thus they live in a complete hallucination in the time of war. Lawrence depicts the echo of religious disbelief in his characters through their vulnerable service to god and religion.

Lawrence was religiously conscious when he was creating characters. Tom has married to Lydia Lensky with a daughter. At first he did not like her being with that child and he "seethed with fury at the small child" (61). But after two years of their marriage, it was much more wonderful to them than it had been before. "It was the entry into circle of existence, it was the baptism to another life, it was the complete confirmation"(78). The word 'baptism' and 'confirmation', here are brought from Bible and the concept here, also brought from Bible itself. These terms as Lionel Kelly claims, "signifies moral and spiritual purification"(xiv). They felt like "everything was lost and everything was found" (78). It shows that was thenew and just discovered world to them which is yet to be explored.

Tom Brangwen never loved his own son as he loved his step child Anna. He enjoyed being father and only gave him satisfaction to know he had a son. He was its father was enough to him. It does not matter more for him that Anna Lensky was born of Lydia and her former husband Paul. "God was her father and mother. He had passed her through the married couple without fully making himself known to them"(79). The phrase "God was her father and mother" proves that the writer is giving credit to the God for our life, still having religious dilemma in the time of declining religious faith. Tom here loves his stepdaughter as she was gifted to him by God himself.

The Brangwen family were separated from the world, isolated, "a small republic set in the invisible bounds"(84). The mother had some belief which was never defined as she was brought up a Roman Catholic. She had gone to the church of the England for protection. Yet she had some fundamental religion. It was as if she worshipped "God as a mystery never seeking in the least to define what He was"(85). She shone and gleamed to the Mystery and she glanced with strange, mystic superstitious which never found expression in the English language. Lawrence indicates through the mystery of religion through which the rest of the world knew nothing and addresses this mystery as unthinking knowledge for which one ardent follower could never say what it meant to him or her.

Lawrence's characters in this novel are engage in activities, having dilemma on religious faith and conscious, where the younger generations are more critical than the older generation. Anna, the girl from the second generation, "listens the words in church and feels sterile"(86). She tries to drag things into consciousness, and could

not go on with her fault finding and her criticism and expression of dissatisfactions. She feels even her father is against her as he follows the religion blindly. The sense of falsity of religious doctrine makes her hate the things expressed:

Many ways she tried of escape. She became an assiduous church goer. But the language meant nothing, and it seems false to her. She hated to hear things expressed, and put into word. While the religious feelings were inside her they were passionately moving. In the mouth of clergyman, they were false, indecent. She tried to read but again the tedium and the sense of falsity of the spoken words put her off. (87)

It tries to show the gradual declination on religious faith in different generations where we see Anna, from second generation feels the language of the church is false. It seemed to her all nothingness in religion. Her problem with Christianity was partly because youthful rebellion, partly the impact of ferment of modern ideas, but much deeper than both of these ran the problem of pain with an inability to understand spirituality.

The range of Lawrence's Biblical allusions is as Kelly claims "brilliantly modulated to fit the sign and language of slightly drunken proud father who is giving away his daughter in marriage" (xviii). Tom's speech about marriage and about angels at the celebration of Anna and Will's wedding is an occasion, when Tom says, "There is no marriage in heaven . . . but on earth there is marriage . . . Marriage is what we are made for . . . And a woman enjoys being a woman. At least we surmise she does . . . now for a woman to be a woman, it takes man. Therefore we have marriage . . . there is no marriage in heaven but on earth there is marriage" (114). Anna's marriage to Will was set and prepared the marriage ceremony at the church. The atmosphere of the church was religiously decorated. The speech that Tom made at the party is full of religious impulses and he talked often about heaven, soul, Angel in relation with marriage. Here, marriage is taken as god's idea and covenant between one man and one woman. These characters seem to have faith upon the god's intention for marriage. This way, Lawrence brings trend of marriage as defined in the Bible.

