Elegiac Form and Imagery in Three Modernist Works

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ABSTRACT

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T.S. Eliot's The Waste Land, Virginia Woolf's To the Lighthouse, and D.H. Lawrence's The Rainbow were conceived or written within the same decade 1915 - 1925, and to a large extent their shared elegiac mood is based upon the events of these years. At the start of this period, as England turned increasingly to the notions of nationhood and social cohesion, these writers reflected instead a sense of disintegration and spirituality. They were sensitive to the disruption caused by the war and to the radical changes that had taken place in cultural life. This thesis probes the elegiac mood that characterized their reaction, a mood distinguished by nostalgia for a shattered past, and the drive to reconstruct. We find in their works a tendency to treat the present as a mere interval: fraught with

indecision, ambiguity and instability. Caught between the phantom of a fertile past and the chimera of a better or at least more bearable future, the protagonists of these three works suddenly, even miraculously, discover the bridge of art. Consolation is achieved through the creative efforts of those in the abyss, and with it comes a renewed sense of connection, of the relation between things.

The sense of nostalgia, disintegration and indecisiveness also invited the metaphoric transference of "death" to an historical period. For T.S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf and D.H. Lawrence, the paradigm of death was a useful one, corresponding both to external events and to their personal feelings. That these writers perceived death as having occurred is evident in their appropriation of the various materials of the elegy - its structure constituted in descending and ascending movements; its thematic concerns constituted in the plastic rendering of decay, disintegration and vacancy, the exploration of the symbolic role of nature and the preoccupation with the question of immortality. In each case some scaling down of the historical landscape was necessary

in order to accommodate it within an elegiac mode. By metaphoric extension the deaths of Mrs Ramsay and Tom Brangwen come to represent the novelist's sense of the death of an era. In T.S. Eliot's poem, the correlation between a parched landscape and a generalized dessication echoes the pastoral elegy's convention of imitative nature.

The tendency towards simplification is also present in the imagery of The Waste Land, To the Lighthouse and The Rainbow. The historical movement from Victorian to modern spiritual beliefs, aesthetic perceptions, and sexual mores that the three works document is described in images of water and flooding. The flood which overcomes Tom Brangwen and Phlebas the Phoenician, and which accompanies Mrs Ramsay's death, is exchanged for navigable seas in The Waste Land and To the Lighthouse, and for an over-arching rainbow in The Rainbow. In Eliot's poem, the drought is spiritual in origin; in To the Lighthouse the stretch of sea between mainland and beacon is representative of both an aesthetic and a familial distance; in The Rainbow, the driving rain and galloping horses are sexual forces. The three creative impulses reflected in these

images of drought, sea and rain, all derive from an identical source - water as the symbol of the unconscious. Thus the three works approach consolation via the same element, water, to the same end, creativity.

If the most important thematic projection of their elegiac mood is a contemporary failure in personal relations, then the most significant consolation that Eliot, Woolf and Lawrence offer is a reaffirmation of love. This is reflected in the oracular commands of the thunder, in the rapprochement of Mr Ramsay and his children, and in Ursula's willingness at the novel's conclusion to embrace rather than to embattle. This consolation in love is achieved only after an arduous journey has been undertaken, a journey that is at once that of the sun-hero beneath the sea, of the questers in search of the Grail, and of the mourner as exile.

I attempt to show the similarities between The Waste Land and the pastoral elegy through direct comparison. For the purposes of this comparison, Thomas P. Harrison's The Pastoral Elegy provides most of the primary sources in translation. To the Lighthouse is examined

within its autobiographical context, and apart from the diaries, a volume of unpublished autobiographical writings under the title Moments of Being, and Leslie Stephen's Mausoleum Book, have proved valuable. The Rainbow is approached in the context of Lawrence's critical writings, his poetry and novels. The Introduction furnishes a brief introduction to the term elegy, and to some of the anthropological sources of the pastoral elegy.

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INTRODUCTION

It should be made clear from the outset that my intention in this thesis is not to redefine The Waste Land, To the Lighthouse and The Rainbow as elegies. The titles of these works present us with no corpse, nor is their subject the death of one individual. Even Mrs Ramsay's death cannot account entirely for the sense of loss and dispersal that pervades the last two sections of To the Lighthouse. Thus I have rather tried to argue for an elegiac mood, based on just this generalized sense of loss and dispersal, which is transformed by an artistic process into a consolation. Herein lies an elegiac sleight of hand, since out of the very depths of despair must be extracted both the reason for joy and the means of renewal. And in spite of the spiritual and intellectual battles that are fought in order to win that consolation, the ultimate effect of the words "Shantih shantih shantih", of the line drawn on Lily's canvas, or of the rainbow arching over Beldover, is comparable in deftness and facility to the twitching of a

mantle, the sudden turning to "fresh woods, and pastures new".

Although I am arguing for no more than an elegiac mood, some introduction to the term "elegy" is essential, since it has never enjoyed uniformity of use. In addition, such an introduction must necessarily return to the original sources of the pastoral elegy, which will in turn clarify what is meant by elegiac form and imagery.

The ancient Greeks traced the etymology of the word "élegos" to a phrase meaning "to speak well of the dead".[1] While scholars have quibbled over this derivation, and poets have not always used the term uniformly, its strong associations with mourning and the commemoration of the dead have remained. The problem stems partly from the fact that the earliest extant "elegies" we have are almost without exception <u>not</u> about the honoured dead, so that a scholar like C.M. Bowra would define the elegy by purely technical criteria: as a two line stanza of an hexameter followed by a pentameter.[2] But as M.Alexiou points out, this couplet, which can stand freely on its own, lends itself to instructive and commemorative

purposes, as well as to extemporizing, and these factors, combined with the idiomatic Greek expression "to speak well, as of the dead", indicate the strong possibility that the metre did once carry a message about the dead.[3] Alexiou suggests that the élegos was originally an after-supper song, passed around the table by the men, but always serious in content, and ideally suited to social and political themes as well as to the praise of individual men and events. This vein of serious social comment and gnomic wisdom seems to have been retained in the elegiac tradition, and is to be found in Lycidas and the Anglo-Saxon elegies respectively. From the start, the identification of elegy by tone has been as important as its definition according to metre. In the words of A.E. Harvey, "it becomes possible to understand how the non-threnodic elegy may have grown out of the threnodic: the mood of both is similar, that of advice, exhortation and reflection".[4] Coleridge outlined the peculiar attraction of the elegy, and some reasons for its wide range of uses, in this way:

> Elegy is the form of poetry natural to the reflective mind. It may treat of any subject, but it must treat of no subject for

> itself; but always and exclusively with reference to the poet himself. As he will regret for the past or desire for the future, so sorrow and love become the principle themes of elegy. Elegy presents everything as lost and gone, or absent and future.[5]

As élegos became elegy, so the classical meter fell away, resisting translation as the term itself did not. Confusion, stemming possibly from earlier uses of the term without reference to death or mourning, resulted in Elizabethan "elegies" on subjects both erotic and didactic. F.W. Weitzman quotes an interesting use by Alexander Barclay, whose phrase "I tell mine elegy" appears to signify the same thing as "I make my moan".[6] Similarly, Drayton's "For now as Elegiack I bewaile" introduces some bitter commentary on "these poor base times".[7] Elizabethan poets whose subject was the death of a particular individual would include this fact in the titular formula "Elegy on the death of...". Not only was death frequently not the subject matter of their elegies, but Webbe even categorized the elegy as "comicall", along with "epigrammes... and delectable ditties which poets haue deuised respecting only the delights thereof".[8]

Our association of the word "elegy" with death

and lamentation has grown out of ancient Greek theory rather than practice, as well as out of the more stable tradition of pastoral elegy, beginning with Theocritus's First Idyll. The pastoral elegy mourns the death of a shepherd who is never just a shepherd, but a god and poet and lover too, and it is through this rustic figure and all his far-reaching representativeness that "the pastoral process of putting the complex into the simple" is achieved.[9] As shepherd he represents an ideal rustic society; as god he is the wounded vegetation spirit typified in the figure of Adonis, as poet he is the purveyor of artistic perfection. In spite of its inventory of conventions,[10] the pastoral elegy is remarkably flexible: the shepherd-god figure facilitates an easy transition from pagan to Christian literary traditions. The form quickly established itself as a way of talking about something else apart from death - it is not a genre than demands personal grief.

From the earliest times the grief within the cults of Adonis, Attis and Osiris was carefully premeditated; the tears and wailing were intended, in Frazer's words, "to propitiate the corn-god, who was then either perishing under

the sickles of the reapers or being trodden to death under the hooves of the oxen in the threshing floor".[11]

The myths that originated in the ancient Mediterranean civilizations to explain the seasonal cycle of birth, growth, flowering, decay and death, as well as the daily cycle of sunrise and sunset, still serve as the foundations of elegiac form. Elegiac form or movement consists of a descending action, brought about by a death, and an ascending action, brought about by a rebirth. The descent is at once the disappearance of all vegetative growth into the infertile soil of winter, the journey to the depths of Hades, and the sinking into a trough of despair. The ascent is at once that of the crops in spring, of a god reborn, and of happiness reasserted.

If we examine it more closely, the myth which accounts for the daily disappearance and reappearance of the sun has a perfect elegiac structure. The sun is a hero, devoured by a water-monster in the West.[12] Inside the monster's belly, the hero is borne back towards the East in a journey under-water. The hero lights a fire in its belly, and feeling hungry,

cuts himself a piece of the monster's heart. When the beast fetches up on dry land in the East, the hero cuts it open and slips out - hairless, because of the great heat within the monster's belly. In doing so, the hero may be able to free those unfortunate ones who were the monster's previous victims. The journey can be illustrated thus:

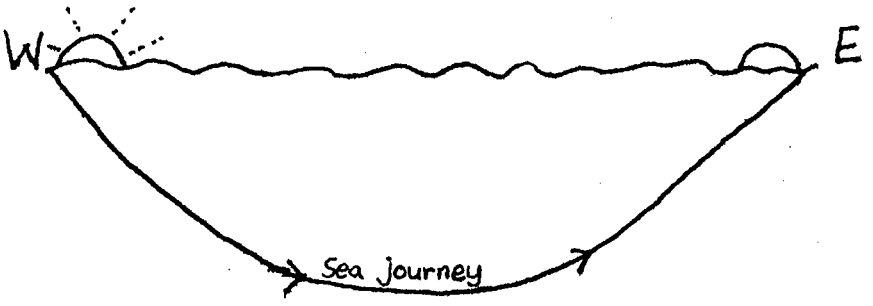

Fig.I: The Journey of the Sea-monster

This myth contains all the essential elements of the elegy: the death which is in a sense false because the rising movement is assured, and because the experience is an enriching one; the concept of death as a sea-journey which is a recurrent motif; the cheating of death by using it as transportation to a place of rebirth; and the achievement of an ascent through a paradoxical feeding off death, indeed,

off the very heart of death. In addition, the sinking down into the sea symbolizes the descent into the depths of the psyche, in an attempt to break the grip of what Jung would term the "ego-consciousness" on the unconscious.[13] Elegiac movement is thus often a movement from individualism to a love that is achieved without thought of personal survival. Then finally, the importance of women in elegiac form and imagery is confirmed by this myth. Both the belly of the sea-monster and the sea which surrounds it suggest the womb, and the idea that rebirth is achieved through the fertility of a woman. The problem in the three works I will discuss is the growing unwillingness of women to adopt this role, as well as their refusal to enact their tasks (ancient in origin) of lamentation, and of consolation.

The motif of the journey through water has another anthropological precedent in the throwing of the effigy of the dead Adonis into the sea at Alexandria. It was borne to Byblos by the current in seven days, and thus resurrected. As in the story of the hero who cuts open the monster's belly, thereby saving many others, the resurrection of the god is cause for universal joy. The descent of the god

that was thought to take place when the crops were buried underground, was also seen as a journey undertaken for the express purpose of combating Hades and saving mankind from death. In the Grail legend described by Jessie Weston, the knight-hero who goes out to save the wasted land must ask questions about the significance of certain portents, before the land can be restored to fertility. In The Waste Land, To the Lighthouse and The Rainbow, journeys of various kinds are undertaken but they are meaningless except when, like James's trip to the lighthouse, they are undertaken in a questioning spirit. The asking of a question implies the search for meaning, a search prevalent in all three works. In the Grail legend, the questions that are to be asked refer to the lance with its bleeding tip, and ... to the chalice, sexual symbols as Miss Weston points out.[15] This introduces two further concerns central to the three texts: the extent to which the sexual relationship can bring consolation, and the relationship between sex and death.

Alexiou points out that "moirológi", the general term for "lament for the dead", could also refer to events such as departure from

home, a change of religion, or even marriage.[16] The nexus of lament and marriage rite is strengthened by the fact that the dead were often dressed in wedding attire, and that marriages and funerals were treated as fundamentally similar occasions, as both constituted rites of passage within the cycle of human life.[17]

In To the Lighthouse, Mrs Ramsay's concept of marriage involves the death of one's own personality in favour of a fusion with the loved object. In The Rainbow, the death-like oblivion experienced during sexual communion ideally leads to a sensation of being newly born. While love is seen as the source of renewal, the failure of love is seen as the source of a fragmentation and disintegration that symbolizes something more than just the decline of its own: the decline of a civilization. After Mrs Ramsay has died, and with her the last traces of a stable England basking under the reign of Victoria, the surviving Ramsays and their friends seem to shy away from one another. Again, once the Brangwens move off Marsh Farm to meet the demands of the twentieth century by taking up occupations in town, the old sense of complete satisfaction

in marriage begins to falter. And the characters in The Waste Land, left rootless and stupefied after the First World War, when they are not alone, make futile attempts to engage one another's attention. Such attempts turn out to be no more than mercenary or commercial exercises: Madame Sosostris is surely paid for her advice; the woman at her dressing table has to revert to emotional blackmail; Lily is warned to give Albert "a good time" or face the consequences; and a "small house agent's clerk" finds the moment "propitious" and takes advantage of an indifferent typist. Thus the death mourned in the three works I will discuss is no less an organic death than that mourned in the mythological antecedents, except that in these works it is the organic, familial connection between people that has been severed rather than the earth's fruitfulness at the winter solstice.

The transition in the focus of mourning from vegetative death to the material destruction or decay of a civilization, was made early on in the history of the elegy. Alexiou reveals that a monody composed in the second century A.D. by Aelian Aristeides, on the earthquake that swallowed up Smyrna, moved the emperor to

tears.[18] Several famous laments have the subject of the fall of great cities after siege or battle: the cities of Constantinople, Athens, Malta, Cyprus an Crete were all mourned in this way. It is an easy step from mourning a city that represented all the greatest and the best in the civilized world to mourning an era now lost. Northrop Frye points out how easily the passage of civilized life was assimilated to the organic cycle of growth, maturity, decline, death, and rebirth in another form.[19] Yet herein lies a paradox for Eliot, Woolf and Lawrence: though the decline of a civilized centre, or of an era of civilization, might approximate the stages of organic decline, the decline itself is caused by the erosion of organic, familial links.

Thus the elegiac mood of The Waste Land, To the Lighthouse and The Rainbow involves a complex sense of loss. The ebbing of a Golden Age that the three works are at pains to document, is at once welcomed and wistfully regretted by the poet or novelist. It is difficult to pass off as no more than irony those evocations of the past that seem to have been composed in the spirit of idylls, and which are often at variance stylistically with

the rest of the text. When Virginia Woolf describes Mrs Ramsay for example, she tempers her irony towards this "angel in the house" with such tenderness that it is sometimes difficult to know how to respond to the novel's central figure. Even to the somewhat delapidated family holiday house, Mrs Ramsay brings an aura of gracious late Victorian living. There is a sense of security and rightness in the regular breathing of the sleeping children, in the regular meals, the kindness, charity and hospitality offered by Mrs Ramsay. Her matchmaking represents another face of this neatness and ordering: no loose threads are allowed. She belongs to the era of "the Bank of England and the Indian Empire, of ringed fingers and lace"; the era of clear distinctions between the roles of men and women, then in the process of being challenged.

The opening of The Waste Land contains a similar evocation of a lifestyle the beauty and ease of which appear now only as a memoir:

> And when we were children, staying at the arch-duke's,
> My cousin's, he took me out on a sled,
> And I was frightened. He said, Marie,
> Marie, hold on tight. And down we went.
> In the mountains, there you feel free.
> I read, much of the night, and go south in the winter. (ll.13-18)

The first few pages of The Rainbow present a rural idyll: the Brangwens of Marsh Farm live close to the soil, satisfied, having ample, in harmony with nature, unquestioning, fertile. Despite the outward-looking of the Brangwen women, their world is insular and secure. The Brangwens are described as having a natural superiority, and their aristocratic claims are enhanced by their connexions with immigrants of the Polish ruling class. In all three texts, it is interesting to note that England's other "Golden Age", the Elizabethan era, is recalled. Ursula dreams of a time when she might have seen "the stately, gorgeous barge of the Queen float down, the crimson carpet put upon the landing stairs, the gentlemen in their purple-velvet cloaks, bare-headed, standing in the sunshine grouped on either side waiting" (p.362). Like Eliot in "The Fire Sermon", she quotes Spenser's lilting refrain in remembrance of this period of England's history:

> 'Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song.'

Though the link in To the Lighthouse may be more tenuous, it is nevertheless significant that the last view we have of Mrs Ramsay alive is of her reading Elizabethan poetry. She reads "The Syrens' Song" by William Browne

("Steer, hither steer your winged pines, all beaten Mariners"), and Shakespeare's sonnet 98 (From you have I been absent in the spring"). These poems of yearning, lyrical beauty evoke Mrs Ramsay herself - the great, almost fatal, attraction she holds for men, as well as the sense of betrayal by absence that characterizes her death.

In "The Fire Sermon", Eliot focuses on the relationship between Elizabeth and Leicester, but the mood of nostalgia is soon corrected: the barge becomes a "canoe" and the relationship sterile, lustful, meaningless. In this way the yearning for the past is qualified by the apprehension that the changes that have taken place have been necessary, if not for the better, since corruption has taken root in the old order. The sense of yearning that permeates the three texts is the result of a divided perspective: the poet/novelist not only looks backwards to a Golden age, but also forward to a better time that cannot be realized until certain conditions have been met. Consequently, a strain of inconclusiveness runs thoughout these texts, and is moreover, inherent in the elegiac form.

The axis of the elegiac movement is firmly lodged between two points of artistic creation: a past recreated in a golden light, and a future postulated in equally glittering terms, so that the journey of the sea-monster from west to east could be reinterpreted thus:

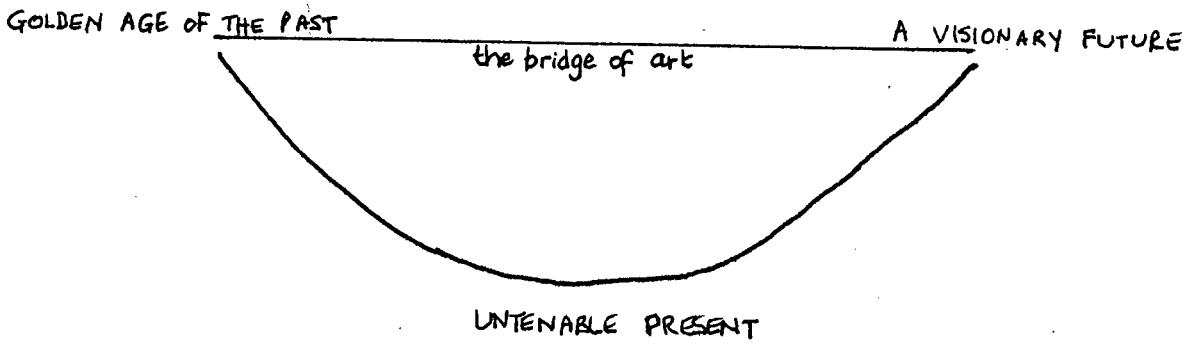

Fig.2: The Elegiac Movement

It is through a self-conscious use of art that the untenable present is surpassed. The movement from despair to joy in To the Lighthouse and The Rainbow for example, is an artistic achievement, dependent upon the drawing of complex analogies. For example, an analogy is drawn between James's reconciliation with his father and the completion of Lily's picture, and between Ursula's recognition of her need for a man and her vision of Beldover renewed.

Four essential elegiac motifs emerge from the myth of the setting sun: the use of cunning - or art - to shape events; the importance of nature; the necessity of a journey through experience that is also a search for meaning and renewal; and the recovery of the source of life which at the same time represents freedom from the bondage of death.

I. T.S. ELIOT : The Waste Land

When the shepherd of the pastoral elegy dies, rustic confusion ensues: crops fail, trees bear alien fruit, the herdsmen cease to tend their beasts. The whole pastoral world is turned upside down, and its values are perverted. In Castiglione's "Alcon", the mourning Iolas "gave no thought to pasturing the flocks or the sleek bulls or after feeding to drive them to the rivers to drink", while at the same time "the sterile fields deny their promised yield, and evil rust has devoured the growing wheat".[20] In Virgil's 5th Eclogue, Mopsus complains in a similar vein: "Often in the furrows to which we entrusted the large grains of barley, unfruitful darnel and sterile oats spring up".[21]

Thyrsis, in Theocritus' first idyll goes so far as to command nature to be unnatural, saying: "now you may bear violets, you bramble bushes; bear them, you thistles, and let the lovely narcissus spread its foliage over the juniper".[22] Thus the pastoral elegy, in

recounting the death of the shepherd, charts also the death of the pastoral world. An effective way of describing such a phenomenon in a modern pastoral elegy would be not only to put forward the image of a desolate and parched waste land, but also to foreground the city as a ready metaphor for death, a death worse than total extinction because it contains some memories of a rustic and ordered past.

Although the shepherd's death is accompanied by widespread agricultural failure, there is always an abundant sufficiency of flowers to be found for mourning purposes: Eliot's lilacs and hyacinths in "The Burial of the Dead" are an instance of this paradox. Bearing in mind the correspondence between the state of death and the city, it is significant that in this opening section of The Waste Land, London appears to us as an "Unreal City,/ Under the brown fog of a winter dawn," [23] emerging like a phantom in the season of vegetative death. Passing over London Bridge are the crowds of people who work in the city, who are thus seen to be co-operating with the state of death, and of whom the poet says "I had not thought death had undone so many."

The inhabitants of the Waste Land operate under conditions antithetical to the pastoral ideal. T.G. Rosenmeyer describes the typical pastoral condition as being that of "otium", that is, "vacation, freedom, escape from pressing business, particularly a business with overtones of death", and the opposite of this condition as "ponos", that is, "labour and pain".[24]

This is not to suggest that the shepherds do not work, but that more emphasis is placed on the tranquility and harmony of their pastoral world, and especially their singing competitions and noontime period of rest. "Labour and pain" destroy this happy state, thus bringing about a pastoral death. Eliot's wasted city can be seen to be populated by the working dead; there is

> Mr Eugenides, the Smyrna merchant
> Unshaven, with a pocket full of currants
> C.i.f. London: documents at sight,
> (ll.209-211)

as well as the typist, the "small house agent's clerk" and the "city directors", all in "The Fire Sermon". Even Madame Sosostris is a business woman of sorts, the more so because of her brisk and commercial method of telling fortunes. If work is analogous to death, then

the life that has departed from us must be associated with scenes of leisure and play, remembered even in the state of death. Thus I would be inclined to read the passages beginning "Summer surprised us, coming over the Starnbergersee" in "The Burial of the Dead", and "The river sweats/ Oil and tar/ The barges drift/ With turning tide", in "The Fire Sermon" as reminiscences of a time before the pastoral death had occurred, rather than as descriptions of an equally decadent, only feudal past. The conventional pastoral contrast between otium and labour appears in The Waste Land in the form of a contrast between the sterile industria of the present and the ease and leisure of a more rural past.

In addition, within the terms of Eliot's poem, the very act of remembrance is life-enhancing. In The Waste Land "remembering" is consistently used as a metaphor for reviving, while "forgetting" is used in the sense of accepting death. Once more the fall and rise pattern of elegy is traced, this time in the sinking down of experience into the unconscious, and its resurrection through the intervention of memory. Phlebas, the Phoenician sailor in "Death by Water",

a fortnight dead,
Forgot the cry of gulls, and the deep sea swell
And the profit and loss,

having died, it seems partly, to escape the urban death already identified: the commercial pursuits involving "profit and loss". These lines suggest a forgetfulness in death that is more like Shelley's "awake him not! Surely he takes his fill/ Of deep liquid rest, forgetful of all ill".25

Since a state of forgetfulness permits the inhabitants of The Waste Land to cling on to their dulled and clumsy understanding of things, it has a strong attraction for them. The poem begins with the typical elegiac statement of the cruelty of nature, which renews itself with seeming disregard for man's inability to do the same:26

April is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.
Winter kept us warm, covering
Earth in forgetful snow, feeding
A little life with dried tubers. (*ll.*1-7)

This leads straight into the Munich passage of holiday and childhood reminiscence ("Marie,/ Marie, hold on tight. And down we went"), which acts like the brief "stirring" of "dull roots with spring rain" in its tentative

suggestions of revived life which quickly filter away. The many remembered and half-remembered fragments that make up The Waste Land are not the remnants of an old skin that must be cast off, but remnants that must find some cohesion (yet: "I can connect/ Nothing with nothing"), so that the poem's persona can conclude:

> These fragments I have shored against my ruins. (ℓ.430)

In "A Game of Chess" the physically prepared but mentally neurotic woman questions her male companion in a catalogue of negatives that could be a continuation of the "ye were not..." convention of pastoral elegy. In Milton's Lycidas the mourning shepherd asks

> Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorseless deep
> Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?
> For neither were ye playing on the steep
> Where your old bards, the famous Druids, lie,
> Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high,
> Nor yet where Deva spreads her wizard stream.[27]

This quick succession of negative constructions is echoed by the woman in "A Game of Chess" when she asks

> 'Do
> You know nothing? Do you see nothing? Do you remember
> 'Nothing?' (ℓℓ.121-3)

The reply of her companion is a confirmation of remembrance, and it brings with it the full weight of the tragi-comic reversal as enacted in The Tempest:

> I remember
> Those pearls were his eyes (ll .124-5)

The message to the waste landers is: Think back and you will remember that you are not dead but waiting to be transformed.

To return to the problem of the city as death: the collapse of the urban metropolis forseen in the lines

> Falling towers
> Jerusalem Athens Alexandria
> Vienna London
> Unreal (ll .373-6)

I would read less as an angry prophecy of disintegration than as an indictment of the sordid monetary transactions that dominate the lives of these once civilized centres. "London bridge is fallingdownfallingdownfallingdown" expresses in joyous childish rhyme the sweeping away of the dead crowds we have already wit-

nessed crossing the bridge in the service of the city and its "labour and pain". In "What the Thunder Said", the vision of apocalyptic destruction comes in extremis:

> What is that sound high in the air
> Murmur of maternal lamentation
> Who are those hooded hordes swarming
> Over endless plains, stumbling in cracked earth
> Ringed by the flat horizon only
> What is the city over the mountains
> Cracks and reforms and bursts in the violet air (ll.366-372)

"The murmur of maternal lamentation" is reminiscent of the Adonis cult - of women mourning the dying god. Yet in the myth as recounted by Frazer, the parts of the dead god were carefully collected together, so that the inclusion here of a reference to this cult feeds our expectation that the "cracked earth" will be made whole once more.

The ominously faceless "hooded hordes" are caught as the earth cracks open. In the distance a city is rent apart, reforms and bursts in a way paralleling Christ's boast to the Pharisees. The earth seems endless but it is "ringed by the flat horizon only", and the imagery of cracking and bursting can be interpreted as an expansion and extension beyond such cramping limits. It is interesting that

in what could be called one of the earliest English elegies, the Anglo-Saxon poem The Wanderer, a similar apocalyptic vision occurs:

> The wine halls are crumbling, the rulers are lying dead, deprived of pleasure, the whole proud company has fallen near the wall; some war snatched away and carried off along the onward road: one a bird bore away over the deep ocean; one the grey wolf dismembered in death; one a sad-faced man buried in a grave in the earth. Thus the creator of men laid waste this earthly abode until, bereft of the sounds of the citizen's revelry, the ancient gigantic structures stood desolate.[28]

In The Wanderer, it is the human inhabitants of a decadent society that are seen to be brought down, while the structures remain, but Eliot's protagonist survives the falling of cities, and is in fact graced with divine insight (the "Da" sequence), once the way has been thus cleared. The disruption of an ordered existence is the result of death's intrusion into life, and The Waste Land's constant images of scattering and dispersal are typical of the pastoral elegy. The Greek refrain "Where were ye, nymphs..." is symptomatic of this dispersal upon earth, as is Eliot's "the nymphs are/ departed..."; the nymphs in the pastoral elegy fail in their duties, and because they have not guarded the shepherd and supervised his activities, he is dead. We find, in

the pastoral elegies of Nemesian and Sannazaro, the lament for the shepherd himself as a central figure of authority, as a guiding hand.[29] In The Waste Land, the restoration of just such a guiding hand is presented in the final section in maritime imagery:

> ...The boat responded
> Gaily, to the hand expert with with sail and oar
> The sea was calm, your heart would have responded
> Gaily, when invited, beating obedient
> To controlling hands (ℓℓ .418-422)

This cohesive force lessens the power of the poem's initial wanton "mixing" and "stirring", actions which result in the trouble and confusion of "A Game of Chess". The first death of The Waste Land then, is the symbolic death of the shepherd, who represents the state of "otium", with its attendant order, peace, leisure-time, and non-commercial activity. When the shepherds of the pastoral elegy have sung their lament, however, they always return to this state, and to their flocks and herds, and do not neglect them forever. Eliot's is almost a piscatory elegy, in that the boatsman returns to his steering, and the fisherman to his casting.

From Theocritus's first idyll onward, the

pastoral elegy established itself as the poet's poem: in it the darling of the muses is mourned by his successor. In Theocritus's idyll, Thyrsis, who is described as being second only to Pan, sings of the death of Daphnis; but Moschus was the first to do this of a real poet's:

> ...I sing thee the dirge of an Ausonian sorrow, I that am no stranger to the pastoral song, but heir of the Doric Muse which thou didst teach thy pupils. This was thy gift to me; to others didst thou leave thy wealth, to me thy minstrelsy.[30]

One of the first consolations offered by the elegy is in the very fact of the poem's existence, and in its beauty and permanence. The message is clear: the waters have closed over the head of Daphnis, and he has surrendered his oaten flute to Pan, but the pastoral art is not dead, for I, Thyrsis, sing as sweetly as he. Consolation lies also in the immortality of art: the worms cannot get at it, the poet lives on in fame. In Lycidas, life is cut off by cruel shears, "but not the praise", Apollo comforts the poet.

A recurrent theme of the pastoral elegy has remained the death of a real poet - Sidney, Keats, Clough and Arnold have all been honoured in this way . It quickly became a genre in

which the surviving poet paid tribute, acknowledged debt, claimed inheritance and propounded the theory of immortal fame. The pastoral elegist recognizes that he has not composed in a vacuum, but within the continuity of a rich and fertile tradition. Thus we find skilfully woven into the pastoral elegies references to the pastoral art of those who have worn the laurels before. Many of the most admired pastoral elegies are scholarly assimilations, yet without the sense of a dry compendium that should attend such a practice. The Waste Land itself contains, according to Edmund Wilson, quotations, allusions and imitations of at least 35 different writers, as well as popular songs and passages in at least six foreign languages.[31]

The shepherd's singing contest which frames many of the original pastoral elegies is at an artistic remove from the lament it contains. The singers exchange praise and courtesies (typically likening one another's poetry to the rustling hymn of the pines and the music of the bubbling stream) and discuss the winner's gifts, before the dirge begins. Later, once the sorrowful tale has been narrated, they return happily to their daily

tasks, as if this has been after all, only a brief fictional interlude. Death is absorbed within the context of art, a formal distance is established between the song and reality. The consolation offered by art in the pastoral elegy rests in the control it exercises over death's chaos. One of the most important voices in The Waste Land is that of Ariel, who brings the message that death has been overcome because transforming powers have been at work. At those moments in the poem of seemingly the greatest nullity (after the "nothing" exchange in "A Game of Chess", and after the encounter between typist and clerk in "The Fire Sermon") his voice is raised. Ferdinand, Ariel's audience in The Tempest, is no less important in this process, and his voice too, is heard:

> 'This music crept by me upon the waters'
> (ℓ.257)

The pastoral elegy has a living, speaking voice (it was often written in dialogue form), and its audience - those who must be consoled and taught the lesson of immortality - are often contained within the poem itself (perhaps in the procession of mourners). Consolation is offered in The Waste Land, the Thunder does speak; the point is whether, amidst the "murmur of maternal lamentation" and tolling

bells, or within the empty chapel "only the wind's home", anyone is listening.

The decorated cup which serves as a trophy for the singer of the pastoral lament, with its intricate design containing many elements combined into one harmonious whole, is a symbol of pastoral art. The description of the woman's room at the beginning of "A Game of Chess" corresponds with that of the exquisite drinking vessel in Theocritus' first idyll, and though the similarities are in a sense fortuitous, it is worthwhile to examine them side by side:

> Next a deep drinking-cup, with sweet wax scoured,
> Two-handled, newly-carven, smacking yet
> O' the chisel. Ivy reaches up and climbs
> About its lip, gilt here and there with sprays
> Of woodbine, that enwreathed about it flaunts
> Her saffron fruitage. Framed therein appears
> A damsel ('tis a miracle of art)
> In robe and snood: and suitors at her side
> With locks fair-flowing, on her right and left,
> Battle with words, that fail to reach her heart.
> She, laughing, glances now on this, flings now
> Her chance regards on that: they, all for love
> Wearied and eye-swoln, find their labours lost.
> Carven elsewhere an ancient fisher stands
> On the rough rocks: thereto the old man with pains

Drags his casting-net, as one that toils
Full stoutly: every fibre of his frame
Seems fishing; so about the grey-beard's neck
(In might a youngster yet) the sinews swell.
Hard by the wave-beat sire a vineyard bends
Beneath its graceful load of burnished grapes;
A boy sits on the rude fence watching them
Near two foxes: down the rows of grapes
One ranging steals the ripest; one assails
With wiles the poor lad's scrip, to leave him soon
Stranded and supperless. He plaits meanwhile
With ears of corn a right fine cricket-trap
And fits it on a rush: for vines, for scrip,
Little he cares, enamoured of his toy.
The cup is hung all round with lissom briar,
Triumph of Aeolian art, a wondrous sight.[32]

And from The Waste Land:

The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne,
Glowed on the marble, where the glass
Held up by standards wrought with fruited vines
From which a golden Cupidon peeped out
(Another hid his eyes behind his wing)
Doubled the flames of sevenbranched candelabra
Reflecting light upon the table as
The glitter of her jewels rose to meet it,
From satin cases poured in rich profusion;
In vials of ivory and coloured glass
Unstoppered, lurked her strange synthetic perfumes,
Unguent, powdered, or liquid-troubled, confused
And drowned the sense in odours; stirred by the air
That freshened from the window, these ascended
In fattening the prolonged candle-flames,
Flung their smoke into the laquearia,
Stirring the pattern on the coffered ceiling.
Huge sea-wood fed with copper
Burned green and orange, framed by the coloured stone,
In which sad light a carved dolphin swam.

> Above the antique mantel was displayed
> As though a window gave upon the sylvan scene
> The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king
> So rudely forced; yet there the nightingale
> Filled all the desert with inviolable voice
> And still she cried, and still the world pursues,
> "Jug Jug" to dirty ears.
> And other withered stumps of time
> Were told upon the walls; staring forms
> Leaned out, leaning, hushing the room enclosed. (*ll.*77-106)

These two descriptions mimic perfectly the pastoral elegy's task of distancing the painful event by encapsulating it within a pleasing artistic form. Furthermore, the description acts as a showpiece for the poet's technical skill and creative ingenuity; no attempt is made to hide the fact of artifice. In lines such as

> ...the glass
> Held up by standards wrought with fruited vines
> From which a golden Cupidon peeped out
> (Another hid his eyes behind his wing)
> Doubled the flames of sevenbranched candelabra
> Reflecting light upon the table as
> The glitter of her jewels rose to meet it,

and

> ...Ivy reaches up and climbs
> About its lip, gilt here and there with sprays
> Of woodbine, that enwreathed about it flaunts
> Her saffron fruitage

we are literally made to feel the mechanism of the poet's craftsmanship as he holds the

elements together in a tortuous syntax; we are reminded that the pastoral shepherd's oaten flute is as much an instrument of inspiration as it is a product of engineering. Even more importantly, as we have seen in these two examples, the room or cup described contains a mixture of happy or peaceful images and images depicting frustration and deception. In Theocritus, the drinking vessel captures on its timeless surface a woman's wanton flirting, her suitors' failure and dejection, an old fisherman labouring at his nets, and a boy absorbed in fashioning a cricket-trap while a pair of foxes steal his grapes and his wallet. Yet all these diverse incidents are woven into a single "triumph of Aeolian art, a wondrous sight". The cup motif mimics the consolatory achievements of the pastoral elegy; preserving and making permanent fleeting moments in reconstituting discrete, scattered experiences into an indivisible whole; recreating in the name of beauty and pleasure things harsh, painful and unpleasant; and casting an ironic distance between aesthetic and immediate experiences.

Eliot's room, however, poses a problem, because the woman sitting in her "burnished throne" and

who seems no less "wrought" and "fashioned" than her furniture, is in fact alive - has the potential to move and disrupt the artifice. This mixing of life and art is a corruption of the pastoral ideal, which clearly distinguishes between the two, thus the scene is "troubled, confused". The woman's presence also suggests a failure in life, that it can sink to the level of a stale, mannered appearance. The pastoral scene dictates that her existence in the room is irreconcilable, while paradoxically, the dolphin swimming alongside Philomel ("by the barbarous king so rudely forced") is not an irreconcilable combination.

Philomel, or the nightingale, is a motif which recurs throughout the pastoral elegy often, as in Sannazaro's Eclogue 1, singing a plaintive lay:

> Philomel, renewing each year your ancient woes,
> and with sweet accents making yourself heard by the woods and the caves.

In Castiglione's Alcon, Iolas mourns "like Philomel, who in the darkness/ bemoans her lost brood," and in Pope's Fourth Pastoral her song is equally funereal:

> Such Silence waits on Philomela's Strains,
> In some still Ev'ning, when the whisp'ring breeze

> Pants on the Leaves, and dies upon the Trees.[33]

Shelley finds in the bird's sad notes a particular reference to Keats:

> Thy spirit's sister, the lorn nightingale,
> Mourns not her mate with such melodious pain.

The nightingale's mournful song is in itself appropriate to the elegy, and birds are said to bring the first message of disaster, just as a dove was the first to bring Noah the news that the water had abated and new life could begin. But Philomel has a special significance for the pastoral elegist - she too, mimics the consolatory action because although her person was violated, she was transformed into a bird, and her voice is "inviolable", as is the voice of the pastoral elegy. Her mournful song harks back to her cruel rape, but it is yet, and perhaps even in consequence, beautiful. Inviolability becomes, by extension, immortality, and the elegist's voice is like Philomel's, mournful but conscious that the suffering is over and that experience is ready to be transformed into art. In The Waste Land, Philomel's song juxtaposes the pain and its metamorphosis, encapsulating one of the major statements of the poem, that loveless sex is death.

The death of the lover, or of Love, is of great significance to both the traditional pastoral elegy and Eliot's poem.

The pastoral shepherd, whether Attis, Adonis or Daphnis, is beloved of the goddess of fertility, who is among the chief of his mourners, just as the original vegetation god, Tammuz, was beloved of Ishtar, and mourned by her. As T.P. Harrison has pointed out, the nature which mourns for the dead or dying god in pastoral convention was the thing originally mourned,[34] and the myth of the beautiful young god whose vital reproductive organs are savagely gored by the wild boar is really an account of nature's wintertime loss of fertility. In the myth, the goddess bargains with the queen of the underworld for the return of her lover. Their sexual reunion results in the rejuvenation of nature, as all things begin once more to procreate; but in the pastoral elegy the role of love is not so simple. Bion seems almost alone in adhering to the idea of a genuinely grieving goddess of love; in his poem Adonis has a bleeding wound "but more grievous the wound which Cytherea bears in her heart",[35] and she suffers a loss of beauty that

reflects also nature's harsh winter profile. Even so, her kiss breathes no new life into Adonis, nor does the poem project her journey to Hades in search of him. In her literary representations, the goddess of fertility (Ishtar; Cybele) became more a goddess of love than of reproduction, and there are hints of cruelty and infidelity on her part which make the assumption that she will be the agent of the god's resurrection problematic. In Theocritus's Idyll I, she is a goddess of deception, and not grief-stricken but indignant:

> Ay, but she too came, the sweetly smiling Cypris, craftily smiling she came, yet keeping her heavy anger

And Daphnis tells her:

> Nay, go and confront Diomedes again, and say 'The herdsman Daphnis I conquered, do thou join battle with me',

adding:

> Even I, by Love am now hailed to Hades.

The origin of this antagonism between Cypris and Daphnis is not clear, but it seems that the shepherd may either have been repulsed by her infidelity and therefore unresponsive to her advances, or responsive but later betrayed in trust. The idea that Love does not waste too much time grieving before proceeding to the arms of yet another lissom shepherd, was

developed in later pastoral elegies, and her role as restorer of life correspondingly diminished:

> Soon she saw him as dead, Love in another direction carried away her sorrow swifter than wind, so that she who was but now so smitten with Adonis, forgot him to love an Anchises, A Phrygian shepherd.[36]

It is not just the French poet who is cynical about Love's constancy; John Gay's "louts" are melancholy about Blouzelinda's death only

> Till bonny Susan sped across the plain;
> They seized the lass in apron clean array'd,
> And to the ale-house forced the willing maid;
> In ale and kisses they forget their cares,
> And Susan Blouzelinda's loss repairs.[37]

Fresh love affairs may blot out the memory of the dead lover, but this must be seen as a paltry consolation when compared to the original resurrection and sexual re-encountering amidst all the world's rejoicing experienced by Tammuz and Ishtar. Another potential source of difficulty lies in the fact that love is in opposition to the state of "otium" upon which the pastoral idyll relies, because of its restless and inflammabale nature. The pastoral world is uneasily suspended between the two poles of chastity and licentiousness (both ultimately negations of reproduction) as

represented in the figures of Daphnis and Pan.

The protagonists of The Waste Land are caught in an impossible situation: the origins of the pastoral elegy demand that a woman plays some part in the restoration to life and virility of the dead god, but the women in the poem have only an illicit, contraceptive and bored sexuality to offer. In the lines the protagonist addresses to "the hyacinth girl",

> - Yet when we came back, late, from the Hyacinth garden,
> Your arms full, and your hair wet, I could not
> Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither
> Living nor dead, and I knew nothing,
> Looking into the heart of light, the silence (ll 37-41).

there is a perfect ambivalence as to whether the experience in the hyacinth garden marked a moment of intense passion or a moment face to face with the void of death. The passage operates in the same way as a metaphysical conceit equating death with orgasm.

The development we have to trace in relation to the pastoral elegy is from a spontaneous death (primitive people observe that nature dies), to a mortal wound inflicted on the reproductive organs of a god (the boar unmans Adonis), to a wound inflicted by woman herself, this last being accompanied by a less reversi-

ble impotence. Madame Sosostris' cards predict that "Belladonna, the Lady of the Rocks,/ the lady of situations" will play a prominent role in the poem; but it turns out to be a role involving no more than the passive acceptance of rape (the typist; the Thames daughters; perhaps even Lily if she wants to keep her husband), and resulting only in unfruitfulness (Elizabeth; Ophelia). Although Philomel and Ophelia might have spoken out against their cruel usage, they are trapped by circumstance, and ultimately powerless to protest in words that the rest of the waste landers might understand, but can only suggest the crimes against them in a painfully inarticulate way:

> 'Jug Jug' to dirty ears (ℓ. 103)

and:

> Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies,
> good night, good night (ℓ.171).

The women of The Waste Land cannot reverse the impotence of its male inhabitants because they too have suffered a blow to their fertility (the unanswerable question of modern times is "What you get married for if you don't want children?"), and in consequence they too, require a restitution of vitality. In fact, sexuality is no longer at the heart of the matter, but spirituality, for which physical

sterility acts as a metaphor in the poem. The role of Ishtar and her colleagues in bringing the dead back to life is irrelevant when it is not the reproductive functions of nature that have been wounded, but man's spirit.