Lawrence asserts in his essay "The risen Lord" that "what we have to remember is that the great religious images are only images of our own experiences, or of our own state of mind and soul" (269). As he asserts in this novel, "there were very few people coming in the church" (130) shows church had made very little influence on people. He questions on the belief system through his character like Anna who "ceased to come to church with any anticipation" (130). Anna makes fun of the vicar who told her to be good in this way and in that but she is not very much interested in being good as they said. She just wants something that is not her ready-made duty and never of herself. The church and the vicar counted always very small in her life. When her husband was roused by the thought of ostensible church, she hated it not for fulfilling anything in her. The church told her to be good but she had no idea of contradicting what it said. This way she demands a serious Christian answer with religious follower. It was shameful to Anna doing these all religious task with unsatisfied desires. But there was nobody to affirm it. She wanted to be like



other people who were decently satisfied. This way the narrator does a study of spiritual and moral legacy and human aspiration.

We can see religious expression through the form of art in second generation's Will and Anna. The writer of this novel also tries to show that in Christianity, female are making subordinated by taking the reference of the Eve, who was said to be made out of Adam. Will, who works for wood carving makes Adam as big as God and Eve like doll. Anna jeered at the Eve, saying, "she is like a little marionette why is she so small? . . . it is impudence to say that woman was made out of man's body, when every man is born of woman. What impudence men have, What arrogance (145)"? Lawrence is digging the story of Bible that how female are making subordinated through the myth of Adam and Eve. But Lawrence seems nowhere to support male's supremacy but centered around the struggle of female. This observation challenges conventional depiction of sexuality in Lawrence that he is also called a misogynist.

The language of this novel is associated to the Bible from which the concept of flood is derived. Through this novel we can examine that there was change came over the Marsh farm as the flood destructed it. Unlike in bible the outcome after flood in this novel is towards progress. In nature flood leads to destruction but here the chapter "Marsh and the Flood" leads to the new chapter of this book "Widening Circle" and "First Love". In this sense we can say that this novel is modernizing the Bible. After the death of their father, Will Brangwen was madly in love with his wife. He is no more in bereavement of his father's death. The death does not shaken him. "Death seemed to gather in him into a mad , overwhelming passion for his wife . . . he was almost beside himself with desire for her " (211). After her grandfather's sudden death from flood when ursula is eight years old, she begins the exploration of self-consciousness and reflects on the life. This way this novel presents a complete denial of the concept of flood of the Bible.

Lawrence satirizes the people who feel that the Church is all in one. He poses his belief from the mouth of Will, who says "there is much that the church did not include. There is life also outside the church . . . temple was never perfectly a temple" (172). But still as a symbol he loved it. The writer further narrates Will looked after stone and woodwork, mending the organ and restoring a piece of broken carving repairing the church furniture but failed to become really articulate, and also to find real expression. He tried to come back to the consciousness and escape out into the world again. But in spirit, he was uncreated. The writer is conveying us to move beyond elementary teaching of church and grow deeper in the words of Christ. Church should be a place where we can grow spiritually and it should not be confined to only a weekly gathering spot.

Anna could not understand her husband's blind and unwanted devotion to the church. It was only the church building he cared for. "He labored cleaning the stone, repairing the woodwork, restoring the organ, and making the singing as perfect as possible" (174). To keep the church ritual intact was his business and to make the form of service complete was in his own hands. He was in his own hands. As Lawrence describes in his novel, we see he was like the lover who knows he is betrayed, but who still loves, whose love is only the more tense. The church was false, but he

served it more attentively. Will's unwanted devotion to church architecture clearly manifests the ethos of religious declination.

We can also see the relation between child psychology and religion. Ursula as a girl of fourteen feels blessed on Sunday and gladly celebrates the day. For her the "whole world is for twenty four hours revoked and only Sunday world existed which remained the maximum day of the week for her"(227). She turned passionately to the sense of eternal security. They sang their Sunday song together but they found strange and undefined place there. In their vision, not in reality that "the white robed spirit of Christ past between olive tree . . . There was a voice in the night calling Samuel, Samuel! . . . But not this night, nor last night, but in the unfathomed night of Sunday"(229). Her act of hearing the voice indicates that Anna is in dilemma to have faith on religion. She neither distrust and reject it nor assimilate in her life. Ursula also partook of the visionary being. Christianity teaches children that there exists a powerful, evil Devil and infuses their childhood with needless fear and dread. They impose information to them that who accept Jesus as their personal savior are good and those who does not accept as personal savior are destined to hell. The narrator further describes that they shrank to apply religion to their immediate action but they fail to do. So they could not fit with the jealous idea of democratic Christian.