Once the expectations of "Belladonna, the Lady of the Rocks" have been disappointed, there is a sudden alteration in the scheme of the poem as laid out by Madame Sosostris. Women and sexual relations no longer feature in "Death by Water" and "What the Thunder said," (except in the "murmur of maternal lamentation" and the woman who does her hair), and despite Madame Sosostris' dire warning ("I do not find/ The Hanged Man"), the implication of the last two sections of the poem is that this card, symbolizing Christ, has indeed been found. The corpse is committed to the waves and has sprouted, without the collaboration of a goddess figure. A transition has taken place from hopes of a physical renewal to hopes of a spiritual renewal, within or without the Christian framework.

There is an interesting myth recounted by Frazer concerning the birth of Adonis. Many believed Adonis to have come to birth in a

tree trunk, from the bark of which he was released after ten months gestation by the tusk of a boar which split open the plant. Thus both his birth and his death were determined by the gash of a boar. From this we gather that the fact of the wound itself was enough to ensure life, a concept supported by the immediate transformation of the spilt blood of Adonis and Hyacinth into flowers. In the story recounted by Frazer of the death of Attis, there is an interesting ambiguity: Attis was thought of either as having been wounded by a boar like Adonis, or as having unmanned himself on a tree. Now if the wound can be said to carry with it the assurance of rebirth, then by a self-inflicted wound the god becomes responsible for his own rebirth, and begets himself. Herein lies the significance of Tiresias' hermaphrodism; with the reproductive organs of both man and woman, he has the potential to beget himself, a potential which has, admittedly, brought him pain, but pain has brought him consciousness. As he is the type of all the protagonists of the poem, they too have the potential for self-renewal. Paradoxically the sexual misdeed (Attis unmans himself, Tiresias witnesses the coupling of snakes, the inhabitants of The Waste Land

indulge in meaningless physical exchange) leads to spiritual awareness, or at least to the realization of a spiritual shortcoming. The impotence and licentiousness of the waste land are necessary forerunners to a more significant sequel, entailing the death of the god.

The Waste Land, with its dual use of the dying god, as a symbol for vegetative and spiritual renewal, traces an historical development in the thought of Western man, in his progression from the animism of the Tammuz/Adonis cults to the mysticism of Buddha and Christ.[38] The predominance of water symbolism in the poem facilitates this transition; the god Adonis or his effigy was committed to the waves in a ceremony which ensured the fertile flooding of the valley in spring, while the Christian waters of baptism and the waters of the flood ensure spiritual cleansing in preparation for an inner rejuvenation. For the Greeks the "sea is the symbol of generation",[39] as for Christians it is "Maris Stella". In following this historical movement, Eliot also pilots us through the archetypal elegiac movement, that is, from a preoccupation with the worldly and the material, which cannot but bring grief and mortality, to a transcendence of temporal

things through meditation upon the divine. It is a move, essentially, to joy. In Virgil we find that

> Even the shaggy mountains, rapturously hurl their voices to the stars; now even cliffs, even the trees shout the song: A god, a god is he, Menalcas! (Eclogue 5, ℓ. 62-64)

And in Milton:

> So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
> Through the dear might of him that walked the waves,
> Where other groves, and other streams along,
> With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,
> And hears the unexpressive nuptial song,
> In the blest kingdoms of joy and love.
> (ℓℓ. 172-177)

It is also within this framework that the elegy's strongest didactic statement can be made as in this warning from Petrarch's Galatea:

> Should anyone cherish things mortal or hope here firmly to plant his steps? Of what avail birth or of what avail riches, or beauty, or youth? (ℓℓ. 84-86)

Sometimes the dead return with injunctions to righteousness, as in Boccaccio's Olympia ("Feed your brother's hunger, give draughts of milk to the weary"),[40] and this is done in a tone not so different from that of Eliot's "Da" sequence, and its injunction to "give... sympathize... control". The realization that the dead person has achieved a transcendent

state invariably brings with it the accusation that the mourner is guilty in grieving - "to pine over one's own loss is not love; to mourn another's happy lot is envy".[41]

In discussing Eliot's alteration in focus from earthly to spiritual concerns, I will examine in detail four passages from The Waste Land. The first is from "The Burial of the Dead":

> What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
> Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,
> You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
> A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,
> And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,
> And the dry stone no sound of water. Only
> There is shadow under this red rock,
> (Come in under the shadow of this red rock),
> And I will show you something different from either
> Your shadow at morning striding behind you
> Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;
> I will show you fear in a handful of dust
> (ll.19-30)

The question which opens this passage is raised by the sterility and futility of the practice of a materialistic religion ("you know only a heap of broken images"). The "Son of man" is a pilgrim sent out to dispel such beliefs, but in the passage from Ezekial to which Eliot refers us, a large measure of the success he hopes to achieve with these "children of a hard face and an obstinate heart" will depend

upon his courage; the repeated injunction to him is "fear not... neither be thou dismayed".

There is never an unequivocal promise of deliverance for the waste land, always some conditions must be met, and it seems unlikely that fear and dismay can be avoided. The "shadow under this red rock" is equivalent to "rivers of waters in drought" in the lines from Isaiah which are the source of this expression, so that lines 23-26 present a paradox: there is no relief to be found (here, "where the sun beats,/ And the dead tree gives no shelter"), and yet relief is offered ("come in under the shadow of this red rock"). The relief offered is part of a process implying liberation from the self, and described in the lines "And I will show you something different...". Significantly, the original fragment from which this section derived was called "The Death of St Narcissus". The expectation of "something <u>different</u>" is a magnificent hope in a land laid waste by repetition and monotony. Our shadows behind and before us are symbolic of our entrapment within ourselves, and within a cyclical view of time dictated entirely by the sameness of endless sunrises and sunsets. "Something different" involves the mystical brotherhood

of a possible future revealed in the chapter from Isaiah: "And a man shall be as another one is hid from the wind, and hideth himself from a storm...". The message is reiterated in "What the Thunder said" :

> We think of the key, each in his prison
> Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison
> (ll 413-414)

Man, looking beyond the limits of his own self and of his daily treadmill, sees "fear in a handful of dust", which is a threatening prospect, but not without compensation. Unknowingly, man carries within himself something different from the things he already knows too well, he carries with him his own mortality, and therein the chance to escape from the earthly cycle of days. The prophet is sent out to the hard-hearted inhabitants of a waste land, but first he must eat a book of "lamentations, and canticles, and woe"[42] which he finds surprisingly sweet, just as "a handful of dust" is a surprising thing to offer as though it were a gift.

The second important passage to look at in connection with this theme is from "The Fire Sermon":

> A rat crept softly through the vegetation
> Dragging its slimy belly on the bank

While I was fishing in the dull canal
On a winter evening round behind the gas-
house
Musing upon the king my brother's wreck
And on the king my father's death before
him.
White bodies naked on the low damp ground
And bones cast in a little low dry garret,
Rattled by the rat's foot only, year to
year.
But at my back from time to time I hear
The sound of horns and motors, which shall
bring
Sweeney to Mrs Porter in the spring.
O the moon shone bright on Mrs Porter
And on her daughter
They wash their feet in soda water
Et O ces voix d'enfants, chantant dans la coupole! (ll.187-202)

Here another advance has been made in the movement away from material preoccupations. In an ugly and polluted industrial setting, surrounded by rats and bones, the protagonist is found in imaginative reverie:

> Musing upon the king my brother's wreck
> And on the king my father's death before
> him
> (ll.191-2)

Casting his line into the "dull canal" in search of a fish, the symbol of life, he thinks of a death by water that is really, in the context of The Tempest, a reformation of character by marine suffering.

Drawing up his line from the canal the fisher enacts his own mental process in which he draws

up from his unconscious an image that will serve as a helpful guide. The correspondence between water and the unconscious established by Jung is important to an understanding of The Waste Land: the drought suffered by its inhabitants is the product of an imaginative and spiritual failure. The action of drawing up counterbalances the flaccid heaviness of the rat "dragging its slimy belly on the bank", and the "white bodies naked on the low damp ground". But this fisherman figure and his elegiac "mens absentia cogitans" is plagued by an urgency ("at my back from time to time I hear...") which interrupts his fertile reverie, and which leads to a false sense of advancement - the rhyme quickens ("Porter/ ...daughter/ ...water"), while the content becomes dangerously flippant ("They wash their feet in soda water"). In addition to this, he is still beset by temporal concerns ("year to year"; "time to time") which in turn inhibit the transition to a non-temporal concept of rebirth.

This transition is made more convincingly in "Death by Water":

> A current under sea
> Picked his bones in whispers. As he rose and fell
> He passed the stages of his age and youth
> Entering the whirlpool

> Gentile or Jew
> O you who turn the wheel and look to wind-
> ward,
> Consider Phlebas, who was once handsome and
> tall as you
>
> (ℓℓ 315-321)

The bones of the previous extract no longer lie in a "dry garret", but have been committed to the waves. Thus there has been a more complete surrender to the unconscious forces. Sinking into the waves has meant the discovery of an unexpected buoyancy; a current lifts the bones and the dead sailor rises and falls, echoing the less satisfactory "stirring" of the poem's opening lines. The cycle of temporal repetition has been surpassed ("He passed through the stages of his age and youth"), and in "entering the whirlpool", a new cycle has been embarked upon. When we now "consider Phlebas", it is to notice that his bodily death is complete. In the return to the sailing boat image lies reassurance as to the buoyancy available even within this death by water, as well as a promise of futurity. We are addressed as "you who turn the wheel and look to windward", and are thus placed in an unusual position of control and granted a forward-looking perspective in the journey ahead.

This journey, documented in "What the Thunder

said" is, however, one of hardship:

> Here is no water but only rock
> Rock and no water and the sandy road
> The road winding above among the mountains
> Which are mountains of rock without water
> If there were water we should stop and drink
> Amongst the rock one cannot stop or think
> Sweat is dry and feet are in the sand
> If there were only water amongst the rock
> Dead mountain mouth of carious teeth that
> cannot spit
> Here one can neither stand nor lie nor sit
> There is not even silence in the mountains
> But dry sterile thunder without rain
> There is not even solitude in the mountains
> But red sullen faces that sneer and snarl
> From the doors of mudcracked houses
> If there were water
> And no rock
> If there were rock
> And also water
> And water
> A spring
> A pool among the rock
> If there were the sound of water only
> Not the cicada
> And dry grass singing
> But sound of water over a rock
> Where the hermit-thrush sings in the pine
> trees
> Drip drop drip drop drop drop drop
> But there is no water (*ll* 331-358)

In these scenes of suffering pilgrimage, there is at least no more of the stagnant, self-satisfied sitting in throne or barge, or by canal. Dissatisfaction has led to a proper search for meaning, and images of dryness and parching are no longer scattered about in confusion in the text but are linked to a landscape of winding roads. The journey is hard and painful, but the pilgrim stumbles on, pressing forward in lines that apparently can-

not pause for punctuation. Increasingly too, the imaginative faculties take over, throwing up images of water and song that challenge the reign of drought that exists in the poet's consciousness. Because of the lack of punctuation, it could be the hermit-thrush's song that produces the tantalizing "drip drop" noise, and this deceit on the part of the bird is indicative of a generalized antagonism found in nature in this section. The hostility that is encountered in the mountains along the way ("red sullen faces") is an essential part of the rebirth by violence endured in both pagan and Christian traditions (in the wounds of Adonis and Christ). The "water-dripping song" is constructed in such a way that the water literally emerges from the rocks in the interchange of lines ("rock/ ...rock/ ...water/ ...water/ ...spring/ ...pool/ ...rock"), and seems to drip from ledge to ledge as the mountainous place is ascended. There is, in The Waste Land, an elegiac recognition that life is a journey, perhaps even a journey in exile because of the death that has occurred. The Anglo-Saxon poem The Wanderer begins

> A wanderer on earth remembering hardships, the violent assaults of enemies, the extinction of a loving family, spoke thus: (ℓℓ 6-7)

And Sannazaro's Lycidas complains in this fashion:

> now I desire only to traverse the bounds of the unmeasured deep and to wander wildly through the stormy waves...[43]

Life, once the book of lamentation has been eaten, is a journey with only grief as a companion, but it is a journey that is also a quest, in search of either fertility or spiritual relief. The conditions of resurrection in the waste land, illustrated in the four passages, are then first, the loss of self, requiring courage; second, the return to spiritual sources, requiring imagination; third, the attainment of control, requiring energy and movement; and fourth, the search for meaning, requiring a journey.

II. VIRGINIA WOOLF: To the Lighthouse

There is a recurrent contradiction in a number of critical readings of Virginia Woolf's To the Lighthouse. While the novel is acknowledged as being one of her finest, and sometimes even as her masterpiece, its predominant poetic qualities frequently leave the critic feeling confused and irritated. I think this reaction has to do with a misinterpretation of the very nature of the work - which is consequently approached with the wrong critical expectations - and that until the novel is read in relation to its elegiac form (even as an elegy in lyrical prose rather than poetry), the various critical objections that have been raised can never be adequately answered. It is perhaps significant that the most recognisable elegiac section in To the Lighthouse, "Time Passes", is the one most often deplored, Arnold Kettle finding it "self-consciously arty and rather thin".[44] Many critics of Virginia Woolf's To the Lighthouse have insisted on judging the work in which she consciously experimented with the novel form,

and which she hesitated even to call a "novel", in the very literary terms she had rejected. Her tentative suggestion that she might find a new way of describing her fiction ("I have an idea that I will invent a new name for my books to supplant 'novel'. A new - by Virginia Woolf. But what? Elegy?)[45] has not received enough attention. It is not enough to say that To the Lighthouse is an elegy in the sense that it mourns the death of Virginia Woolf's parents, or even the passing of her childhood at St. Ives. For their daughter, the memory of Leslie and Julia Stephen was inextricably bound up with the memory of a Victorian ethos that included particular literary attitudes toward life and reality. The death of her parents had this consolation for Virginia Woolf, that she was thereby freed to write. A reality that is made up of moments of intensity, and of objects and scenes that acquire a significance beyond their material existence, can best be communicated via a poetic style and method, and it is this style and method in Virginia Woolf that critics have found overbearing and pointless:

> The preoccupation with intimating 'significance' in fine shades of consciousness, together with the unremitting play of visual imagery, the 'beautiful' writing and the lack of moral interest and interest in

> action; give the effect of something closely akin to a sophisticated aestheticism.[46]

It is in fact a triumph of her elegiac art that she should lament a brief Victorian interlude in the language of a Modernist writer, and it should come as no surprise that style, technique and language are given precedence over character and action: To the Lighthouse, while laying the dead to rest, ushers in a whole new range of fictional possibilities.

The worst kind of criticism of this, as of her other novels, is levelled by critics who unwittingly adopt the attitude of Charles Tansley ("women can't paint, can't write"),[47] and who despise Virginia Woolf's brave exploration of human sensibility and consciousness as being symptomatic of an embarrassing feminine weakness:

> I cannot escape the feeling that from time to time the exercise of sensibility has become an end in itself. Nor do the moments of revelation and illumination always seem illuminative in any real sense; but rather a succession of short, sharp female gasps of ecstasy;[48]

> To demand 'thinking' from Mrs Woolf is clearly illegitimate: but such a deliberate repudiation of it and such a smokescreen of feminine charm is surely to be deprecated.[49]

The lyrical qualities of To the Lighthouse have their origin in Virginia Woolf's impatience

with the limits of traditional narrative techniques. If she was moving toward poetry then she was also bringing the best of prose with her, and any accusation of obscurity or ephemerality must be countered in her own words: "You cannot cross the narrow bridge of art carrying all its tools in your hands".[50]

Although Virginia Woolf's entry in her diary for the 14th of May 1925 says of To the Lighthouse :[51]

> This is going to be fairly short: to have father's character done complete in it; & mother's; & St Ives; & childhood; & all the usual things I try to put in - life death &c. But the centre is father's character, sitting in a boat, reciting We perished, each alone, while he crushes a dying mackerel -

it turned out that her mother, Julia Stephen, and the relationship between her parents, provided the book's focus. It could perhaps have been that when she settled down to it, she found it difficult to write an elegy about a person she did not wholly and unreservedly love. But I think it more likely that Virginia Woolf discovered in the relationship between her parents a duality that became the very essence of her "elegy"; that is, the clash of a destructively harsh factual reality and the realm of creative intuition; the alternation

of pain and comfort; the contrast of resistant and free-flowing forms, of isolation and merging. The spoken dialogue between Mr and Mrs Ramsay with which To the Lighthouse opens becomes a paradigm for the unspoken philosophical dialogue extending throughout the novel:

> "Yes, of course, if it's fine to-morrow," said Mrs Ramsay.
>
> ...
>
> "But," said his father, stopping in front of the drawing-room window, "it won't be fine."
>
> ...
>
> "But it may be fine - I expect it will be fine," said Mrs Ramsay, making some twist of the reddish-brown stocking she was knitting, impatiently (pp.9-10)

Mrs Ramsay's role in this section, "The Window", is that of a transformer, and her knitting of the stocking mimics the action she also performs on another level: she takes the strands of disappointment, failure, insecurity and loss and knits them into the service of her domesticity. She seems at first to represent the ascending movement of the elegy, constantly (as in this quoted exchange) rebuilding the

hopes of those around her, providing a comfort so exquisite that it justifies the loss. All her attributes seem to contribute to her role; she is in a sense "holding back the flood" in her reaffirmation of old, traditional values - marriage, the supremacy of men, the domestic and nurturing role of women, the power of the Empire - attributes held in common with the real Julia Stephen. But she is only a pretender to this position in the elegiac framework of the novel. Mrs Ramsay appears to be attempting to prevent death, to be holding on to the old order, resisting change. Nor does she properly transform the death blows dealt by Tansley and her husband when they pronounce on the weather, - she merely poses a contradictory view which does not take them into account. And finally, if we examine her character in relation to the fairy tale we find her reading to James, "The Fisherman and his Wife", we discover that she is at least partly responsible for the flood. Like the Fisherman's wife, Mrs Ramsay "wanted something more... could not think what it was that she wanted"; (p.108) she is ambitious, if only for her children, she issues commands, she wants to be loved and obeyed. She is not unaware of this aspect of her personality,

"Wishing to dominate, wishing to interfere, making people do what she wished - that was the charge against her, and she thought it most unjust" As character faults, these are negligible, and even if they are freely admitted they are no excuse for critical views such as those of Glenn Pedersen.[52] Furthermore, the story "The Fisherman and his Wife" does not have a relevance to Mrs Ramsay alone; Mr Ramsay himself seeks a fame he has not earned, and an affection and comfort he feels he has to command. Yet even Mr Ramsay has pretensions to holding back the tide of time and destruction, "The father of eight children - he reminded himself... They would stem the flood a bit" (p.66). It is ironic that either Mr or Mrs Ramsay should be seen as capable of "holding back the flood"; they are themselves inevitably a part of the cause of the flood, and destined to be swept away by it. But it is Lily Briscoe who will ultimately take on the role of the transformer in the novel, she becomes the figure of Virginia Woolf herself, who places in perspective the insistent memory of her parents in the creation of an elegiac work of art. That there should have been in the novel some slight inarticulated uneasiness between Mrs Ramsay and Lily Briscoe (over the

importance of marriage; Lily's painting; the feminine role), and that Lily should have found it necessary to reduce the deceased object of her love to an abstract shape (albeit "without irreverence"), (p.52), demonstrates Virginia Woolf's broader elegiac concerns in To the Lighthouse. In Moments of Being she said of the novel "...I wrote the book very quickly; and when it was written, I ceased to be obsessed by my mother. I no longer hear her voice; I do not see her."[53] Her mother was the type of the "angel in the house" of whom Virginia Woolf said in an address "Had I not killed her she would have killed me. She would have plucked the heart out of my writing."[54] Thus the death of her parents was necessary to the survival of her literary skills; the artists Lily Briscoe and Virginia Woolf are able to transform death by co-opting it into the creative process. On what would have been her father's 96th birthday, Virginia Woolf wrote in her diary:

> His life would have entirely ended mine. What would have happened? No writing, no books; - inconceivable. I used to think of him and mother daily; but writing The Lighthouse, laid them in my mind. And now he comes back sometimes, but differently. (I believe this to be true - that I was obsessed by them both, unhealthily; and writing of them was a necessary act.)[55]

One of the most interesting documents to read in conjunction with To the Lighthouse is a collection of Virginia Woolf's autobiographical writings entitled Moments of Being. In the following extracts from this collection it is evident that as early as 1908 Virginia Woolf conceived of the relationship between her parents in terms approximating the sea-voyaging-lighthouse imagery which describes the same relationship in To the Lighthouse:

> After all she was 15 years the younger, and her own age was made emphatic by the keen intellect, always voyaging, as she must have thought, alone in ice-bound seas. Her pride in it was like the pride of one in some lofty mountain peak, visited only by the lights of the stars, and the rain of snow; (p.43)
>
> ...he worshipped in her something as unchallengeably high as the lofty remote peak which she honoured in him (p.43)
>
> ...and each sprang rejoicing to do homage to qualities unlike their own - how sweet, released from the agony and loneliness of thought to recognize instantly the real presence of unquestionable human loveliness! As a seafarer wrapt for many days in mist on the fruitless waters lands at dawn upon a sunlit shore, (pp.43-44)

Here, as in To the Lighthouse, reverence and homage emerge as the chief components of the relationship. Mr Ramsay, hero, voyager, takes off his armour momentarily and demands to know "who will blame him if he does homage to the beauty of the world?" (p.38) As far as Mrs

Ramsay is concerned "there was nobody she reverenced more. She was not good enough to tie his shoe strings, she felt" (p.34). William Bankes, Lily Briscoe and Charles Tansley are like the wreath bearers in the traditional elegy when they praise this couple. The lofty position of Mrs Ramsay is due in part to her goddess-like beauty, and in part also to her role as patroness of marriage and motherhood, so that she tends to invite a distant and idealized affection; Charles Tansley for instance, has a vision of her "stepping through fields of flowers and taking to her breast buds that had broken and lambs that had fallen; with the stars in her eyes and the wind in her hair" (p.18). Lily is torn between the impulse to lay her head childlike in Mrs Ramsay's lap and to laugh hysterically "at the thought of Mrs Ramsay presiding with immutable calm over destinies she completely failed to understand" (p.50). Nevertheless, observing William Bankes' rapture before Mrs Ramsay, "she took shelter from the reverence which covered all women; she felt herself praised" (p.48). With Mr Ramsay it is, as the autobiographical extract suggested, his intellect that is praised and respected, not only by his wife, but by colleagues such

as William Bankes and Charles Tansley as well. Again Lily Briscoe encounters obstacles in her attempt to lay praise at his feet; then, in a moment of comic inspiration, she does just this - praises his boots in fact - and he is satisfied. If we take the analogy of Lily Briscoe as Virginia Woolf and Mr Ramsay as Leslie Stephen, then we see the elegist's subtle inference that her father would not have objected to this portrait of himself, but would have had the capacity to appreciate it. In the quoted passages from Moments of Being, Leslie and Julia Stephen are both seen as remote mountain peaks, attainable only after the undertaking of a difficult journey. Similarly, in To the Lighthouse, Mr and Mrs Ramsay are conceived of as Lighthouse-type figures, yet in each case the effect is entirely different. Mr Ramsay, for example, has this experience:

> It was his power, his gift, suddenly to shed all superfluities, to shrink and diminish so that he looked barer and felt sparer, even physically, yet lost none of his intensity of mind, and so to stand on his little ledge facing the dark of human ignorance, how we know nothing and the sea eats away the ground we stand on - that was his fate, his gift. But having thrown away, when he dismounted, all gestures and fripperies, all trophies of nuts and roses, and shrunk so that not only fame but even his own name was forgotten by him, he kept even in that desolation a

> vigilance which spared no phantom and luxuriated in no vision, and it was in this guise that he inspired in William Bankes (intermittently) and in Charles Tansley (obsequiously) and in his wife now, when she looked up and saw him standing at the edge of the lawn, profound reverence, and pity, and gratitude too, as a stake driven into the bed of a channel upon which the gulls perch and the waves beat inspires in merry boatloads a feeling of gratitude for the duty it has taken upon itself of marking the channel out there in the floods alone (pp.44-45).

Even when Mr Ramsay abandons for a moment his heroic stance, it is only to exchange it for an impersonal form of heroism. He becomes a stake in the sea of human ignorance, a lonely pinnacle of truth and reason by which we can take our bearings. And in contrast to his severe and uncompromising vigilance, we - the rest of humanity - are characterized as "merry boat-loads", a band of thoughtlessly gay trippers reliant on him for our preservation. Thus even when stripped of his name and personality, he assumes a position of superiority. Mr Ramsay's philosophical position is also in contradiction to this view of himself as a lone beacon of protection. On his stark promontory he comes to the realization that we know nothing except that we know nothing, and it is by the light of this truth that he hopes to guide humanity on the dark sea of human ignorance. But he admits that even so "the

sea eats away the ground we stand on" - that inevitably even the outposts of reason will be flooded by these dark waters; in fact, knowledge of death is the only certainty he can provide. Mr Ramsay remains an admirable figure because it takes courage to make such an admission. The starkness of Mr Ramsay's vision can be read in two contrasting ways, which in turn reveal a contradiction in Virginia Woolf's attitude toward her father. Mr Ramsay's keeping of a "vigilance which spared no phantom" suggests that instead of providing the protection of a lighthouse, his beam is really destructive, and so intent upon one single area of concern that it fails to reveal by intermittent strokes a complex and diverse reality. A more sympathetic reading, however, would suggest that this stark singularity of Mr Ramsay's is a thing of beauty. Lily Briscoe is impressed by the "unornamented beauty" (p.146) of his philosophical position, as it is symbolized in the image of the kitchen table. Her description of this image - "it was all edges and angles; it was uncompromisingly plain" - significantly could apply to Lily herself, and by analogy, to Virginia Woolf. Thus Mr Ramsay either obscures reality (by fixing only on one part of it), or in fact

reveals it, by piercing to the essence of a thing, without regard for ornament.

When we examine Mrs Ramsay's conception of herself we see how it is possible for both her and her husband to be lofty beacons while at the same time offering directly opposing views of reality:

> When life sank down for a moment, the range of experience seemed limitless.... Beneath it is all dark, it is all spreading, it is unfathomably deep; but now and again we rise to the surface and that is what you see us by (p.60).

Again, at p.61, we see:

> Not as onself did one find rest ever, in her experience (she accomplished here something dextrous with her needles), but as a wedge of darkness. Losing personality, one lost the fret, the hurry, the stir; and there rose to her lips always some exclamation of triumph over life when things came together in this peace, this rest, this eternity; and pausing there she looked out to meet that stroke of the Lighthouse, the long steady stroke, the last of the three, which was her stroke...

Mrs Ramsay identifies with the Lighthouse beam, but she partakes also of the surrounding darkness against which her husband stood as a bulwark. Throughout Mrs Ramsay's mystical reverie there intrude interspersed worries about her children and the future ("Children don't forget, children, don't forget"/ "No

happiness lasted; she knew that" [p.61]). Since these occur to her at the same time as the strokes of light assure her of her "triumph over life"; of the possibility of a timeless experience and complete happiness, she is offered immediate consolation. The intimation of death contained in these anxieties has no effect upon her intimations of eternity, but is subsumed into them, just as the beam from the Lighthouse takes in indiscriminately all that falls in its path. Moreover, Mrs Ramsay has here experienced a kind of death, a death of her personality, yet in stripping life away and becoming a "wedge of darkness", she has paradoxically become one with the beam of light; "it seemed to her like her own eyes meeting her own eyes" (p.61), and the experience has been one of ecstasy for her.

Mrs Ramsay's promotion of the state of marriage and of human bonds of love should not be scorned as a piece of Victoriana; it is explicable in terms of this deep-seated mysticism. She believes it possible to "marry" with inanimate objects, and she achieves this fusion through the practice of a selfless love; thus her espousal of the condition of marriage assures her of the immortality her husband had been

unable to arrange for himself. The implication is that we can only really know ourselves and other people and inanimate objects if we have love and do not insist on an existence entirely apart. Mr Ramsay "stands proud" in both senses of the expression, convinced of his own intellectual superiority as of his distinct separateness, thus his very impulse to fame is the thing which confounds his ambitions. He insists on standing out, as a stake, or on a promontory, challenging the flux about him and so is doomed to be swept up in it. Mrs Ramsay on the other hand, discovers her essence in the flux, remarking how "now and again we rise to the surface and that is what you see us by".Mrs Ramsay's reverie proposes an apprehension of reality which totally reverses that of her husband. Here reality is to be found in the murky depths Mr Ramsay had so feared, and what rises above the surface is only the smallest fraction of the truth, as the rest remains submerged. Personality is visible, but in the deeper layers of consciousness, the self is mobile and triumphant. It is only by descending to these depths that self-knowledge is possible; Mrs Ramsay acquires the searching eyes of the Lighthouse itself and is able to examine the very mystery of her own existence, the Lighthouse

> stroking with its silver fingers some sealed vessel in her brain whose bursting would flood her with delight... and the ecstasy burst in her eyes, and waves of pure delight raced over the floor of her mind and she felt It is enough! It is enough! (pp.62-63)

Lily Briscoe senses all this love and knowledge in Mrs Ramsay, senses that somehow Mrs Ramsay holds the answer:

> And yet, she knew knowledge and wisdom were stored in Mrs Ramsay's heart. How then, she had asked herself, did one know one thing or another about people, sealed as they were? (p.51).

The image of a sealed vessel in this passage suggests some final resistance, some constructed defence against immersion, against being known on a deep and obscure level to oneself and to others. Nevertheless, the release promises the kind of ecstasy experienced by Mrs Ramsay. Perhaps because she has plumbed these depths in herself, she is endowed with similar means of knowing others, and at the dinner party there is a moment where "her eyes were so clear that they seemed to go round the table unveiling each of these people, and their thoughts and their feelings, without effort like a light stealing under the water so that its ripples and the reeds in it and the minnows balancing themselves and the sudden silent

trout are all lit up hanging, trembling" (pp.98-99). The image used here of things being held together in a quivering moment of suspension recurs in various guises throughout To the Lighthouse.

In the novel, each moment of life is precariously balanced, seeming poised but really ready to shatter and fragment at the slightest disturbance, and this is the difficulty experienced by Mrs Ramsay at the dinner party. Here the guests are held together, reassured and guided by Mrs Ramsay; her role as a beacon is confirmed when she leaves them to bid her children goodnight, and Lily finds the guests "had gone up on to the bridge of the ship and were taking their bearings" (p.104). Mrs Ramsay herself, exists in a delicate state of poise, and later that evening, when she is alone with her thoughts, she gradually grows "still like a tree which has been tossing and quivering and now, when the breeze falls, settles, leaf by leaf, into quiet" (p.109). In the quiet, reflective gathering of the self together after the bustle of the day, Mrs Ramsay resembles a tree as its leaves grow still: like the tree, she is capable of surviving violent storms, of bending to chaos

but always falling naturally back into place. The image is felicitous too in that it conveys the sense of an exhausted sigh as the moment of repose is reached, and perhaps also an entirely feminine gesture of smoothing out skirts, in any case, a sense of the retrieval of beauty.

The graceful, fruitful boughs of Mrs Ramsay's consciousness are plundered, in an extension of this image, by the sharp, sterile beak of her husband in his demands for sympathy and protection:

> So boasting of her capacity to surround and protect, there was scarcely a shell of herself left for her to know herself by; all was so lavished and spent; and James, as he stood still between her knees, felt her rise in a rosy-flowered fruit tree laid with leaves and dancing boughs into which the beak of brass the arid scimitar of his father, the egotistical man, plunged and smote, demanding sympathy (p.39).

Thus the relationship between Mr and Mrs Ramsay is not purely one of homage, and the shared image of the lighthouse gives way to images suggesting that Mr Ramsay feeds off his wife's abundance. When he has received her sympathy in this way, Mr Ramsay is "like a child who drops off satisfied", leaving a depleted Mrs Ramsay who "seemed to fold herself together, one petal closed in another, and the whole

fabric fell in exhaustion upon itself" (p.40). Another elegiac consolation is offered here: Mrs Ramsay is portrayed as a pliant organic whole; there is no brittle outer shell that can be cracked, spilling her life's contents. The expansiveness of her outstretched boughs and quivering leaves which she offers up voluntarily to her husband's death blow - this personal admission of vulnerability - is the very thing which saves her from death, because she will always reconstitute herself. She does this and more, for she also succours her husband in the process, and is able to sink back in "the rapture of successful creation" (p.40).

The image relates not only to the sexual nature of their relationship, but is also connected to similar images occurring elsewhere in the novel which explore the momentary, easily fragmented nature of reality. Jasper's gunshot which scatters a flock of starlings and which approximates an explosion in Lily's thoughts, the children's cricket ball soaring high at the same time as Lily's "sense of things having been blown apart" (p.69). These examples give some indication of how an elegiac theme suited Virginia Woolf's perception of life as made up

of "atoms", of sights and incidents which shower upon the consciousness, the whole being held together only by a "luminous halo".[56]

A pattern emerges from Mr and Mrs Ramsay's encounters: each threatens to shatter the other's personal reality, there is a clash and a realization of sacred areas violated, and then a subsiding, an overcoming of all by love. Even if we choose to espouse Mrs Ramsay's view of reality over Mr Ramsay's, we should not be tempted to react simplistically, rejecting him as a tyrant, accepting her as a goddess. Mr Ramsay is outraged that she should deny the inescapable mechanics of the weather, Mrs Ramsay that he should so callously disregard the truth of mood:

> He had ridden through the valley of death, been shattered and shivered; and now she flew in the face of facts, made his children hope what was utterly out of the question, in effect, told lies.
>
> ....
>
> To pursue truth with such astonishing lack of consideration for other people's feelings, to rend the thin veils of civilization so wantonly, so brutally, was to her so horrible an outrage of human decency that, without replying, dazed and blinded, she bent her head as if to let the pelt of jagged hail, the drench of dirty water, bespatter her unrebuked. There was nothing to be said.
>
> He stood by her in silence. Very humbly, at length, he said that he would step over

and ask the coastguard if she liked.

> There was nobody whom she reverenced as she reverenced him. (p.34)

There is an interesting echo of this "drench of dirty water" in Leslie Stephen's Mausoleum Book, where Virginia Woolf's father remarks how "Anny and Minny used to call me the cold bath from my habit of drenching Anny's little schemes and fancies with chilling criticism".[57] Mr Ramsay is a compulsive sketcher of heroic scenarios for himself; he is a lone survivor, an Antarctic expeditioner, a military leader. Yet, like Leslie Stephen, the nearest he has come to such enterprise was when as a young man "he used to walk about the country all day long, with nothing but a biscuit in his pocket" (p.66). Admittedly, it is more on an intellectual level that he seeks to represent himself in the role of lone survivor. But even on this level, Mr Ramsay appears absurd. The lines he recites from Tennyson's "The Charge of the Light Brigade" and Cowper's "The Castaway" are perhaps more appropriate to him and his position than he realises. As a philosopher, he finds himself threatened with the fate of the castaway, whose ship must sail on without him: he cannot reach the intellectual state of "R", yet it is the very fact that his mind should

attempt to measure the abstract in an arithmetical way that presents the stumbling block to his advancement. Like the six hundred of Tennyson's poem, he subscribes to an outmoded system of blind authority, which will cause him to ride blithely and unquestioningly to a certain doom. Virginia Woolf's only comment on this triumphant quotation of military heroism is a parenthetical notification of Andrew Ramsay's death in an explosion in France during World War I.

In having Mr Ramsay quote from this last poem, Virginia Woolf achieves an economical identification of Mr Ramsay with the Victorian ethos, both doomed by an unfounded sense of superiority, as well as a mistaken belief that the world and man can be measured, rationalized, analysed. Instead of severe criticism, Virginia Woolf directs toward the Victorian era, insofar as it is represented in the persons of Mr and Mrs Ramsay, a delightfully ironic humour. Right at the outset of the novel there is a subtle tongue-in-cheek cameo of Mrs Ramsay. It occurs during one of her philanthropic visits to an impoverished invalid, which she undertakes with Charles Tansley as companion, the latter having the

following vision of her:

> ...suddenly, in she came, stood for a moment silent (as if she had been pretending up there, and for a moment let herself be now) stood quite motionless for a moment against a picture of Queen Victoria wearing the blue ribbon of the Garter; and all at once he realized it was this: it was this:- she was the most beautiful person he had ever seen (p.18).

This scene has the quality of a photographic portrait; it is comic because of its exaggerated idealism, because of the implication that Mrs Ramsay's impeccable deportment has full royal approval, because Mrs Ramsay is seen to be posing next to Queen Victoria, as her veritable counterpart. Then there is Charles Tansley's hesitancy ("it was this: it was this:-"), the desire of the scholar to be exact, even about something like his feeling towards Mrs Ramsay.

To a certain extent To the Lighthouse is a reply to a Victorian form of mourning in both literature and life, which encouraged any amount of self-indulgence on the part of the bereaved. Queen Victoria set the tone for this with black crinolines and endless devices for installing Albert firmly in the memory of the British public. As with Leslie Stephen, her personal writings give new energy to the word

"inconsolable": "My life as a happy one is ended! The world is gone for me!" she exclaimed, and "I am on a dreary sad pinnacle of solitary grandeur."[58] Many years before embarking on To the Lighthouse, Virginia Woolf would have read Leslie Stephen's Mausoleum Book which was addressed to her, Thoby et al., and which is largely a document of his grief on the death of Julia Stephen. Like Mr Ramsay, Leslie Stephen felt that his life had ended with the death of his spouse. His attitude was maudlin and he sought that kind of comfort which would only deepen his sense of bereavement, calling Julia "my darling" throughout this autobiographical work, so that his love and his loss of it are never far from his mind:

> The loss of my darling is something to which no other loss can be for an instant compared. And yet my solitude is, I can feel, the more intense because so few of those with whom I started and upon whose sympathies I could have counted, survive to care for me (p.66).

Similarly, in the most representative elegy of the time, Tennyson's monumental "In Memoriam", there is a certain reluctance to move away from the position of mourning, and to establish a firm and positive upward movement. Instead, Sorrow is personified in the poem, which continues to vacillate between moods of grief and

hopefulness almost to the end.

Virginia Woolf's incorporation of the memory of her Victorian parents in a Modernist work is a gesture which at once salutes the past and firmly and finally buries it, just as her inclusion of substantial parts of her father's dirge into her own elegiac work is a means of both criticizing and transforming such an unproductive form of mourning. The following extracts from his Mausoleum Book all have their counterpart in some form or another in To the Lighthouse:

> I used sometimes I must confess (as indeed I confessed to her) to profess a rather exaggerated self-deprecation in order to extort some of her delicious compliments. They were delicious, for even if I could not accept her critical judgement as correct, I could feel that it was distorted mainly by her tender love (p.93).
>
> Her instincts were far more to be trusted than my ratiocinations. (p.96).
>
> But putting aside the very few great names, with whom I could not in my wildest fancy compare myself, even the best thinkers become obsolete in a brief time, and turn out to have been superfluous (p.96).
>
> And oh! the delight, the exquisite delight, of my returns - the sight of her lovely eyes lighting up and her tender smile and her loving welcome that will never come again (p.91).

Here in fact, we see Mr Ramsay, a character already created by Leslie Stephen. The desire

to be vindicated, appreciated, comforted, remembered, is instantly recognizable, and there is also a touching admission by this great intellect of fallibility, of egotism, even of occasional helplessness. Virginia Woolf's reaction to her father's displays of grief, recorded in her diary, and in "A Sketch of the Past", is dramatized in the exchanges between Lily and Mr Ramsay. In "The Lighthouse" section of the novel Lily is exasperated by his demands for her commiseration. She takes an ironic view of the "heavy draperies of grief" and the "veil of crape" (p.143) which Mr Ramsay seems to cast upon all that fall within his mournful gaze. Mr Ramsay's grief is given a comic treatment that at once exorcises its effects and puts it to a creative end:

> His immense self-pity, his demand for sympathy poured and spread itself in pools at her feet, and all she did, miserable sinner that she was, was to draw her skirts a little closer round her ankles, lest she should get wet (p.143)

That Mr Ramsay's grief is self-defeating is evident in the choice of imagery: the flood of his self-pity is related to the flood waters of death, and he and Lily are forced to seek a comic refuge upon "the blessed island of good boots" (p.144) as Lily, in desperation, praises his sturdy footwear.

Virginia Woolf had foreseen the temptation of sentimentality presented by her theme, but she had also foreseen how the problem would be avoided by an added dimension of complexity:

> But this theme may be sentimental; father and mother and child in the garden: the death; the sail to the lighthouse. I think, though, that when I begin it I shall enrich it in all sorts of ways; thicken it; give it branches and roots which I do not perceive now (p.36)

To a large extent this complexity was to stem from her apprehension of changes that had taken place in human nature, and she startled the audience at her lecture "Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown" by claiming that these changes took place "on or about December 1910".[59] As this date, which coincided with the opening of the first post-impressionist exhibition in London, suggests, it was not so much that human nature changed but that the ways in which that character was perceived were dramatically revised. Suddenly, it was no longer feasible for an artist to represent man using the traditional methods of realism, since the very notion of "reality" had been called into question. Specifically, whereas Time has always been a central theme for the elegist, for the modern elegist it becomes a very problematic theme, because notions of fate, immortality and cyclic

renewal have in many cases ceased to be tenable. The "Time Passes" setion of To the Lighthouse, which condenses a period of ten years and which contains the deaths of Mrs Ramsay, Prue and Andrew, takes issue with traditional concepts of Time and reality and prepares the way for Lily Briscoe's vision.

"Time Passes" begins with the Ramsays still in occupation of their seaside house, but already the flood which signifies death is approaching them, and the desultory comments of William Bankes, Andrew and Prue acquire an unintentional significance:

> "We must wait for the future to show," said Mr Bankes,...
>
> "It's almost too dark to see," said Andrew,...
>
> "One can hardly tell which is the sea and which is the land," said Prue (p.117).

There is in these remarks a hint of the overwhelming darkness of death that is to enter the house and the Ramsay's lives, as well as a sense of straining one's eyes to make out the future, which remains obscure. The difficulty these three characters experience in seeing anything at all forewarns us of the almost total absence of human sight in this section, an absence which is also a feature of the

deadening of the senses accompanying death. The dark night of sleep which succeeds this conversation acts as a prologue to the deaths that are to come. Virginia Woolf uses the traditional poetic correlation of sleep with death to emphasize a thing shared by both these states, that is, an absence of watchfulness, and watchfulness being a quality shared by Mrs Ramsay and the Lighthouse. Later the flowers in the garden are described as "eyeless, and thus terrible" (p.126); nature does not look out for man, and is blind equally to his joys and his suffering. Yet the death in sleep experienced in this prologue has much in common with Mrs Ramsay's earlier experience of sinking down from the flux of life:

> Nothing it seemed, could survive the flood, the profusion of darkness which creeping in at keyholes and crevices, stole round window blinds, came into bedrooms, swallowed up here a jug and basin, there a bowl of red and yellow dahlias, there the sharp edges and firm bulk of a chest of drawers. Not only was furniture confounded; there was scarcely anything left of body or mind by which one could say "This is he" or "This is she." (p.117).

Here Mrs Ramsay's "there was scarcely a shell of herself for her to know herself by" (p.39) is echoed with the same implication, that it is only when the notion of personality has undergone a death that the real self is released,

and that this death is a necessary precursor to creation. Mrs Ramsay's experience has shown that the only way to survive the flood is to acquiesce to it, and sleep or deep reverie are the models of such acquiescence.

The creeping and pervasive decay that accompanies Mrs Ramsay's death is presaged by little airs which feel their way about the house, tentatively at first but rapidly becoming more audacious. In this sense "Time Passes" shares some of the characteristics of the funeral elegy which concentrates on images of the workings of decay.[60] There are no tombs or worms in "Time Passes", but the paring away of Mrs Ramsay's being is almost as shockingly articulated in the image of her green shawl loosened by the wind, which reveals the stark animal skull beneath. The knowledge of Mrs Ramsay's death is accompanied not only by a fierce disorder in Nature, but also by the suggestion of interrupted sleep, and this is interesting because it seems to distinguish between two different kinds of death in the novel. Mrs Ramsay sinks down into a personal death when she identifies herself with the Lighthouse, but in this she reduces herself only to a somnolent state, when one's life

sinks down to the deeper levels of the sub-conscious, and her real death is characterized as a kind of awakening.

There recur throughout "Time Passes", images of emptiness and of a vacant shell which are associated with this second death:

> [Mr Ramsay stumbling along a passage stretched his arms out one dark morning, but, Mrs Ramsay having died rather suddenly the night before, he stretched his arms out. They remained empty] (p.120).