We can examine the idea of sin as depicted in this novel. The children felt, there was no actual sin. "If Ursula slapped Theresa across the face, even on Sunday, that was not sin, the everlasting. It was misbehavior. If Ursula's friend Billy played truant from Sunday school, he was bad, he was wicked, but he was not a sinner" (230). For them sin was absolute and everlasting. Wickedness and badness were only temporary and relative. Geoffrey W. Sutton and Brandon Schimidly the editor of the book *Christian Morality* quotes that "those ideas and action which were considered sin in the Old Testament time, became no more sin in the new dispensation of Jesus Christ" (14). Lawrence seems like adopting this very liberal act of New Testament where he defined the gradual change in the attitude and approach towards the idea of sin. In this novel, the theological concepts are interpreted in depth and this is the product of social condition in which Lawrence has lived.

Lawrence insists his view about the value of religion in a family where poverty exists. The poor people are for the immediate life of today. They could not passionately engage in slavish service to the church. To them Jesus is the "another world beautifully shining in the distancelike a white moon at sunset. . . What is the unrevealed God matter, when a man had a young family that needed fettling for? . . . that was dirty, decorating hands of the revivalists which wanted to drag Jesus into this everyday life, to dress Jesus up in trousers and frock coat, to compel Him to a vulgar equality of footing" (230-231). All these were indeed very sobering experiences of the poor. So Ursula does not like evangelical teachings and get a peculiar thrill from the application of salvation to her own personal case "Jesus died for me, he suffered for me" (230). It was distasteful to her. She was enemy of those who insisted on humanity of Christ. Against all this, Brangwen family never subscribed to all their life, to that mystical passion. Through these all descriptions Lawrence tries to convey the issue of Bible must be approached from the perspective of the poor people. The

religious scripture should also cover the issue of poverty and their pain, desire and aspirations.

Lawrence on the other hand questions the reliability of the words of the scripture. Ursula, as a religiously conscious character critiques the value of words and questions on its authenticity. On Sundays, she heard the voice from church as if the church itself spoke the language of creation. "The sons of god saw the daughters of men that they were fair and they took them wives of all which they choose. She would not understand the Son of God in fair, so asked who were the sons of God" (231)? Hearing this, she was confused and triggered by different questions in her mind. She wished to see god physically but she could not and it made her faith decline. She clung to the secret hope and the aspiration of "if there were men not begotten by Adam, who were those and when did they come? How can one recognize one's own origin and if they are not offspring of the God from where they are begotten" (232)? She lived a dual life, one where the facts of daily life encompassed everything, and superseded by the eternal truth. By experimenting what said in the Bible personally several times, Ursula eventually discovers the incredibility and hypocrisy of the religion. This way Lawrence critiques the scripture for being unreliable.

Lawrence makes a vehement criticism, of what he takes to be the church's over emphasis on the crucifixion for sin, at the expense of resurrection. As the novel describes "Can I not, then, walk this earth in gladness, being risen from sorrow? Can I not eat with my brother happily, and with joy kiss my beloved, after my resurrection, celebrate my marriage in the flesh with feasting" (236) proves what is wanted is not resurrection after life, but within life. His belief is same in his essay "The Risen Lord" which goes, "If Jesus rises as a full man, in the flesh, he rose to do his share in the world's work. . . . but it would no longer be the fight of self sacrifice" (269). When Ursula encountered Anton Skrenbensky, she felt him a son of God holding him for her dreams. But yet, she was confused, and thinks of herself as waiting to be rescued from her daily world by one of the unaccountable 'Sons of God' who had "known no expulsion, no ignominy of the fall" (232). This vocabulary still suggests romantic imaginings of Ursula and her complicated relationship to the orthodox ritual of religious observation in the celebration of Christ's birth, crucifixion and resurrection. Lawrence's dislike of abstract knowledge and pure spirituality made him mystical materialist and finally become resentful to the Christian doctrine of resurrection of body.

Lawrence comes to judge eastern philosophy and mind through the words of Ursula who was pleased to know, "that in the east one must use hyperbole or else remain unheard, because the eastern man must see a thing swelling to fill all heaven, or dwindled to mere nothing, before he is suitably impressed" (232). It shows Lawrence criticizes eastern philosophy and religious doctrine for its hyperbole and concept of heaven.

Ursula heard another voice from the church on Sunday that "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into heaven . . . if the speech get apply literally, could not a rich man get to heaven" (232)? But what

was this relation between a needle's eye, a rich man, and the heaven? Who knows the psychological, historical, or local interest of these words. It means the absolute world can never be more than half interpreted in terms of relative world. This shows the writer's dissatisfaction to the word of Christian scripture and comes to criticize it. Should Ursula's father Will, have to give his property to the poor to lift him to the heaven? But she could not even imagine that her father giving all the property and capital to the poor and being equal to the wherrys.

Ursula was dissatisfied, so she reverted to the non-literal application of the scriptures. Her father loved the early Italian painters particularly Giotto and Fra Angelico and Filippo Lippi. But Ursula "accustomed to these pictures from her childhood, haunted out their detail" (233). Sometimes her father has to hurry home, and go to Fra Angelica "last judgment". He did not care whether or not he believed in devils or angels. The whole conception gives him the deepest satisfaction and he wanted nothing more. She adored flowers, light and angels and also she liked the demons and enjoyed the hell. But she was bored of "seeing the representation of the encircled God, surrounded by the angels on high" (234). This way Lawrence does a comparative analysis of different generation and their declining faith on god and religion.

In the time of Christmas, people gathered the feeling of expectation and the atmosphere was filled with mystery. The girls were decorating the church, with cold fingers, till a new spirit was in the church and the boys were learning the old mystery play of saint George and Beelzebub. The expectation grew more tense "The gift were given, and received, the joy and peace made a flapping of wings in heart . . . this especial day joyful and the mother also felt a kind of absentness, as if she were exiled for all her life"(234). But still it become a sort of blank holiday, flat and stale. But Christmas was only a domestic feast of sweet meat and toys without any ecstasy. Where children were enjoying only for the feeling of expectation. But none is celebrating it for the religious and spiritual value of it. The scenario is a clear atmosphere of the time which shows spiritual declination and growing to materialistic life.

In the chapter "First Love" the speaker has discussed about the weekday world and Sunday world. The weekday world is described as everyday world where trouble, greediness, responsibility exists and Sunday world is described as the world where exists sin, myth, illusion, giving things to the poor etc. As Ursula passed from girlhood towards womanhood, gradually she suffered the duality of life, the weekday world and the Sunday world. The religion which had been another world for her, now fell away from reality, and became a tale, a myth and an illusion of this present-day life. "The Sunday world was not real or at least not actual"(237). But still she must have to inherit this heavy numbing responsibility of living and undiscovered life. This shows indeed the tormented life to inherit the responsibility of one's own life.

Lawrence strongly condemns religion through the mouthpiece of Ursula who feels enemy to those who insisted on the humanity of Christ. Ursula was very aware of the reality of her practical world where she had to be responsible for herself and do actions that fulfill what she needs. If Jesus were just a man, living in ordinary human

life, then Ursula was different. But it was the “jealousy of vulgar people which must insist on the humanity of Christ. It was the vulgar mind which would allow nothing extra-human, nothing beyond itself to exist”(237). The lines where she treats religion as “vulgar mind which would allow nothing extra- human” is exactly what Nietzsche blames Christianity for: “Christianity is called the religion of pity. Pity stands opposed to the tonic emotion which heightens our vitality”(qtd in Ellmann Feidelson 905). Lawrence’s concern here is to show our practical world which is untouched by idealistic religion and becomes a burden of everyday life.