Mr Ramsay's failure to make contact is expressed grammatically through the stubborn intransitivity of the verb ("stretched his arms out... stretched his arms out").

Human suffering is as an aside within the vast machinery of Nature which occupies the rest of this section. Here, as in the 1912 elegies of Thomas Hardy, the death of the loved one is perceived as a sickening void; the dead cannot be reached yet neither can they be forgotten, because every shape that once held them (Mr Ramsay's open arms; Mrs Ramsay's old grey cloak) remains to taunt the mourner of how it was once filled. Lily's confrontation with the empty space left by Mrs Ramsay is experienced on an immediate, personal level as

well as on an aesthetic level. Her silent, girlish cry "Oh Mrs Ramsay" coincides with a moment when "the whole wave and whisper of the garden became like curves and arabesques flourishing round a centre of complete emptiness" (p.166). It is on this aesthetic level that Lily is able to bridge the awful gap, by inserting into her painting even after Mrs Ramsay's death the wedge-shape which had represented her.

Another of these images of emptiness is the mirror, which had once reflected Mrs Ramsay's face and a flurry of children rushing through the door behind her. This moment is given the illusion of reality because of the three-dimensional qualities of the mirror's glassy surface;

> ...once the looking glass had held a face; had held a world hollowed out in which a figure turned, a hand flashed, the door opened, in came children rushing and tumbling; and went out again. Now, day after day, light turned, like a flower reflected in water, its clear image on the wall opposite. Only the shadows of the trees, flourishing in the wind, made obeisance to the wall... (p.120)

Virginia Woolf's sudden switch from mirror-image reflections to a Platonic reflection of shadows on the wall in the same passage suggests that

it is her intention to work out the complex relations between reflections and reality by calling into question the reliability of the mirror. The memory of Mrs Ramsay with her child is not to be recorded in Lily's picture with any of that mirrored, three-dimensional detail but, more truly, as a "triangular shape" (p.52). The soft shadows of trees and birds cast upon a wall are all we can know of a reality made up of fleeting moments and indistinct shapes.

Particularly, it is the thoughtful walkers on the beach, asking themselves "What am I?" "What is this?" (p.122) who are associated with this image of the mirror:

> As summer neared, as the evenings lengthened, there came to the wakeful, the hopeful, walking the beach, stirring the pool, imaginations of the strangest kind - of flesh turned to atoms which drove before the wind, of stars flashing in their hearts, of cliff, sea, cloud, and sky brought purposely together to assemble outwardly the scattered parts of the vision within. In those mirrors, the minds of men, in those pools of uneasy water, in which clouds forever turn and shadows form, dreams persisted, and it was impossible to resist the strange intimations which every gull, flower, tree, man and woman, and the white earth itself seemed to declare (but if questioned at once to withdraw) that good triumphs, happiness prevails, order rules; or to resist the extraordinary stimulus to range hither and thither in search of some absolute good, some crystal of intensity, remote from the known pleasures and familiar virtues, something alien to the processes

> of domestic life, single, hard, bright, like a diamond in the sand, which would render the possessor secure. (p.123).

This passage occurs between two parenthetical inserts concerning Prue Ramsay's marriage and subsequent death in childbirth, and it can serve as a paradigm for Virginia Woolf's elegiac method in To the Lighthouse. On one level, since both Prue Ramsay's marriage and her death occur in the positive, life-affirming seasons of spring and summer, and since the conviction of eternal goodness and permanence reached by the beachcombers is immediately juxtaposed with her death, their sense of assurance is demonstrated to be invalid and unfounded. Man thinks Nature reflects his moods when in fact the opposite is true, and so it is as fallacious to say that we possess the order and harmony occasionally displayed by Nature as it is for Mrs Ramsay to say "We are in the hands of the Lord" (p.61). Virginia Woolf here rejects that type of blind trust in a kind Fate or benevolent Godhead expressed by Tennyson in lines such as:

> Oh yet we trust that somehow good
> Will be the final goal of ill

and

> Behold, we know not anything;
> I can but trust that good shall fall[61]

The beachcombers in "Time Passes" are mistaken in thinking of the various elements of Nature as "brought purposely together to assemble outwardly the vision within", they are guilty of having stirred the pool (on whose surface the limits of man's reality are reflected) to create this effect, and of allowing their own dreams to cast shadows upon it. In "The Window", Nancy had exposed the arbitrary nature of any reflections in the pool when, brooding and crouching among rocks and sand

> she changed the pool into the sea, and made the minows into sharks and whales, and cast vast clouds over this tiny world by holding her hand against the sun, and so brought darkness and desolation, like God himself, to millions of ignorant and innocent creatures and then took her hand away suddenly and let her sun stream down (p.72).

She achieves this moment of almost cosmic awareness because she is able to see herself objectively, and unlike the beachcombers, takes into account the play of her own shadow upon the water. Her vision precedes that of these other mystics in "Time Passes" and acts as an ironic comment upon theirs, predicting the real implications of looking into the pool. Nancy then shares that capacity for artistic objectivity which manifests itself in Lily Briscoe, and sometimes also in Mrs Ramsay,

who are both conscious of how they affect or create scenes, conscious of how moments of eternity are achieved. The "diamond in the sand" for which these walkers are searching, has its material counterpart in Minta's brooch, and can never be simply "found". At the lowest point in her elegiac work, when all life seems to have sunk away forever, Virginia Woolf even casts doubts upon the two stalwart consolations of the elegy - the comfort that Nature and Man are in direct correspondence and that therefore man can expect a comparable seasonal renewal, and the reassurance that something solid and eternal can be stumbled upon and grasped.

On another level, however, the passage contains an elegiac promise. Prue Ramsay's marriage and death are no more than "the processes of domestic life", they occur, like Mrs Ramsay's "children never forget" in the intervals of darkness between the broader flashes of illumination from the Lighthouse. In this case, the eternal diamond "which would render the possessor secure" still exists, and reduces by its brilliance and intensity all the pleasures and pains of quotidian life to mere shadowy interruptions. Nevertheless, the "diamond" does not exist quite in the way these beach-

combers think. In this image of the precious jewel, Virginia Woolf has a perfect vehicle for her elegiac move upwards, from loss to rediscovery; the diamond which represents permanence and beauty is lost, but is not stumbled upon by these itinerant philosophers (Mr Ramsay, the great walker?), instead it is carefully made, with great workmanship, by Lily and Mrs Ramsay.

Virginia Woolf's cynical view of the mirror and its pretensions is summed up in the toothless, boneted figure of Mrs McNab as she stands before the looking glass and croaks an old music hall tune. Although she has come to save the house from total decay, Mrs McNab is an unlikely Demeter, a goddess of spring-cleaning. Following the first mention of the war, certain signs are given to the walkers on the beach, such as "the silent apparition of an ashen-coloured ship" and a purplish stain upon the bland surface of the sea" (p.124), and it becomes difficult for them, as they walk along the seashore, "to marvel how beauty outside mirrored beauty within" (p.125). The horrible realization that Nature holds neither the answer to our question nor the truth about ourselves leads to the conclusion that "con-

templation was unendurable; the mirror was broken". Yet the parenthetical insert about the publication of Carmichael's poems, which succeeds this moment of despair, already contains a hint of the consolation in art that is to replace those consolations that have been discarded. The admission that there is no real correspondence between external show and internal workings leads to an artistic emancipation where there can be greater emphasis placed on the relation between form and meaning, rather than the relation between form and appearance, and the cracked mirror becomes a symbol of art shared by both James Joyce and Virginia Woolf.

The cracking of the mirror is followed by a brief period of chaos and destruction in which brutish forces of war are characterised as idiotic giants at sport. In the same way, Andrew Ramsay's death in a shell explosion is presaged by "the thud of something falling" (p.124).

Virginia Woolf had predicted "the sound of breaking and falling, crashing and destruction"[62] as a prelude to a new approach to character in fiction. In this way, the war

becomes directly implicated in the advancement of art, and it is significant that "Time Passes" ends with the return of Lily Briscoe the painter and Augustus Carmichael the poet.

Many elegies have in common the return of the mourner to a location so steeped in memories that the ghost of the dead seems still present there. This return is the inspiration of some of the most beautiful and affecting lines among these poems:

> Here came I, often, in old days -
> Thyrsis and I; we still had Thyrsis then.[63]
>
> Dark house, by which once more I stand
> Here in the long unlovely street,
> Doors, where my heart was used to beat
> So quickly, waiting for a hand,
>
> A hand that can be clasp'd no more -
>
> (Tennyson, In Memoriam).
>
> Yes: I have re-entered your olden haunts
> at last;
> Through the years, through the dead scenes
> I have tracked you.[64]

In the same mood Lily Briscoe returns to the Ramsay's Scottish holiday house in "The Lighthouse", where the memory of Mrs Ramsay interrupts her work and leads her to call out aloud the name of the dead woman. And, as in these other elegies, Lily Briscoe is the artist-mourner whose work of art is her own chief

solace, because it incorporates and recreates Mrs Ramsay; not as herself, but as the dark abstract shape which had once allowed her to exist in the flux without being destroyed by it. Lily's pain in recalling Mrs Ramsay has an ironic sequel: her recollection is so powerful and intense that Mrs Ramsay's ghost sits down in a chair, knitting the reddish-brown stocking once more, and her shadow falls across the steps in an aesthetically satisfying way, bringing Lily's painting near completion. Lily never mentions Mrs Ramsay's name again, and she turns her attention instead to Mr Ramsay, who must also contribute to the painting's completion in some way.

The change in the novel's focus from Mrs Ramsay to Lily Briscoe does not really represent a move away from Mrs Ramsay as the novel's centre at all. Through a subtle adjustment in the use of the Lighthouse imagery, which suggests that Lily at once experiences the need to identify with Mrs Ramsay and the exigency of distancing herself from the dead woman, the memory of Mrs Ramsay is kept alive and predominates:

> With a curious physical sensation, as if she were urged forward and at the same time must hold herself back, she made her

> first quick decisive stroke. The brush descended. It flickered brown over the white canvas; it left a running mark. A second time she did it - a third time. And so pausing and so flickering, she attained a dancing rhythmical movement, as if the pauses were one part of the rhythm and the strokes another, and all were related; and so, lightly and swiftly pausing, striking, she scored her canvas with brown running nervous lines which had no sooner settled there than they enclosed (she felt it looming out at her) a space. Down in the hollow of one wave she saw the next wave towering higher and higher above her. For what could be more formidable than that space? Here she was again, she thought, stepping back to look at it, drawn out of gossip, out of living, out of community with people into the presence of this formidable ancient enemy of hers - this other thing, this truth, this reality, which suddenly laid hands on her, emerged stark at the back of appearances and commanded her attention (p.148).

The strokes of the Lighthouse beam with which Mrs Ramsay identified herself are here transformed into the strokes of Lily's painting brush, which share the same rhythmic qualities. Sinking down away from life, Lily and Mrs Ramsay have comparable experiences. Mrs Ramsay conceives of herself as a "wedge of darkness" (p.61), which corresponds with the interval of darkness between the flashes of light from the lighthouse. In the pause between her rhythmical wave-like brushstrokes, Lily is confronted by a formidable space that is not so easy for her to identify with. The problem of empty space is one that poses itself equally to the

elegist and the artist, and Lily is in a sense both these things; it is her task to fill the space, to set the past in an aesthetic relation to the present. Virginia Woolf's concern with the relation between things, with perspective and distance, is an adjunct to her elegiac concerns in To the Lighthouse. Lily stands back from her picture in the same way the elegist must stand back from life, she must connect two discrete masses in the same way as the elegist must look for new relations between people once the old ones have been severed by death. The empty space which poses itself to Lily is the empty space left by Mrs Ramsay's absence. Yet the metaphor of Lily's wave-like brushstrokes offers its own consolation: the massive waves which characterized Mrs Ramsay's death, and which threatened a more universal destruction in the Grimm's fairy tale, become here the vehicle of Lily's creativity. Moreover, the contemplation of abstract space is far preferable to Lily than the contemplation of the real space left by Mrs Ramsay. Drawn away from her painting momentarily by the memory of Mrs Ramsay sitting on the beach, she is struck by how this incident is "lit up, visible to the last detail, with all before it blank and all after it blank, for miles and

miles" (p.159). Then returning to her painting after this encounter with the void, Lily is led to exclaim "Heaven be praised for it, the problem of space remained".

The luminous strokes which had reassured a passive Mrs Ramsay are strokes actively imposed by Lily Briscoe, and finding herself so in control, Lily would never be tempted to say, as did Mrs Ramsay, that "we are in the hands of the Lord". Lily is also more reluctant to succumb to "this other thing, this truth, this reality" than Mrs Ramsay was to succumb to "this peace, this rest, this eternity" (p.61). Although both Lily and Mrs Ramsay experience a kind of death of personality, a sensation of ordinary life passing away, Lily does not immediately share Mrs Ramsay's apprehension of peace and eternity. As an artist, Lily is committed to a complex view of things, she must be watchful, to the point of recognizing the need for "fifty pairs of eyes to see with" (p.182). In fact, there can be little consolation in the elegy unless the artist-mourner has "fifty pairs of eyes to see with". Lily has seen how "life, from being made of little separate incidents which one lived one by one, became curled and whole like a wave which bore

one up with it and threw one down with it, there, with a dash on the beach" (p.47), and now needs to share Mrs Ramsay's vision of life illumined and stilled as well. The ideal exists alongside the real, and forms a part of it; we do not need to reject Mrs Ramsay's moments of vision - these are like "matches struck in the dark" (p.150), and must be combined with Lily's more chaotic view of things. James Ramsay too, has to recognize how the real and the ideal co-exist, even in the figure of the Lighthouse itself:

> The Lighthouse was then a silvery, misty-looking tower with a yellow eye that opened suddenly and softly in the evening. Now -
>
> James looked at the Lighthouse. He could see the white-washed rocks; the tower, stark and straight; he could see that it was barred with black and white; he could see windows in it; he could even see washing spread on the rocks to dry. So that was the Lighthouse, was it?
>
> No, the other was also the Lighthouse. For nothing was simply one thing. The other was the Lighthouse too. (p.172)

These two visions of the Lighthouse correspond to the two versions of reality offered him by his parents, the "other" being the only one he was prepared to accept as a child. Forced to acknowledge the veracity of his father's "black and white" view of reality, James goes on to be more amenable to his father's overtures of

friendship, whereas at six years old he had longed to lash out at this man with an axe or poker were one only to hand. And so in To the Lighthouse reparations are made and reconciliations effected by adjustments in visual focus similar to those made by an artist such as Lily as she explores the possibilities of perspective:

> So much depends then, thought Lily Briscoe, looking at the sea which had scarcely a stain on it, which was so soft that the sails and the clouds seemed set in its blue, so much depends, she thought, upon distance: whether people are near us or far from us; for her feeling for Mr Ramsay changed as he sailed further and further across the bay (pp.176-7).

The trip to the Lighthouse operates on both a literal and a figurative level to bring characters to an increased understanding of one another. It is not just that James and Cam discover on reaching the Lighthouse qualities of humility and gentleness in the father they had up till then resisted as a tyrant: Lily sees the passing of sailing ships as a metaphor for all human relationships, watching the boats moving out of the bay she observes how "one glided, one shook one's sails... between things, beyond things" (p.177). She is grateful to Mr Carmichael for his distance, his indifference to Mrs Ramsay's beauty, his inscrutability. Asleep

in a deck-chair, or in a morphine induced haze, Carmichael shows Lily, his fellow artist, how to step back fom life and merely contemplate, while keeping before her constantly, by his very presence, the question she has already asked: "How did one judge people, think of them?" (p.27).

In To the Lighthouse the differences between people are recognized as navigable distances, so that it is possible for James to "visit" his father's point of view by going to the Lighthouse. When the boat is moving swiftly, Cam and James seem to get on better with each other and with their father than when they are becalmed, so the metaphor seems to work quite extensively. Yet in To the Lighthouse, this crossing of the distances between people in no way diminishes the necessity for these distances to be maintained, for the other problem in the characters' relation to one another is that of intrusion - Mrs Ramsay and James being interrupted by Mr Ramsay; the presence of Charles Tansley; Lily imposed upon by Mr Ramsay while she tries to paint. The task of bringing people and things together is largely Mrs Ramsay's, the task of establishing a suitable distance Lily's, but on Mrs Ramsay's death,

Lily has to learn Mrs Ramsay's technique of "merging, flowing and creating" (p.79) on both a personal and an artistic level.

When she was alive, Mrs Ramsay had that kind of beauty that "stilled life - froze it" (p.164) so that "one forgot the little agitations; the flush, the pallor, some queer distortion some light or shadow, which made the face unrecognizable for a moment and yet added a quality one saw for ever after" (p.165). Significantly Lily is not beautiful and though like Mrs Ramsay, she too is associated with the image of the fountain, hers is not a single column of spray sent up to succour a sterile male, but a spring of diverse experience, her mind "throwing up from its depths, scenes, and names, and sayings, and memories and ideas, like a fountain spurting over that glaring, hideously difficult white space" (p.149). Lily is here enacting Virginia Woolf's injunction to artists in her essay "Modern Fiction" to "record the atoms as the fall upon the mind", to "trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent in appearance, which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness" (p.150). The waves of Lily's painting strokes, score "brown running

nervous lines" in just this disconnected, randomly falling way, forming a pattern in retrospect only.

The experiences of Lily Briscoe and Mrs Ramsay, when combined, complete a description of Virginia Woolf's view of art and life. The strokes of light emitted by the Lighthouse (Mrs Ramsay) correspond to those moments of vision or being when it is possible to divine a kind of transcendant order and peace in things, and the waves which crash upon the beach (Lily Briscoe) correspond to the flux of experience whence these moments are snatched. Inevitably an elegiac work will present this struggle between the opposing forces of fragmentation and cohesion, and after Mrs Ramsay's death, the responsibility for sorting out the problem devolves upon Lily:

> Perished. Alone. The grey green light on the wall opposite. The empty places. Such were some of the parts, but how bring them together? (p.138)

The same attenuated, abrupt sentences and the same sense of a personal duty to bind things together had marked Mrs Ramsay's thoughts at her dinner party in "The Window":

> There was no beauty anywhere. She forebore to look at Mr Tansley. Nothing seemed to

> have merged. They all sat separate. And the whole of the effort of merging, flowing and creating rested on her. (p.79)

The problem placed before each of these women is essentially the same: on a domestic level, Mrs Ramsay has to encourage nearer relations among her dinner guests, on an aesthetic level, Lily has to bring forms together in a meaningful and harmonious relationship. Mrs Ramsay's dinner guests are brought closer together by the introduction of candlelight, Lily joins the two masses of her composition by drawing "a line there, in the centre" (p.192), and in each case the result is a new sense of fluency and cohesion. Lily's final brushstroke which completes her painting seems to have had a similar inspiration to the Lighthouse itself in the novel, and Virginia Woolf's comment to Roger Fry on the matter seems pertinent:

> I meant <u>nothing</u> by the Lighthouse. One has to have a central line drawn down the middle of the book to hold the design together.[65]

Mrs Ramsay's phrase "the whole of the effort" comes close to the crux of the matter. Consolation in the elegy is rarely achieved without conscious artistry, and the jewel for which the walkers on the beach are searching, must in fact be fashioned by those who would possess

it. Even so, it is a difficult thing to obtain, and as Lily remarks, "the great revelation perhaps never did come. Instead there were little daily miracles, illuminations, matches struck unexpectedly in the dark" (p.150). The revelation is to be found in "Mrs Ramsay making of the moment something permanent (as in another sphere Lily herself tried to make of the moment something permanent)" (p.151). Thus it is Mrs Ramsay herself who offers Lily comfort in the face of her own death, who inspires a bereaved Lily to state that "in the midst of chaos there was shape; this external passing and flowing (she looked at the clouds going and the leaves shaking) was struck into stability" (p.150). These words are an almost exact echo of Mrs Ramsay's, and in the thoughts of both women Nature and the external world which are triumphant in "Time Passes" are placed in parentheses, in a significant reversal of their position in that section:

> There is a coherence in things, a stability: something, she meant, is immune from change, and shines out (she glanced at the window with its ripple of reflected lights) in the face of the flowing, the fleeting, the spectral, like a ruby (p.97)

Not a diamond, then, but a ruby is acquired; a glimpse of eternity and order is the reward of suffering and effort.

III. D.H. LAWRENCE : The Rainbow

In D.H. Lawrence's The Rainbow we see how an elegiac form provides the perfect means of revealing the sex-death nexus that is one of the elegy's most persistent strains, and which harks back to the shepherd of the original pastoral elegy, who died of a "wound in the thigh". Again because of its elegiac form, Lawrence's novel is able to explore two apparently diverse crises of the early twentieth century - a creeping industrialism and the domination of sexual relationships by self-interest - without loss of an essential sense of cohesion.

The elegiac form of The Rainbow is a unifying factor in what might otherwise appear to be a sprawling account of the Brangwen family through several generations. It is possible to divide the novel up artificially into three sections, each comprising five chapters, and each corresponding to one aspect of the traditional elegiac structure. In the first section, the Brangwens live an Eden-like

existence at Marsh Farm. During this time however, the seeds of death are sown. A canal is built across their meadows, separating the farm from the collieries. At the same time, Tom Brangwen asserts himself less and less, and he experiences the marriage of Anna as a blow to his masculinity. There is a new-found intellectualism as Will Brangwen enters their lives and talks of Ruskin, of Gothic and Romanesque forms, suggesting that the Brangwens have partaken of the forbidden fruit of knowledge. Yet for the most part, this is an era of satisfaction: there is a sense of sufficiency and completion in the marriage of Tom and Lydia; in their relation to the child Anna; and in the work done on the farm.

The next five chapters establish a downward movement, the beginnings of dissatisfaction. The married couple no longer live protected from an urban environment, and Tom takes a cottage for them in Cossethay. Will becomes increasingly conscious of "the rind of the world" - the bustle of the town, the ugliness of its houses and factories. Will turns towards an artificial haven in the womb-like architecture of churches, but this proves a dead-end, since the kind of fulfillment he

seeks only his wife can give. It is fitting that during this period of the family's history Tom Brangwen drowns in the flood that is caused by the bursting of the canal banks. Ursula now grows up, fighting against the average and the everyday, and striving to establish herself as a separate individual. Ursula explicitly rejects the notion of Christian resurrection, thus suggesting that the consolation contained within The Rainbow is to be a pagan one.