The writer also gives more value to the weekday world where one is responsible to own action deeds and duty. Weekday world is to live and to care about ones’ responsibility where Sunday world is for religion. “Ursula Brangwen, must know how to take the weekday life. . . Her body must be a weekday body, held in a world’s estimate”(238). Therefore Ursula’s task now is to learn the weekday life. The Sunday world is now the shade away vision world. It is very necessary to choose weekday world to be responsible to one’s action and deeds. Ursula came to learn the visionary world of Sunday world which is just meaningless and religious world is merely the construction of human being. Ursula’s progressive thought revealed the modernity on the concept of religiosity.

Ursula must reconcile the two worlds, the weekday world and the Sunday world. Hinz describes, to do this, Ursula must accept “schizophrenic view” of the world that accommodates both the spiritual and the physical. Through her relationship with her teacher and lover Winifred, Ursula gains the idea that religion is manufactured through man’s own self importance and fear. She comes to understand that religion is “an externalization of man’s desire for power and self-preservation” that Hinz argues in his essay “The Rainbow: Ursula’s liberation” is a product of Ursula’s limited religions (36). Ursula loves weekday world, the real world, as she finds Sunday world is only a visionary world and denied its vision, which were not true and she demanded only the weekday meaning of the world. For her there must be balance between weekday world and Sunday world. Sunday world says: “Sell all thou hast, and give to the poor”(238), but she did not want to be really poor. Only the thought of being poor and to live like wherrys was a horror to her and she does not like to be at the mercy of others. Of course she could not sell her property to give for wherrys and be like those people. Thus Lawrence blames Christianity for its impragmatic and idealistic philosophy.

The speaker also pays concern on becoming oneself by observing Sunday world and weekday world. The speaker tries to convey against Sunday world which demands tormenting responsibilities and unreal vision. “How to act, that was the question? Whither to go, how to become oneself” (238)? This way, Sunday world makes one is neither responsible to oneself nor responsible to the world. So the writer demands Sunday world and vision must speak in week day terms. Religion loses much of its potency for Ursula. For her religion is a tale, a myth, or an illusion. She questions the truth of biblical miracles, and has come to a point where “She held that which one cannot experience in daily life is not true for oneself” (237). Now it is completely different from her earlier plea for rescue by a Son of God and ashamed of

her religious ecstasy and consequently her faith on religion came to be degraded. Her thought is occupied with spiritual desolation which is equal to Nietzsche's philosophy of "God is Dead".

Ursula wanted to do what was right. But she did not want to do what the gospel said, that, "sell that you have and give it to the poor." So there was no significant relation between gospel's thought for good deeds and her thought. Gospel's words made her dreary and hopeless. So she went away unchristian but clean. There was something impractical about this humble side of Christianity, so unexpectedly Ursula revolted and hated the wherrys, and wished their death. She wished her father would be "Earl William Brangwen, and she would be the lady Ursula . . . ride the gate of cottages on her horse back and giving them shillings from her purse and nourishing food" (239). So she has complained to her father for leaving them like the lurch and making them poor and insignificant. Ursula wished to help other like the gospel's preaching, but she could not because of her inadequacy and insufficiency which makes Sunday world and its vision a poignant yearning to her. This way Ursula is searching for a pragmatic way in religious world.

It was almost agony and confusion to Ursula to know about the world of Jesus. The vision of Jesus itself was non visionary. She, in a "confused heat of religious yearning hated it . . . Vaguely she knew that Christ means something else, in the vision world. The Sunday world speaks of Jerusalem, something that does not exist in the everyday world . . . It is the betrayal from the vision world to the matter of fact world" (240). But it has no part in everyday world, neither seen nor touched with weekday hands and eyes. She wished to have Christ in all her weekday life or the whole life, but she could not. This confusion of the spirit world and material world degraded her and the materialistic world of modern people as a whole.

The writer brings another influencing character, Winifred Inger who came to be the intimate friend of Ursula. Winifred had had a scientific character. She had known many clever people. She wanted to bring Ursula to her own position of thought. They both took religion and rid of its dogmas and its falsehoods. Winifred humanized it all. Slowly Ursula realized that all "the religion she knew was particular clothing to a human aspiration" (287). And the clothing matters almost of national taste or need. "The Greek had a naked Apollo, the Christian a white-robed Christ, the Buddhist a royal prince, the Egyptians their Osiris. Religions were local and religion was universal" (287). Lawrence critiques Christianity as it is a local branch which has no assimilation with universal religion.