In the third and final section, which is as long as the other two sections together, Ursula confronts the full horror of the death that has occurred. The idea of a loveless marriage of convenience, which is one part of this death, is presented to her in the form of her Uncle Tom's marriage to Winifred Inger, as well as in Anton Skrebensky's proposal to herself. These individuals are all obsessed by abstract concepts of war and democracy, or of commercial enterprise and machinery that are another aspect of the death. At Brinsley Street School, Ursula encounters the inflexibility of an educational system that achieves its ends by brutally crushing all opposition. Meanwhile the Brangwen family move even closer to the colliery district, to the red-brick suburb of

Beldover. Eventually, Ursula is able to see all this surrounding death for what it is: no more than a decaying rind, having no bearing on the pristine kernel within, which represents continuity. Thus Ursula comes to the same revelation that once her grandfather achieved, that "there was the infinite world, eternal, unchanging, as well as the world of life"(p.81).

This overall elegiac movement of The Rainbow is repeated in each relationship between male and female that occurs in the novel. The sexual attraction that initiates the relationship is succeeded by a moment of oblivion that is like death, as the couple embrace. The awful moment of death then gives way to a splendid sensation of rebirth that convinces the lovers that they partake of something immutable and eternal.

These two uses of the elegiac form in the novel, one which charts the effects of intellectualism and industrialism, the other which describes a continual process of death and rebirth in the context of a sexual relationship, are soldered together by Lawrence's choice of imagery. The furnace of love and its connection to the industrial furnace will be discussed later on in this chapter, as

will the kernel and rind imagery, relating at once to an ugly industrialized husk that can be stripped away and to the sensation experienced by the lovers that nothing need exist beside themselves. Whatever else is to be discarded, they will survive.

In the discussion of any elegy, the first and most important task is to identify the corpse. With Lawrence, this task is problematical: "the actual physical fact of death is part of the lifestream" he said in The Crown.[66] For him, real death lay in giving oneself up "to analysis, to introspection, to mechanical war and destruction, to humanitarian absorption in the body politic, the poor", "like a man absorbed in his own members, looking forever at himself".[66] The Rainbow is concerned with the death of an era brought about by these new interests and absorptions, and uses the "actual physical fact of death" as a metaphor for describing it. Thus there are in the novel several sharply realized images of ashen faced corpses, which act as constant reminders of the more abstract death that has occurred: - Tom's corpse as it floats by on the swirling floodwater; Skrebensky's 'corpse' as he feels "as if the knife were being pushed into his

already dead body" (p.480); the "unliving, spectral people" (p.368) travelling on the same train as Ursula to Ilkeston; the veritable "putrescence" of her Uncle Tom; and the "spectres" that are the colliery workers in Wiggiston.

Although in the lines quoted from The Crown Lawrence likens death to "a man... looking forever at himself", in the opening paragraphs of The Rainbow it becomes clear that it is the fact that the Brangwen women look away, toward the town, and that the Brangwen men look up, and see the church spire, that means this death is inevitable. The focus of their gaze is upon the abstractions that church spire and town represent. Thus ultimately their focus is upon themselves and their burgeoning desire for spiritual and intellectual satisfaction, rather than the satisfaction that is to be derived from an intercourse with nature.

Initially, there is no differentiation between one Brangwen male and another, inferring a stability, continuity and unity that is reinforced by the absence of any real differentiation in the consistently horizontal landscape, or of any significant distinction

between the creativity of the land and that of the men who work it. It is this word "creativity" which is of key importance. The Brangwens know the whole "intercourse between heaven and earth" (p.8), "the rush of the sap in spring" (p.7), the progeneration of their livestock, as of themselves: they serve creation, but do not aspire to be creative themselves.

It is the Brangwen women who pick up this discrepancy, remarking how in the cities "men move(d) dominant and creative" (p.9). The dissatisfaction of the Brangwen womenfolk is associated with the introduction of the spoken word into this inarticulate drowse of fertility, and the spoken word represents the intrusion of conscious will, a symptom of death. In one sense, the opening pages of The Rainbow span not just the generations of the Brangwen family's history, but reach back almost to the origins of man, when he first moved about the earth, before he learnt to speak out and assert his will over creation. As Lawrence's narrative progresses into modern history, he is less and less able to pass over such large portions of time, and the difficulty and strain of modern life comes to be reflected in the

novelist's prose. It is significant that a Brangwen called Will should be the one to ponder how the "helpless savages, running with their spears on the riverside, after fish, ... had come to rear up this great London, the ponderous, massive, ugly superstructure of a world of man upon a world of nature!" (p.193). The dislocation between the worlds of man and nature is central to the elegiac concerns of The Rainbow, in that death in the novel is seen primarily as the imposition of the former over the latter, and in that the possibility of rebirth is dependent upon a recognition and reacceptance of nature's qualities of spontaneity, acquiescence, fertility, cyclic rhythm, and unconscious sensuality. This does not necessarily entail a return to an agrarian lifestyle, and it would therefore be possible in the city for men "(to) move dominant and creative". There are a number of practical instances of just this recognition occurring in the novel. When Lydia finds herself a widow in a foreign land, having lost also two children, she is "without passion, like a shade" (p.51):

> There, at first, there was nothing - just grey nothing. But then one morning there was a light from the yellow jasmine which caught her, and after that, morning and evening, the persistent singing of thrushes

> from the shrubbery, till her heart, beaten upon, was forced to lift its voice in rivalry and answer (p.54).

It is in the re-establishment of a dialogue between herself and the natural world that Lydia comes back to life.

Again, with Anna and Will, it is through a recovery of man's historic closeness to nature that they overcome their intention to destroy one another. The couple are at Marsh Farm, and Anna's distress at their battle of wills is heightened by the fact that she is with child and unable to tell her husband of her pregnancy. To her "he seemed like a blade of destruction standing there. She quivered to tears" (p.177). Then, in the midst of the felt antagonism of Tom, Lydia and Anna towards Will, and the antagonism of Will towards Anna, there is an unexpected abatement in the battle:

> Through the open door the level rays of sunset poured in, shining on the floor. A grey hen appeared stepping swiftly in the doorway, pecking, and the light through her comb and her wattles made an oriflamme tossed here and there, as she went, her grey body was like a ghost (p.177).

Anna feeds the hen, and there is a significant return to the past in their conversation.

Lydia reminisces about her first husband who "was not in the least steady - like a running stream" (p.178). Then almost as a direct result of these two instances of harking back, verbally, to the time when Anna's father was alive, and scenically, to the time of closeness between man and nature, Will is suddenly appeased: "It flashed over the youth - Anna too was like a running stream. Instantly he was in love with her again" (p.178).

The arguments between Will and Anna about the cathedral, about her sewing or his woodcuts, cannot be resolved in themselves, nor can they be resolved in words. It is only in setting everything aside, in looking beyond the individual's impulse to triumph in the battle, that the solution will come. The hen, in its domesticity, and notwithstanding its grey body "like a ghost", is really such an unlikely symbol of the holy ghost - a bird of hope but not a dove - that is suggests a solution that is both humble and natural. With Ursula, this restoration of life through a contemplation of nature becomes problematical in correspondence to her distance from an agrarian past, as the

first Brangwen not brought up in the seething fertility of Marsh Farm. When as a young girl, Ursula rides in a motor car with Skrebensky, she is thrilled by the experience, but already there is some suggestion that the machine will prevent them from reaching back to the source of life by rushing them past the countryside where Ursula longs to walk:

> If they could walk through the wetted hay-swaths, smelling the early evening, and pass into the wood where the honeysuckle scent was sweet on the cold tang of the air, and showers of drops fell when one brushed a bough, cold and lovely on the face!
>
> But she was here with him in the car... (p.305).

The "wetted hay-swaths" remind us of how Ursula's parents, Anna and Will, worked together stacking the rustling corn sheaves, in a rhythm that was archetypal not only of the labourer, but of men and women. That these two rhythms are indissolubly linked is illustrated in the fact that Ursula and Skrebensky are propelled past the field in a mechanical rhythm that has superceded the labourer's toil, and it is correspondingly difficult for them to attain the old rhythm of men and women.

Ursula, though thrilled and excited to be riding in the motor car next to Skrebensky, instinctively misses the sensuality of the natural and the untrammelled. Later as a teacher, she is forced to discipline her classes, and again there is a tension between her longing for the relief of the natural world and her entrapment within a mechanical task:

> A jar of buttercups and fool's parsley in the window bottom kept her away in the meadows, where in the lush grass the moondaisies were half-submerged, and a spray of pink ragged robin. Yet before her were the faces of fifty children (p.408).

Thus the world of man and the world of nature are in a constant state of tension and Ursula's visionary experience at the novel's conclusion, in its superimposition of the beautiful and the natural over the sordid and the mechanical, without any attempt at reconciling the two, should come as no surprise. Moreover, the vision of the ugly husk of life swept away, leaving the world new-created, is common to almost all the characters in the novel at some time or other. Will experiences it after his marriage to Anna; Lydia after hers to Tom; and in each case the arch or rainbow represents a new and revitalised connection, and a sense

of having survived the storm and the flood. The novel's conclusion is made up of a strange combination of the visionary impulses characteristic of the latter generations of Brangwens, and the earlier generations' characteristic identification with Nature. This combination is in itself indicative of hope and rebirth, since "within the womb of the established past, the light has entered the darkness, the future is conceived..."[69]

As a symbol, the rainbow unites all the various causes of death in the novel, while at the same time suggesting hope, renewal and survival. By this I mean that the various manifestations of the arch or rainbow link it symbolically to the aspirations of women towards education and social improvement; the desire to depart from community life and seek individual fulfilment; the aspiration of men to greater spiritual heights; the attraction of both men and women for that which is foreign; all of which contribute to the death of an era. All these ambitions are concerned with the desire for knowledge. Originally the Brangwens enjoy a life suffused with the mystery of creation; they are characteristically "blind" and "fulfilled", they do not seek to "know" their

marital partners in any other than the sexual sense, and the cycle of vegetable and animal life is "enough" for them. But as the novel progresses, we see their dissatisfaction accumulates.

Before the rainbow, comes the flood of destruction. I should mention here that there are three types of imagery recurring in The Rainbow that suit Lawrence's elegiac purpose perfectly. These images - of the flood, of the kernel contained within the rind, and of the furnace that is survived through faith - are individually capable of suggesting a death that necessarily precedes rebirth, or that obscures a more intensely experienced life. The imagery of the furnace I will deal with in another context, suffice it here to discuss the elegiac significance of the flood, and of the kernel in its rind. The flood is in itself an important symbol, since it can represent not only the industrial influx, and the masses of humanity, but also the force which pushes these aside. The surrender of personal will on the other hand, is characterized as a life-enhancing flood.

There is also a real flood in the novel, which brings about Tom Brangwen's death. In this

flood, Tom becomes the representative of the old order at Marsh Farm, and his death is caused by the bursting of the canal, the introduction of which had threatened this order. Tom is drunk at the time, and although very humorously so, the fact suggests that a decadence has set in, and it is significant that the flood does not occur when the great patriarch of Marsh Farm is at the height of his potency. Lawrence uses the biblical story of the Flood in contrasting ways in his novel: here he offers a fine parody of it, as Tom reels drunkenly from the pub into the torrents of rain and asks his mare "which of us is Noah?" (p.244). But it is Tom himself who is Noah, since the blessedness of the Brangwens' fruitful lives seems to imply a pact or covenant between them and God. Tom is in high spirits and amuses himself by directing heavy sarcasm at the rain. Then the old Brangwen mood of **laisser aller** comes upon him as he suggests philosophically, with all the false logic of an intoxicated man, that even if the roads are washed away, they will all no doubt one day return. Besides, it is no longer for him to be anxious, the farm is his son Fred's concern now. Here we see that the decline of the Brangwens is based upon the very thing that

once made them giants among men - their abdication of will. Tom is prepared to let go to such an extent that he is washed away by the tide, and his intoxication in this scene is merely the outward, physical indication of his laxity.[70]

In this scene the flood which symbolically brings about the end of the old era is necessary, since that which was once apt and good and life-enhancing - the Brangwens working and breeding without conscious thought or aspiration - has induced impotency and a certain slackness. Therefore it should come as no surprise that the next generation is marked by a surfeit of will and of consciousness, by a need to look outwards and upwards once more, as a new order is established. There seems to be no doubt that the old era goes out to meets its own death, spontaneously, as we read of how Tom "went out to meet the running flood, sinking deeper and deeper" (p.246). But the death itself is not characterized as acquiescence to the flow; Tom is "borne down, borne inevitably down" (p.246), in a manner which suggests that it is the relentless imposition of will that has Tom secured "in a black horror of suffocation" (p.246). This seeming paradox is

really a finely worked-out paradigm of the clash that occurs when the old, lax, agrarian order encounters the new, active, industrial order: the one already on its way out, the other asserting itself always with greater confidence. Significantly, the floodwater encroaches even on the homestead; the kitchen is waterlogged, and the water washes the kettle off the hob, in a symbolic gesture which demonstrates how home and hearth are now subtly under threat. It is fitting that Tom, who lived in darkness, his eyes cast down to the furrow, or blinded by the sun, who lived also unconsciously, uneasy with education, without curiosity, should become, "in the utter darkness, the unconscious, drowning body (that) was rolled along" (p.247).

The imagery of the flood is supplemented by another kind of imagery prevalent in The Rainbow, that of the rind of ugly, outward activity which is cast off revealing the shiny kernel within. The flood sweeps away everything that falls in its path, indiscriminately, in contrast to the paring away of a rind, or the crumbling of a husk. But in fact, the two kinds of imagery are not so dissimilar, since there are survivors of the flood, and in the

case of Anna and Will, these survivors consider themselves to have been chosen, emerging in a renewed world as the kernel emerges from the rind. The shift in imagery has more to do with a shift in the broader concerns of the novel. The flood represents the kind of sweeping, dramatic change inflicted by an angry god, and directed at a people, rather than at individuals. The peeling away of an old husk introduces a new emphasis upon individuality, upon the self emerging from the shell of useless social connections.

The focus of The Rainbow, in shifting from old, communal, agrarian order to the modern, industrial one, shifts also from the Old to the New Testament in its biblical metaphors. It is no longer the Brangwen family which seeks favour in the eyes of the Lord by its pleasing communal activities, but each individual Brangwen (Will and Ursula in particular) who seeks a personal relationship with God, and an individual reward at the end of a lonely pilgrimage, so that Ursula can feel towards the end of the novel that she

> was the naked, clear kernel thrusting forth the clear, powerful shoot, and the world was a bygone winter, discarded, her

> mother and father and Anton and college and all her friends, all cast off like a year that has gone by, whilst the kernel was free and naked and striving to take new root, to create a new knowledge of Eternity in the flux of time (p.493).

Though Ursula is compelled to live and work in an increasingly mechanized and sordid environment, she is nevertheless still able to conceive of herself in profoundly natural and regenerative terms. Furthermore, this sordid environment is considered to be no more than a "rind", an evil which can never finally triumph because its superficial nature means that it can be stripped off with ease.

Ursula sees the inhabitants of the colliery town of Wiggiston as being "like creatures with no more hope, but which still live and have passionate being, within some utterly unliving shell " (p.346). Will sees the superficial life of Ilkeston in much the same way as he surveys "the rind of the world: houses, factories, trams, the discarded rind; people scurrying about, work going on, all on the discarded surface" (p.150). Like his daughter, he sees this rind as "unreality", which can be peeled away to reveal "the permanent bedrock" of one's own being, "knitted one rock with the woman one loved".

Because Ursula acknowledges that she is not the only one capable of shedding the decayed husk that surrounds and stifles her - that in fact even the spectral colliery workers have a pure, clean kernel of being - the novel can end on a note of such triumphant optimism. With Ursula's recognition 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... that they would cast off their horny covering of disintegration, that new, clean, naked bodies would issue to a new generation, to a new growth, rising to the light and the wind and the clean rain of heaven" (pp.495-6), the complex relations between the flood and kernel imagery are finally resolved. The flood ends in a rainbow which reflects a promise of continued life, just as the kernel contains the potential to sprout and grow. The promise of the novel is that the whole modern world need not be swept away, as was necessary in the Old Testament tale: instead, renewal is dependent upon the discarding of the rind of corruption and death which encloses and obscures the Truth.

At the beginning of the chapter "Anna Victrix" the flood imagery readily gives way to imagery

suggesting emergence from the rind. During the first days of their honeymoon, Will feels that he and Anna "were the only inhabitants of the visible earth, the rest were under the flood" (p.144). In their bedroom, "like a chestnut falling out of a burr, he was shed naked and glistening on to a soft fecund earth, leaving behind him the hard rind of worldly knowledge and experience" (p.145). If all else is destroyed, the one thing that will remain and renew itself is the relation between men and women. Thus it is wrong to say that the optimism of the concluding paragraphs of The Rainbow has no precedent in the novel.[71] The terms in which Ursula conceives of the renewal of the world are exactly the terms used to describe this eternal, unchanging relation. The language remains visionary because Ursula has no mate; nevertheless, she is confident that "the man would come out of Eternity to which she herself belonged" (p.494).

We have come now to the most important point that Lawrence has to make in this elegiac work: that the relation between men and women is eternal, whatever else happens, and that it exists separately, possibly even on another plane, from the rest of life. As I said at the

outset, the sexual encounter itself follows an elegiac structure, from sexual attraction to the swooning death in an embrace, to a final sense of being deposited, newly-created, on the vast and desolate plain of eternity. Throughout the novel, men and women, and the offshoots of their loins, are characterized as survivors, as travellers in a hostile environment, as the foundations about which a rainbow might arch. There is a sense of each couple being on the brink, in a way that recalls Lawrence's comments in his Study of Thomas Hardy.[72] Here Lawrence says: "I wish we were all like kindled bonfires on the edge of space, marking out the advance-posts", and there is, in the image of Tom and Lydia walking on a desolate plain, just this sense of intrepid moving forward into the unknown. Tom feels himself "tiny, a little upright figure on a plain circled round with the immense, roaring sky: he and his wife, two little, upright figures walking across this plain, whilst the heavens shimmered and roared about them" (p.135).

Will has a similar experience to that of his uncle, of feeling that nothing else in the world matters apart from the marital connection;

that all else might fall away, so long as the vital connection remained:

> Sweep away the whole monstrous structure of the world today, cities and industries and civilization, leave only the bare earth with plants growing and waters running, and he would not mind, so long as he were whole, had Anna and the child and the new, strange certainty in his soul (p.193).

Yet already Will is fractionally less sure of his wife. The growing emancipation of women in the novel means that we are prepared for Ursula's establishment of herself, without a mate, on the furthest edge of the unknown: "Let the whole world slide down and over the edge of oblivion, he would stand alone. But he was unsure of her" (p.194). Still, the implication remains that the leap into love is an act of faith, comparable to the entrance of Shadrach, Mesach and Abednigo into the furnace. Nor are the rewards for these two acts of faith entirely different: Ursula feels after discovering the darkness within Skrebensky that "she belonged to the eternal, changeless place into which they had leapt together" (p.145). Like her father and grandfather before her, Ursula is "a traveller on the face of the earth" (p.417), and she shares their fearlessness. But while Tom had felt of his relationship with Lydia "as if a strong light were burning there, and

he was blind within it, unable to know anything, except that this transfiguration burned between him and her" (p.39), Ursula is not content with life around what she perceives as "the camp fire". She is tantalized by what lies beyond this, "the glimmer of dark movement just out of range,... the eyes of the wild beast gleaming from the darkness" (p.437).

In all these extracts it is the primeval, the savage, the rejection of safety and comfort that is of crucial importance. Ursula feels "free as a leopard that sends up its ravenous cry in the night", while Skrebensky views the world "as a lion or tiger may lie with narrowed eyes watching the people pass before its cage" (p.449). The light of the camp fire or arc-lamp does not bring the clarity that might be expected: their light blinds the eyes to anything beyond the illumined circle, limiting horizons instead of broadening them.73 The primeval darkness beyond represents the unknown; and the doorway to the unknown in The Rainbow is often to be apprehended in one's marriage partner.

In the novel, the desirability of the unknown is crystallized in the relationship between man and woman. Within this relationship, sexual

intimacy is contrasted with individual separateness; one spouse is often the other's polar opposite, thus opening a whole new world of discovery; and moreover, one of the marriage partners is likely to be of foreign extraction.[74] Lydia is a foreigner, a Pole, and an aristocrat. She comes, arctic, polar, superior, to Tom, who has been living in the drowsy heat of blood intimacy with the land, who has had little truck with learning or politics, and stands somewhat in awe of this strange older woman. And yet, their relationship is one of the most successful in the novel. According to Lawrence's doctrine, this very foreignness establishes theirs as the archetypal connection:

> For it is as if life were a double cycle, of men and women, facing opposite ways, travelling opposite ways, revolving upon each other, man reaching forward with outstretched hand, woman reaching forward with outstretched hand, and neither able to move till their hands have grasped each other, when they draw nearer and nearer, each travelling in his separate cycle, till the two are abreast, and side by side, until even they pass on again, away from each other, travelling their opposite ways to the same infinite goal.[75]

This pattern, entailing the momentary encounter of the two different cycles of men and women, is repeated in some of the most outstanding

passages of the novel: - the scene where Will and Anna stack sheaves together beneath the moonlight; and the scene where Ursula and Skrebensky dance at Fred's wedding. Significantly, when Tom Brangwen first encounters Lydia, they are travelling in opposite directions along the same road, and the moment of recognition that occurs as they pass one another is as a flash of knowledge and insight between the inhabitants of two different worlds. It is an immemorial pattern, for one of the earlier Brangwen couples "were two very separate beings, vitally connected, knowing nothing of each other, yet living in their separate ways from one root" (p.13).

When Tom goes to the Vicarage one evening, "to do a bit of courtin', like" (p.42), he stands in the wind and dark and looks through the kitchen window at the Polish woman as she rocks her child to sleep. Their situation in this scene is symbolic of their relationship. Later on in their marriage his complaint is that she seems "utterly certain, satisfied, absolute, excluding him" (p.93), while in fact she is suffering, and in need of him. Just as Anna reprimands her mother for singing a mournful, nostalgic tune before Tom enters the

kitchen of the vicarage, so too is Tom to feel estranged by her sudden and unaccountable returns to "the old loss, the pain of the old life, the dead husband, the dead children" (p.65). Anna's presence in this tableau that forms the prologue to the scene of Tom's proposal possesses a symbolic importance. It is Lydia's fertility, and the drowsy mood that comes upon her in pregnancy, that is to leave Tom feeling disconnected, "like a broken arch thrust sickeningly out from support" (p.65). Prophetic too is the situation of the scene, within the vicarage's kitchen, where Lydia moves assured and capable about her domestic tasks. It has its counterpart in the scene where Tom carries the sobbing Anna into the barn at Marsh Farm; the soft champing of the animals, and Tom's own rhythmic, assured movements soothing the child. Life is restored to calm order once again by domestic routine. Lydia's presence in the kitchen is an indication of her ability to nurture and to provide stability and support, while Tom's presence amongst the cattle in the barn is indicative of his more free-ranging activities out of doors.

Pertinent to this juncture in the novel is a comment from the Study of Thomas Hardy:

> From her he has a sense of stability. She supplies him with the feeling of Immutability, Permanence, Eternality. He himself is a raging activity, change potent within change. (p.446)

In knocking on the door of the Vicarage, where Lydia is employed as housekeeper, Tom is also approaching the doorway to the unknown which she represents to him. As he steps over the threshold, his face and eyes are obscured to Lydia, so that "only she knew he was a man come for her" (p.44). Once individuality has been obscured in this way, the scene becomes an almost primeval encounter between man and woman:

> He was watching her, without knowing her, only aware underneath of her presence.
>
> 'I have come to have a word with you,' he said, striding forward to the table, laying down his hat and the flowers, which tumbled apart and lay in a loose heap. She had flinched from his advance. She had no will, no being. The wind boomed in the chimney, and he waited. He had disembarrassed his hands. Now he shut his fists.
>
> He was aware of her standing there unknown, dread, yet related to him.
>
> 'I came up,' he said, speaking curiously matter-of-fact and level, 'to ask if you'd marry me. You are free, aren't you?'
>
> There was a long silence, whilst his blue eyes, strangely impersonal, looked for the truth out of her. And she, as if hypnotized, must answer at length.
>
> 'Yes, I am free to marry.'
> The expression of his eyes changed, became less impersonal, as if he were looking

> almost at her, for the truth of her. Steady and intent and eternal they were, as if they would never change. They seemed to fix and resolve her. She quivered, feeling herself created, will-less lapsing into him, into a common will with him.
>
> 'You want me?' she said.
> A pallor came over his face.
> 'Yes,' he said.
> Still there was suspense and silence.
> 'No,' she said, not of herself. 'No, I don't know.'
>
> He felt the tension breaking up in him, his fists slackened, he was unable to move. He stood looking at her, helpless in his vague collapse. For a moment she had become unreal to him. Then he saw her come to him, curiously direct and as if without movement, in sudden flow. She put her hand to his coat.
>
> 'Yes I want to,' she said, impersonally, looking at him with wide, candid, newly-opened eyes, opened now with supreme truth. He went very white as he stood, and did not move, only his eyes were held by hers, and he suffered. She seemed to see him with her newly-opened, wide eyes, almost of a child, and with a strange movement, that was agony to him, she reached slowly forward her dark face and her breast to him, with a slow insinuation of a kiss that made something break in his brain, and it was darkness over him for a few moments (pp.45-6).

Tom's simple, matter-of-fact phrases, and Lydia's hesitant, almost monosyllabic replies belie the more profound dialogue that is taking place between them on another level, a dialogue that is rich and subtle in texture. Partly, the arrangement of the different levels reflects the superficial strangeness that exists between them while they are simultaneously connected

by an unspoken and instinctual bond. They seem to experience a certain pain in rousing themselves to speak, in a way reminiscent of the earlier generations of Brangwens, not much given to volubility. Although Tom asks Lydia his question, he does not seek her true response in her words, looking instead into her, "for the truth of her" (p.45). Tom's verbal reticence and awkward physical presence are the outward manifestations of his unstated reluctance to let go of his will and flow towards Lydia. His gestures too, mimic an internal process of withholding and releasing. He comes in with a "gripped fist of flowers", which when laid down "tumble(d) apart and (lie) in a loose heap". But having "disembarrassed" his hands, he proceeds once more to clench his empty fists. It is Lydia's almost overt surrender of will, her readiness to fuse into him that finally affects Tom to the point where he feels "the tension breaking up in him, his fists slacken(ed)," and he is "unable to move". Thus it is Lydia who initiates the subtle change from the language of social intercourse to the language of the senses and the instincts; a change that is effected through the substitution of "want" for the more socially restricting question of "marriage". The words

they have exchanged have only served to bank the flood that is now released in their silent embrace. Tom feels something "break in his brain", and the kiss brings a moment of darkness and obliteration that is akin to Tom's later death by drowning.

Their coming together is painful to them, and throughout the novel the surrender of will, the fusing "into a common will" is an extreme experience. The words which describe this surrender - "break"; "collapse" - suggest a violent and forceful destruction of the barriers of the self. This destruction is prefigured in Tom's encounter at the hotel in Matlock with the foreigner and his girl, who together "had set fire to the homestead of his nature" (p.25). Lydia flinches from Tom's advance; when she in turn reaches her face toward him, the movement is "agony to him". This pain is made up of a dread of embracing the unknown, summed up in Tom's exclamation "such intimacy of embrace, and such utter foreignness of contact!" (p.49). As they pass through the darkness and oblivion that is the moment of the kiss, they are reanimated, returning "gradually, but newly created, as after a gestation, a new birth, in the womb of darkness" (p.46).

When examining the differences between Tom's proposal to Lydia, and scenes involving Will and Anna, or Skrebensky and Ursula, the treatment and appearance of one particular symbol - that of the moon - can be used as a gauge. As Tom leaves Lydia on the night of his proposal, the moon is neither static nor fully revealed. A strong wind blows clouds which scud across her surface creating strange effects of light and shape, so that it appears as though "the moon-light blew about" (p.47).

Moreover, the moon scurries through the sky "running liquid-brilliant into the open for a moment" before plunging under cover again. For the most part, the moon in this scene emits a "radiance... like a vapour", putting on a fluid and kinetic display in which water and light fuse and become almost indistinguishable. This is the moon as it is never again seen in the novel.

In The Rainbow, the moon symbolizes the role played by the self, and by personal will (especially female will) in each relationship: here it shares the characteristics of Tom's Lydia, who is subtle, shadowy, assured but self-effacing. The ready fusing of cloud and

moonlight which conjures ambiguities of form, points to the rich complexity and completeness of union that is their marriage. Tom is the only character in the novel who can properly ask "what had he known, but the long, marital embrace with his wife!" (p.129).

On the evening Will and Anna decide to marry, the evening of the sheaves-stacking, "a large gold moon hung heavily to the grey horizon" (p.121). The lovers, walking through the farmlands, do not want to turn back and symbolically, their unspoken question "yet whither were they to go, towards the moon?" (p.121) means that the advance towards increased individualism and the shedding of greater power upon the will has already begun. Like the moon, the two characters are "separate, single" (p.121), thus heralding the fierce individualism of the coming generation. And yet paradoxically, in this scene it is through the exercise of will, through a consciousness of purpose, that Will Brangwen manages to bring himself and Anna into closer contact. While Tom and Lydia are idle in the scene of their first union, Will and Anna literally have to labour to be together.

Although the work takes place in a field, and is agricultural in nature, Will works like a machine, "threading backwards and forwards like a shuttle across the strip of cleared stubble, weaving the long line of riding shocks, nearer and nearer to the shadowy trees, threading his sheaves with hers" (p.123). The metaphor employed above hints at the encroachment of industrialism upon the sexual relationship, which comes increasingly to resemble the clash of mechanical forces. The rhythm that Will and Anna establish as they move from stack to shock is yet another enactment of "the double cycle, of men and women, facing opposite ways, revolving upon each other" that Lawrence described in the Study of Thomas Hardy.

Throughout the scene, Will is simply "he"; Anna "she", and as with Tom and Lydia, very little is uttered aloud. When Anna speaks it is to issue directives: "we will put up some sheaves" (p.121); "You take this row" (p.122); "Put yours down" (p.124), thus imposing her will upon their rhythm through imperatives. To challenge her supremacy, Will must exert himself, impose himself on her, and when he finally speaks it is to refute her command: "No, it's your turn" (p.124) he says. Their

meeting at the shock is more explicitly sexual than the meeting of Tom and Lydia, and takes place "where the shocks rode erect; the rest was open and prostrate" (p.121). It is more boldly a question of pursuit, of overcoming, of triumph: "And the whole rhythm of him beat into his kisses, and still he pursued her, in his kisses, and still she was not quite overcome" (p.124). Between these lovers, the battle for the subordination of personal will does not cease with the embrace, but continues within it.

The noise made by the mingling of the sheaves is ambiguous, suggesting both fluidity and a clash of wills. The "splash", "clash" and "hiss" of the sheaves reverberate through the passage with a harsh sibilance that infers once more the conflict that is contained within the embrace of the couple. The mingling of their corn beneath a pregnant moon anticipates the real fertility of Anna and Will who will bring forth such a wealth of progeny that the novel could be said to reach an apex of fecundity in this couple. The mingling sheaves are likened not only to splashing water, but also to the tangling of hair, an image of great intimacy and rich in its associations of fertility.

Although Anna's bosom is "laid bare" and left "heaving and panting with moonlight" (p.122), she does not achieve consummation through this symbol of individual satisfaction and triumph that is the moon (as Ursula does), nor is she alone in her transfiguration (as Ursula is), for Will too "was silvery with moonlight, with a moonlit, shadowy face that frightened her" (p.124). Will glimpses the moon through Anna's hair, just as Tom had seen it through the clouds, and it seems to him "to swim liquid-bright" (p.125). In this way, fluidity and a certain dynamism are conferred upon the otherwise single and static moon. Will's exclamations of wonder echo Tom's "Such intimacy of embrace, and such utter foreigness of contact" (p.49):

> All the moonlight upon her, all the darkness within her! All the night for him now, to unfold, to venture within, all the mystery to be entered, all the discovery to be made. (p.49)

Will's feelings expressed in the above passage are inspired by the fullness and completeness ("all... all... all...") he perceives in his union with Anna. She withholds none of her darkness despite her illumination beneath the moon, and gives herself freely to this blood connection with him, rather than to an abstract connection with the moon.

Will's sense of discovery in Anna, Tom's thrilling perception of the foreignness of his contact with Lydia, reveal a concept of marriage as a psychic journey through unknown territory, a pioneering venture. With Ursula and Skrebensky, we encounter a couple who, failing to embark upon this voyage, suffer a persistent restlessness and an actual wanderlust that takes them all over England, from a country house near Oxford, to Dorothy's cottage in Sussex, to a bungalow on the Lincolnshire coast. They wage battle in Paris, Rouen and London, yet they fail to cover this much territory within one another. Skrebensky is foreign to Ursula only by nationality, and by virtue of his travels to South Africa and India, otherwise he seems to her "added up, finished" (p.473). What Ursula at first detects in Skrebensky is a false sense of scope, "a sense of the vast world, a sense of distances and large masses of humanity" (p.293). Skrebensky is in fact to divert Ursula from any exciting discovery of himself as a man, from any knowledge of him as her husband, to a frightening confrontation with the grim realities of encroaching industrialism, mass civilization, war, and with notions of democracy and government. Instead of a sense of widening horizons, these

things bring to Ursula a sense of reduction, of being crushed and borne in upon.

In directing her away from himself, in taking her only in the flesh, Skrebensky is partly responsible for Ursula's growing desire for selfhood, for individual satisfaction and achievement. Theirs is a compact between worldliness and selfishness, a compact achieved through the flesh in a conscious cynicism:

> Daring and reckless and dangerous they knew it was, their game, each playing with fire, not with love. A sort of defiance of all the world possessed her in it - she would kiss him just because she wanted to. And a dare-devilry in him, like cynicism, a cut at everything he pretended to serve, retaliated in him (p.302).

In a sense, Ursula has been prepared for the thrill of danger inherent in her liaison with Skrebensky through her childish relationship with her father. Then there was a real dare-devilry in their diving together off the canal bridge, in their sickening ride on the swing-boats. They too, shared a "curious taunting intimacy" (p.226), and a scorn of what the world might think. It is as though the old excitement and fear generated in the encounter of father and daughter - such as passed between Tom and Anna, and the old thrill of the unknown generated by the encounter of lovers such as

Tom and Lydia, Will and Anna, are no longer sufficient to sustain the modern generation. Ursula seems to need the threat of death to loom over her before she can achieve satisfaction, and with her the caresses of love are exchanged for the assault of metal blades. Her desperate search for the dangerous and the exotic leads her to insist on making love to Skrebensky out of doors, in a symbolic rejection of the safety of houses. Whereas Tom had felt of his early encounter with the foreigner and his girl that the "homestead of his nature" had been set alight, Ursula must literally move out of the homestead. This increasingly literal search on the part of Ursula for actual foreignness of place and person, for authentic and imminent danger, as well as her growing insistence upon the "weekday world", is symptomatic of a more widespread and historical move away from obscure, instinctive and inarticulate experience which The Rainbow describes.

Fully revealed beneath the moon, there can be no merging in darkness for Ursula and Skrebensky. Like the moon, they are left distinct and separate; the only thing they discover in their collaboration is a further sense of the self:

> And after all, what could either of them get from such a passion but a sense of his or her own maximum self, in contradistinction to the rest of life? Wherein was something finite and sad, for the human soul at its maximum wants a sense of the infinite (p.303).

The distinction drawn here, between "maximum" and "infinite", is of crucial relevance to the elegiac strain present in all the relationships between men and women in the novel. As this distinction suggests, there are two kinds of death to be reckoned with: the oblivion encountered by the lovers as they kiss, and the dead-end encountered by the self in search of personal gratification.

The "death" experienced by Tom and Lydia, Will and Anna, is really only the "death" of sexual consummation, and is rapidly superceded by a sensation of being newly born. Ursula and Skrebensky are always moving in opposite directions, there is no meeting point to be established within the rhythm of their respective cycles. If Ursula feels that she belongs "to the eternal, changeless place into which they had leapt together" (p.451), then Skrebensky feels "heavy with a corpse-like inanition" (p.450). The reason for this is that the male-female rhythms which determined

the coming together and parting of the Brangwen men and women of the nineteenth century have been superceded by the new, single rhythm of the individual, which is inflexible and ominously related to the churning of the mechanized world.

This transposition is symbolically represented in the scene (from which the above quotations derive) where Ursula and Skrebensky come together at Beldover, their kisses experienced against a backdrop of "a shunting train, the tiny clink-clink of the wagons ... the glow of the furnaces along the railway" and "the machine-glimmer beyond" (p.451). Instead of a battle between his will and her will, culminating in a fusion of wills, there is battle without fusion in each of their encounters:

> It was his will and her will locked in a trance of motion, two wills locked in one motion, yet never fusing, never yielding one to the other. It was a glaucous, intertwining, delicious flux and contest in flux (p.318).

If this is a description of Ursula and Skrebensky dancing together at her Uncle Fred's wedding, then it is also a description of the broader pattern of their relationship. The couple cannot fuse or yield since they are "locked" in contest, and this word, with all

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its implications of rigidity, intransigence, and imprisonment within will, appropriately describes the dilemma of Ursula and Skrebensky. Though their wills remain separate, the motion of the dance is a rhythm they are forced to share, unlike the freedom Will and Anna exercise in moving about the field according to the rhythm they wish to adopt. That Lawrence chooses to show this couple dancing together is interesting, since the dance symbolizes formal, accepted social interaction, the form within which society permits lovers to meet and engage in physical contact. Equivalent scenes showing Tom and Lydia, Will and Anna together, with the moon as the central motif, represent moments stolen away from such formal contact, in effect, trysts.

This is increasingly to become Ursula and Skrebensky's problem: that social reality imposes itself upon the inherent and delicious corruption of their relationship. Their chief pleasure has been in defying the world, in flaunting their intimacy. Marriage would effectively put a stop to this. In fact, when Skrebensky writes to Ursula of his plans for their marriage and proposed life in India, his words serve the purpose of "disposing of her"

(p.458). Skrebensky knows that in suggesting this plan of action to Ursula he is effectively putting an end to the potent vitality of their relationship. He has already admitted this to himself:

> 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).

Thus in asking Ursula to marry him, Skrebensky is consciously and wilfully inviting her to join him in living a lie, to share with him an arid and deathly conventional existence. It is to Ursula's credit that she ignores the content of the epistle, considering him "throughout the greater part of his letter, to be talking without much meaning" (p.459).

The imagery of the dancing scene,

in its rich elegiac content, benefits from a comparison with Lawrence's volume of poetry entitled Birds, Beasts and Flowers,[76] as well as with his essay Within the Sepulchre,[77] which have similar concerns. In Within the Sepulchre, Lawrence defines death as the

deluded self thinking itself to be everything, universal, whereas in fact it is unborn and constantly recoiling upon itself in the womb. Instead of reaching out and blossoming, the self turns inward, and, breaking down and dissecting what it finds, brings upon itself reduction and dissolution. Thus death is the same as self-gratification, where the self reacts upon the self, consciously.

Like her mother, Ursula offers herself to the moon, "her two breasts opened to make way for it, her body opened wide like a quivering anenome" (p.319). Ursula wants a satisfaction that excludes Skrebensky, and in turning to the moon so provocatively she is consciously choosing pure self-gratification, and the reduction consequent upon this choice. In so far as the moon is single, fertile and luminous, it is like Ursula herself, and her desire for consummation with it represents a desire for further selfhood.

We should not dismiss this relationship between Ursula and Skrebensky, as some critics have done, as a grotesquely meaningless encounter of two individuals with nothing in common.[78] The imagery of flooding is the key to an under-

standing of Lawrence's intention: to suggest a suffocating death that is also fluid and thus related to the "stream" of life. The later scenes of Ursula's corrosive lust have some interesting parallels with Lawrence's poems "Medlars and Sorb-Apples"; "Pomegranate"; "Grapes"; and "Figs".

Like the fig in Lawrence's poem, Ursula suffers from overexposure. Basking in the moonlight, she basks in self-knowledge, a fact which has obscene overtones for Lawrence, since for him the mysteries of sex and of self are the same thing, and sacred. But although the fig splits, "showing her crimson through the purple split", and "like a prostitute ... making show of her secret", Lawrence in another poem, "Pomegranate", discovers it to be "rosy, tender, glittering within the fissure", implying that the mystery of sex is constantly renewable. The fissure-like female part which so obscenely exposed itself in "Figs" is discovered to be a necessary rupture which paradoxically leads the way back to wholeness and renewal. Truly it can be said of the pomegranate, as of Ursula, that "the end cracks open with the beginning". The flesh of the rotting sorb-apple comes out "stream within stream": the stream of life is contained within the stream of death, and both

represent the flux.

Although Ursula has revealed a compulsion to expose herself to the moonlight, to glory in her own self and in knowledge of herself, she and Skrebensky are still in possession of a potential darkness and fecundity. On the night he tells her about Africa, these two lovers share a rhythm that is neither the superficially imposed rhythm of the dance, nor the persistent rhythm of the machine; rather, they "vibrate" together, an expression which recurs throughout the passage. During this night Ursula, inspired by Skrebensky's talk of Africa (its profound obscurities and blood-life), rediscovers the darkness, so that as they kiss they become "one stream, one dark fecundity" (p.447). Ursula capitulates self- hood and personal power, becoming "all dark, will-less, having only receptive will" (p.446). She is no longer merely Ursula Brangwen, but "the whole of Woman", and the question raised is "all containing, universal, how should she be limited to individuality?" (p.444). Though Ursula thinks it splendid and supreme to be illuminated in the moonlight, it is only now that "their bodies walked untouched by the light, darkness supreme and arrogant" (p.447).

The Dionysian[79] experiences of the last pair of lovers in The Rainbow correlate with similar experiences in "Medlars and Sorb-Apples" and "Grapes", where they become the irrational means of countering rational, mechanical pleasures. The only escape from pure gratification, from the self reacting consciously upon the self, is through intoxication, which takes the self beyond its own cramping limits, and forces unconsciousness upon it. Thus Ursula must indulge in these orgies of self-satisfaction, which almost destroy Skrebensky during their stay at Dorothy's cottage, before witnessing the rainbow, before envisaging a new germination in Beldover. In "Grapes", Lawrence urges a return to man's curious, exploratory, pre-selfconscious state, when he experienced the world through instinct and sensitivity rather than through a knowing sensuality. Yet paradoxically, it is only through exploiting that very knowing sensuality, by getting drunk, that the route back to pre-history is rediscovered:

> And if we sip the wine, we find dreams coming upon us
> Out of the imminent night.
> Nay, we find ourselves crossing the fern-scented frontiers
> Of the world before the floods, where man was dark and evasive
> And the tiny vine-flower rose of all roses, perfumed,
> And all in naked communion communicating as now our clothed vision can never communicate.

Ursula's self-indulgence in these closing scenes of her relationship with Skrebensky, is equivalent to alcoholic excess.

At Dorothy's cottage, the relationship of Ursula and Skrebensky is in its death throes. Ursula feels there is nothing further to Skrebensky, "he seem(s) added up, finished" (p.473). She reaches what Lawrence would have called the "consummation of reduction" when she admits to Dorothy:

> Love - love - what does it mean - what does it amount to? So much personal gratification. It doesn't lead anywhere (p.475).

In part, this statement reflects a failure in Skrebensky himself, as an unworthy object of love; Skrebensky who is set on turning Ursula into his "social wife" (p.453), and who reveals a growing interest in the sterile concepts of nation, war, empire and duty. Partly also it reflects a failure in Ursula, who is not content with the rich dark fecundity of their encounters, but wants ever more recognition for herself, and who is in danger of becoming all appetite. [80]

The sea tantalizes Ursula "with vast sugges-

tions of fulfilment" (p.478), and she leads Skrebensky to the shore, where she uses him to personify the "salt, bitter passion of the sea". It is a failure. The entire scene of Ursula's harsh, destructive fight for self-gratification is dominated by the "great flare of light" (p.480) provided by the moon which rudely exposes them and their coldly deliberate pursuit of consummation:

> "No, here," she said, going out on to the slope full under the moonshine. She lay motionless, with wide-open eyes looking at the moon. He came direct to her, without preliminaries. She held him pinned down at the chest, awful. The fight, the struggle for consummation was terrible (p.480).