Ursula talked so much of religion when she discussed with friends. In religion there are two great motives of fear and love. These both motives are equally great. But Christianity accepted crucifixion to escape from fear. It said "Do your worst to me, that I may have no more fear of the worst" (287). But that which was feared was not necessarily all evil and which was loved was not necessarily all evil. "Fear shall become reverence and love shall become triumph and triumph shall become identification" (287). So Lawrence comes to the conclusion that human desire is the criterion of all truth and good. Truth does not lie beyond humanity, but is one of the products of human mind and feeling. So there is really nothing to fear.

The writer further narrates that motive of fear in religion is base and must be left to the “ancient worshippers of the power, worship of Moloch”(298). So they do not worship power in their enlightened souls. Power is degenerated to money and Napoleonic stupidity. Ursula could not help dreaming of “Moloch”. Her God was the lion and eagle who are not mild and gentle. She worships lion and eagle, “Not because they had power, but because they were proud and strong”(288). They were not the passive subject like lamb or dove. She loved the dignity and self possession of lion. But she could not love lamb because of its passive, submissive, and sacrificial nature and they, trembling submit to fear . . . and become beloved” (288). So she stretched her own limbs like a lion or wild horse, making the heart relentless on its desire. She may suffer thousands deathsbut she would still be a lion’s heart. And she would be separate from this conflicting universe. Through the rest of the novel, Ursula slowly comes to realize that she is a mere individual in a universe comprised of other individuals. For Hinz, “Ursula cannot separate herself from the cosmos, and she learns to accept “the joyousness of dependence” (288).

In the classical references, it is noted that Diana or Atermis is the goddess of the moon. She is also referred to as protector of maidens and her picture is a huntress with a bow and dogs. Lawrence must have used this archetypal myth to design his wild character, Ursula. It is very likely that he is trying to attribute the qualities of the goddess Diana to Ursula in this novel. Her continuous refusal to marry all the men that propose marriage to her depict Ursula as someone possessed by the spirit of a goddess. The restraint in making love is to be connected with the puritanical nature of Lawrence inherited from his mother. This side of him portrays the opposite which blossoms when he meets Frieda. Ursula also portrays this puritanical quality.

I passed through Lawrence’s wrestling with “Bible” in *The Rainbow* then I felt, I began anew. Lawrence looks the Bible as if he is universalizing religion and essential Christian experiences. He sees the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in everyone by his senses. So, he could not believe the omnipotent god who could permit the injustice and cruelty of the world. He cannot believe either in the divinity of Christ or hates Christianity.

If we come understand Ursula’s religious dilemma then only we will recognize Lawrence’s attitude towards religion. Bible, in this novel, plays a positive role where myth is not taken as an argument but it is an attempt to narrate a whole human experience. Therefore religion is not a response to something outside human but an externalization of their desire. And consequently there is nothing to fear because there is nothing beyond man to be afraid of. So fear is the sign of unenlightened mentality. Fear is only that limited experience of limited religion. So we can conclude that Lawrence was deconstructing Christianity and became anenlightened one.

The overall response to the question on D. H. Lawrence treatment of religion in *The Rainbow* is not anti-Christian, rather he is deconstructing Bible in modernist perspective. So that we can say he is modernizing the concept of religion and his approach to treat religion follows the same pattern of his concept “blood consciousness”. This novel can also be viewed as experimenting with religion when

questioning the scripture is thought to be anti-Christian. But Lawrence raised his finger to the unreliable, unpragmatic, superficial and speculative assumptions of Christianity and finally found the way of acceptance. Thus this novel helps to reverse traditional concept of religion to the modern concept. Thus this work is a ground-breaking work of Lawrence. It is no part of my concern here to argue how far his criticism applies to Christianity today. But I think they might be more acceptable to make committed Christian. Though Lawrence's emphasis changed from time to time, his essential objections seem clear. And they might have been summed up in his several corrosive portraits of churchmen. Doing all these, Lawrence accuses Christianity for reducing religion, god and humanity and he deconstructed his own model of doctrines of Bible and Christianity.



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