The stasis at which this couple have arrived is evident in the rigidity of their prostrate bodies, which simultaneously suggests the proximity to death. The absence of real communion is indicated by Ursula's blank, staring eyes, and by Skrebensky's desire to get the whole charade over with as quickly as possible. Their mutual antagonism is no longer hidden, and Ursula has finally achieved her heart's desire - supremacy, triumph - in the obliteration of Skrebensky. Yet strangely, the very elements which had urged Ursula onwards to achieve this state, the moon and

the sea, now pass away altogether, and as she lifts her "dead body" from the sands, she discovers that "there was now no moon for her, no sea" (p.481). There is an overwhelming sense of the tension and violence of the preceding chapters subsiding, of a restoration of balance as Ursula returns to her family, and Skrebensky leaves for India. The process of resurgence and rebirth must now begin, and after a period of illness during which she exchanges humility for her past arrogance, Ursula walks one afternoon towards Willey Green, the "rain swinging with slow, floating waves across the landscape' (p.487), and achieves her triumphant vision.

In the final phase of an elegy, the elegist triumphs over the death that has occurred by finding a way of rejoicing in it. The conditions which lead to the passing away of an era in The Rainbow are created by an excess of resistance of one form or another. On the literal level, there is the banking of the canal, while on a psychological level, there are the demands of the individual will to selfhood and consciousness. Because of the pressure that builds up in the relationship of Ursula and Skrebensky, their ultimate break-up is a cause for optimism, and is accompanied by

a sense of release for Ursula, who sees the world refreshed too. The resurrection of the town of Beldover that Ursula imagines, is indicative of her personal rebirth, since the Brangwens have traditionally described their inner being in architectural terms; from Tom's reference to "the homestead of his nature", to Will's sensation of being like a seed in the womb of the church. The family progresses from a lack of personal will on the part of Tom, to an excess of will in Tom's nephew of that name, to a sacrifice of will on the part of Ursula as she surrenders her initial determination to work out her own destiny. Thus the two crises of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth centuries with which the novel deals - the crises in personal relations and in industrial expansion, are essentially the same. Each is characterized by rigid channelling of people - into individuals concerned only with careers and personal gratification; into mere cogs in a mechanical process; into the lackeys of a regimented educational system.

The flood occurring on the last pages of the novel, which marks the end of Ursula's fierce individualism, and which is symbolized in the driving rain and galloping horses, is thus an

exigency, and a welcome relief. There is no relief from the rigid structures created by industrialization except through this flood of sexual awakening, and this personal act of letting go, both deaths of a kind. This is why Ursula sees the vision of a Beldover renewed and transfigured - because she has personally given up that desire "to know, and to be of the fighting host" (p.9), that once her female ancestors expressed. We cannot understand this concluding section unless we see the novel as having a complex elegiac consolation and resolution, based on a welcoming of the flood and its destruction of all barriers, and on the reassurance that the rainbow will follow.

The successive floods in The Rainbow, the actual flood which drowns Tom Brangwen, and the floods of sexual awakening, bring home the reality of our distance from an antediluvian state, from the virtues of man's prehistory. Yet in sweeping away the rind of the world for the lovers, the floods of sexual awakening effect a return to a state similar to that of prehistory, permitting lovers to stand together like Ursula and Skrebensky "dark", fluid, infinitely potent, giving the living lie to the dead whole which contained them" (p.453).

Sexuality truly is the life-renewing flood, invading and overcoming the barriers of will, the reserves of self, all the neat channelling of everyday activity and the properly directed energies of the machine. Because it destroys these things, the flood is perceived at first with some horror; the sense of release comes later.

In The Virgin and the Gipsy, the flood encountered by Yvette is both palpably real, and sexual, and her reaction to it is one of curiosity and desire mixed with sheer fright:

> To her horror and amazement, round the bend of the river she saw a shaggy, tawny wave-front of water advancing like a wall of lions. The roaring sound wiped out everything. She was powerless, too amazed and wonder struck, she wanted to see it.[81]

The water advances like a pride of lions, prophesying Yvette's imminent initiation into the purely animal, into the fear and the power of sex. Yvette is saved by the flood of her burgeoning sexuality as much as by the flood from the burst reservoir. Ironically the gipsy who is the source of her awakening, saves her from the real torrent that rages through her house.

The horses which loom threateningly over Ursula are similar in many ways to the leonine waves which threaten Yvette in The Virgin and the Gipsy. The horses, as Lawrence points out in Fantasia of the Unconscious, represent "the deepest sensual activity in the male" and "danger passion".[82] Her experience, frightening and exhausting, is a potent reminder to Ursula that she must yet deal with this male activity, notwithstanding her rejection of Skrebensky. Because of the almost visionary nature of her encounter with the horses, it is brought home to Ursula that the impulse towards the sensuality of the male is within her, that is, insofar as the apparition of the beasts stems as much from her unconscious mind as from the lee of a clump of trees on Willey Green. The message to Ursula is that the relation between male and female is permanent, whatever strides are made in the direction of individualism, and it is only after this confrontation with the equine symbols of her own deep-seated needs that Ursula acquiesces:

> It was not for her to create, but to recognise a man created by God. The man should come from the Infinite and she should hail him (p.494).

As with Yvette, the danger once encountered proves to be for Ursula the key to a different

and more profound safety than ever experienced before:

> As she sat there, spent, time and flux of change passed away from her, she lay as if unconscious upon the bed of the stream, like a stone, unconscious, unchanging, unchangeable, whilst everything rolled by in transcience, leaving her there, a stone at rest on the bed of the stream, unalterable and passive, sunk to the bottom of all change (p.490).

This, rather than the sight of the rainbow, is Ursula's private elegiac consolation, that she can lapse back into unconsciousness after the fruitless search for its direct opposite, consciousness; that she can plumb the depths of the stream where she had once envied and aspired to the moon. Attaining thus to the eternal world, Ursula is in a position comparable to that of Will and Anna just after their marriage, where it is possible for her to dismiss the ugly, sordid nature of built-up civilization, and to see "the old, brittle corruption of houses and factories swept away" (p.496). Here she seems to echo the sentiments of her grandfather, who is consoled on the night of his wife's childbirth that "there was the infinite world, eternal, unchanging, as well as the world of life" (p.81). The "infinite world" of which Tom speaks is the

kernel, from which the rind may be stripped away - not in reality, for it would be impossible to do anything about the incipient bruise of industrialism and mass civilization - but in significance. The outer shell of the architecture of corruption falls away beside the essential realization of permanence in the relation of men and women.[83] It is this tension between two worlds, one eternal and unchanging, the other transient and fluctuating, that is at the root of both the anguish and the relief inherent in the elegy, and in The Rainbow specifically, each relationship is seen against a background of the struggle through flux to infinity.

The elegiac movement of the novel has much to do with the Brangwen women, and the changing imagery of their visions of the future. The earlier Brangwen women see the future as a furnace through which their sons must walk, like Shadrach, Mesach and Abednigo, emboldened by faith. The meaning of this image is two-fold, and reflects two different versions of futurity in The Rainbow. Firstly, continuity in the novel is dependent upon the courage and trust of the lovers, who leap into the unknown, and "taking the superb and supreme risk,

deposit() a security of life in the womb".[84] But the furnace has a literal sense too, and secondly, the future means going forth or sending one's offspring into a newly industrialized world. Thus "the supreme risk" is no longer just the leap into the unknown of love. This new feeling of anguish about the responsibility of love and continuity is articulated in Lady Chatterley's Lover by Mellors once "he had taken the woman, and brought on himself a new cycle of pain and doom":

> It was not the woman's fault, nor even love's fault, nor the fault of sex. The fault lay there, out there, in those evil electric lights and diabolic rattlings of engines. There, in the world of the mechanized greedy, greedy mechanism and mechanized greed, sparkling with lights and gushing hot metal and roaring with traffic, there lay the vast evil thing, ready to destroy whatever did not conform.[85]

Mellors' fears underline the ominous proximity of the furnace of love to the furnace of industry and explain his reluctance, as well as Ursula's in The Rainbow, to deposit the seed of security in the womb. In The Rainbow, both the lovers and their children are sent out into the unknown, and the significance of the biblical allusion is that survival - not being consumed by the industrial furnace, not being destroyed in the struggle of love - depends upon faith and courage, not faith in God, but

faith in woman, since she is the one who demands it:

> The child she might hold up, she might toss the child forward into the furnace, the child might walk there, amid the burning coals and the incandescent roar of heat, as the three witnesses walked with the angel in the fire (p.196)

This is the elegy's movement downwards, towards annihilation, but as we have already seen, the lovers are not consumed but achieve consummation; and the rhythm of industrial activity is always superseded by the old rhythm of men and women, and by the rhythms of the Natural cycle. Thus the change from the imagery of the furnace to that of the rainbow, the second image of futurity, is easily achieved.

The biblical rainbow is a reward for faith, it is a covenant fulfilled because the faithful have proved themselves to be such. Readily leaping into the unknown like "the three witnesses", the Brangwen family (in the person of Ursula) is rewarded by a vision of the rainbow, an acknowledgement of their trust. The rainbow has always been present, if implicitly, as each set of lovers, like Anna's father and mother, meet "to the span of the heavens" (p.97).

Thus in the novel, the Brangwen women are entrusted with the deep religious significance of things, envisioning both the need for faith and its vindication. Tom Brangwen feels an "innate desire to find in a woman the embodiment of all his inarticulate, powerful religious impulses" (p.20), and senses that "woman (is) immortal, whatever happened, whoever (turns) towards death".

Always, for the Brangwens, the religious impulse is "inarticulate"; "incommunicable"; "unintelligible"; nor is it orthodox in its expression, for they are not concerned with rules of conduct, craving instead "the sense of the eternal and immortal" (p.274). Ultimately, the religious problem of the novel is one of architecture, just as the final elegiac solution of the novel is architectural. Will thinks to find immortality and the highest ecstasy in Lincoln Cathedral's Gothic architecture:

> And there was no time nor life nor death, but only this, this timeless consummation, where the thrust from earth met the thrust from earth and the arch was locked on the keystone of ecstasy . (p.202)

Instead of seeing Church <u>in</u> Woman, Will sees

the church as a woman, and, concentrating on its soaring arches and triumphant apex, does not realize that he has left Anna behind, that he himself is like an arch reaching out without support.

The difference between these stone arches and the arch of water and light that is the rainbow, is that the rainbow does not exclude the sky, but soars in it, and is made from it. Anna feels sick and disillusioned in the cathedral because she sees how much it leaves out, and because it houses not so much the body of God as the body of Will, which he will eat, hoping to achieve immortality. This macabre suggestion of hers is understandable when we see what Will does in the Church is to attempt to achieve ecstasy and eternity alone, without her his wife, which in Lawrence's doctrine means death. In this sense, Will's experience in Lincoln Cathedral has its correlative in Ursula's desire for consummation with the moon, and both instances serve to warn of the sterile consequences of men and women seeking personal satisfaction, and even transfiguration, without their mate.

Anna counters the soaring enclosure of this

space inside the cathedral with a mental image suggesting a soaring in unlimited space:

> She wanted to get out of this fixed, leaping, forward-travelling movement, to rise from it as a bird rises with wet, limp feet from the sea, to lift herself as a bird lifts its breast and thrusts its body from the pulse and heave of a sea that bears it forward to an unwilling conclusion (p.203).

Anna's longing to soar as a bird is echoed in Will's rejection of the cathedral as a false doorway, since "outside the cathedral were many flying spirits that could never be sifted through the jewelled gloom" (p 206). This is the difference between the two arches, the arch of the cathedral and the arch of the rainbow: the one excludes light, the other is made of it; the one is a source of personal ecstasy; the other is a result of joint ecstasy; the one is forged by man, the other is given by God. It is in this context that we must view Ursula's seeing 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 heavens".

CONCLUSION

The titles of all three of these Modernist texts - The Waste Land, To the Lighthouse, and The Rainbow - have a geographical orientation that unites them in one central elegiac concern: a journey in exile, real or metaphoric, which is what life becomes for the mourner once the death has occurred. The metaphor of a journey is consistent with the formal movement of the elegy through a trough of despair and incomprehension about the death to an arrival, after an ascent, at a state of acceptance, understanding and joy that amounts to a spiritual release for the traveller. Because of this last consideration, the journey is often one from a material or worldly perception of things to one that is abstract and spiritual, as in The Waste Land.

This theme is not only ideally suited to the preoccupation with alienation and with outsiders in Modernism, but also echoes the theme of the search for the Holy Grail which grew out of the original Adonis cult. The characters in The Waste Land, as well as Ursula in The Rainbow

and Lily Briscoe in To the Lighthouse, are akin to the questers in their search for a spiritual (or at least artistic) solution that is bound symbolically to sexual or conjugal conditions. Thus their search goes back to the original base of the elegy where the seasonal infertility of the soil came to be represented in the death of the lover-god. Right from the beginning, the connection between sex and the spirit existed in the elegy. And in The Waste Land, the search for meaning continues to be symbolized in the futile sexual encounters of the characters. In To the Lighthouse, the question of real marriage looms as large as the question of how to "marry" with things on another, more intangible level; and in The Rainbow the failure of Ursula and Skrebensky's relationship on a sexual level occurs once they have reached spiritual nullity.

The myth of Adonis with which the development of the elegy was so closely enmeshed was expanded in some versions to encompass the scattering of the parts of the dead god, symbolizing the dispersal caused by death. This raises another elegiac motif which has its Modernist counterpart in the problem of

disintegration. There are passages in each of the three works with which I have dealt that express a similar anguish over not knowing how things fit together:

> What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
> Out of this stony rubbish?
>
> (The Waste Land, lines 19-20)

> I can connect
> Nothing with nothing
>
> (lines 19-20)

> Perished. Alone. The grey-green light on the wall opposite. The empty places. Such were some of the parts, but how bring them together?
>
> (To the Lighthouse, p.138)

> There was no meeting place, no centre, no artery, no organic formation. There [the town of Wiggiston] lay, like the new foundations of a red-brick confusion rapidly spreading, like a skin disease.
>
> (The Rainbow, p.345)

In each case the cause of the fragmentation is different, although of course the loss of an

organic centre underlies the entire modern ethos. In The Waste Land, the fragmentation is intellectual and spiritual, and is characterized by a pervasive atmosphere of eclecticism and dilettantism. In To the Lighthouse, Mrs Ramsay's death causes the dispersal of her family and their friends. Her death serves to bring to light a fragmentation that has already occurred in the field of artistic perception, where there is no longer one acceptable reality, but the whole range of experience which needs to be set down on paper and canvas, so that ultimately the problem of cohesion operates on both a personal and an artistic level in the novel. In The Rainbow, the initial fragmentation of the Brangwens' life-style occurs as the result of advances in industrialisation and education, although later it is the individual aspirations of characters like Ursula and Skrebensky that make even sexual union impossible.

The death of Tom Brangwen, as of Mrs Ramsay, represents the passing of an old, established order that succumbs not only as a result of external forces of modernization, but also because of personal failings such as an excessive laxity, and a refusal to fight,

change or create. Thus the death of these individuals reflects necessary historical change, and the elegiac form in all three works provides a framework within which to respond to modernity. Yet the very attempt to use an elegiac form in this context produces a problem. In the traditional elegy, the mourner is comforted by concepts such as cyclic renewal and immortality, which reassure the mourner that the death is not final. In The Waste Land, To the Lighthouse and The Rainbow however, time itself (in the form of historical change) is the source of the grief, and moreover, concepts such as cyclic renewal and immortality are not accessible to the Modernist writer, who doubts the pagan connection between the fortunes of man and nature implied in the former as much as he questions the Christian imperative of the latter.

I would argue that in confronting the challenge of immortality and of time in general in an era that was questioning both, the three writers - T.S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf and D.H. Lawrence - arrived at the same solution. They subordinated both the linear and the cyclic views of time to a dimension of human experience that does not answer to chronology, but

that nevertheless holds the key to refreshment and renewal - the unconscious. And in each case, a study of this dimension revealed one particular symbol that could assuage the disappointments suffered on a conscious level, and that was the symbol of water. In Eliot's poem, water indicates relief from a spiritual drought; in To the Lighthouse, it provides the means of crossing the great distances between different points of view; in The Rainbow it transforms the ugliness of the world by involving a sexual experience that floods consciousness.

It is through this symbol too, that immortality is assured. Mrs Ramsay finds that people are like sealed vessels, and that this is what confounds our search for eternal rest, since "not as oneself did one find rest ever, in her experience". Only in "losing personality, one lost the fret, the hurry, the stir; and there rose to her lips always some exclamation of triumph over life when things came together in this peace, this rest, this eternity" (p.61). Thus what is needed for immortality is impersonality to the point of abstraction (whether it be Mrs Ramsay's "wedge of darkness" or the recurrent sensation of the Brangwens of being

"like a nut from its shell which is unreality"), as well as the breaking down of the barriers of the self which is associated with fluidity and described in terms of a flood.

In The Rainbow, and in To the Lighthouse, there is a moment when this flood, as it occurs in Mrs Ramsay's consciousness, or in that of the lovers, seems like a death, and this is of the utmost importance. The sudden recognition of mortality, as in

> (Come in under the shadow of this red rock),
> And I will show you something different
> from either
> Your shadow at morning striding behind you
> Or your shadow at evening rising to meet
> you;
> I will show you fear in a handful of dust
>
> (The Waste Land, 26-30)

precedes the realization of its exact opposite - immortality - which is redefined in these three works as the ability to look beyond the self, beyond personality. Via this tricky path, the concept of immortality is placed firmly within the realm of love. The surrender of personal will becomes the "device" Mrs Ramsay had sought "for becoming, like waters

poured into one jar, inextricably the same, one with the object one adored" (p.50). It is no coincidence that two of the directives issued in "The Thunder Speaks", to give ("Datta"), and to sympathize ("Dayadhvan"), are concerned with this problem of identifying with others, and of letting go of oneself as much as of one's own possessions, as the only means of achieving the final blessing "Shantih shantih shantih".

It is, perhaps, no surprise that Eliot, Lawrence and Woolf experimented with time on a stylistic level. Eliot interspersed contemporary scenes with references to the Sixteenth Century, and to pagan and biblical sources. Woolf divided her novel into three sections, the last and first separated by an interval of ten years and dealing with only one day apiece, the middle section covering the intervening years of seasonal, national, artistic and personal alteration. In Lawrence's novel we see the writer spanning centuries and generations of the Brangwen family's existence, almost as far back as prehistoric times, and this in a matter of a few chapters, while requiring more than half of the novel's length to document the early adulthood of Ursula Brangwen as she

struggles through the increasingly hostile environment of the twentieth century. There is an elegiac need in all of these works to reckon with the past, as well as to be reconciled to it, and hence the importance of forgetfulness and of memory in The Waste Land and in To the Lighthouse.

The use of the elegiac form has assisted these Modernist writers in giving cohesive expressions to the diverse forces - psychological, sexual, industrial, intellectual - that rent the society in which they were living. It enabled them to heal that wound, related in many ways to the original wound in the thigh of Adonis, through reworking a traditional symbol (that of water) as well as a traditional consolation (that of immortality). Consequently, we should not view the positive, even optimistic, endings of The Rainbow and The Waste Land with suspicion; rather we should hail them as formal expression of inchoate emotions and conditions. The elegiac achievement of all three of these works is the establishment of a dynamic relationship of the changing with the continuous, and a recognition of the recurrent within the historical.

ENDNOTES

[1] Margaret Alexiou, The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition (London: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1974), p.104.

[2] C.M. Bowra, Early Greek Elegists (Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons, 1960), p.3.

[3] Alexiou, p.104.

[4] A.E. Harvey, "The Classification of Greek Lyric Poetry," The Classical Quarterly, 32 (1911), 171.

[5] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Miscellaneous Criticism, ed. Thomas Middleton Raysor. (London: Constable and Co., 1936), p.430.

[6] Francis White Weitzmann, "Notes on the Elizabethan Elegie," PMLA, 50 (1935), 438.

[7] Weitzmann, 438.

[8] Weitzmann, 442.

[9] William Empson, Some Versions of Pastoral (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1935), p.25.

[10] An account of these conventions is to be found in George Norlin, "The Conventions of Pastoral Elegy," American Journal of Philology, 32 (1911), 294-312.

[11] Sir James Frazer, Adonis, Attis, Osiris, Part 4, Vol I of The Golden Bough (London: Macmillan,

1911), p.231.

[12] Carl G. Jung, Symbols of Transformation, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956), p.209. The diagram is derived from Jung's.

[13] Jung, p.348

[14] Jessie Weston, From Ritual to Romance, (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1957), p.

[15] Weston, p.

[16] Alexiou, p.110.

[17] Alexiou, p.120.

[18] Alexiou, p.85.

[19] Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism, (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1957), p.158.

[20] Castiglione, "Alcon," trans. Harry Joshua Leon, in The Pastoral Elegy: An Anthology, ed. Thomas Perrin Harrison (New York: Octagon Books, 1968), pp.112-113.

[21] Harrison, p.42.

[22] Harrison, p.28.

[23] T.S. Eliot, The Waste Land, in Collected Poems 1909-1962 (London: Faber, 1963). Edition used throughout.

[24] Thomas G. Rosenmeyer, The Green Cabinet: Theocritus and the European Pastoral Lyric (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1969), pp.67-68; p.229.

[25] Percy Bysshe Shelley, Adonais, ll.62-63, in The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley, ed. Edward Dowden (London: Macmillan, 1900) p.421.

[26] See the famous passage from Moschus, "Lament

for Bion," ll.99-103: "Alas, when the mallows perish in the garden, and the green celery, and the luxuriant, curling dill, they later come to life again and grow in another year; but we, the great, the mighty, the wise men, when once we die, unhearing we sleep in the hollow earth, a right long sleep without end or awaking."

[27] John Milton, Lycidas, ll.50-55, in The Poetical Works of John Milton (London: J.M. Dent, 1909), p.442. Edition used throughout.

[28] The Wanderer ll.79-87, trans. S.A.J. Bradley, in Anglo-Saxon Poetry, ed. S.A.J. Bradley (London: J.M. Dent, 1982), p.324.

[29] See Nemesian, "Eclogue 1", ll.58-60: "Thou didst encourage us to fit reeds to our lips, to join them together with wax, and didst teach us to beguile our painful cares", Harrison, p.53. See also Sannazaro, "Arcadia", ll.26-29: "Surely, I do not know who will hereafter be our trusted guide in times of doubt ...", Harrison, p.93.

[30] Moschus, "Lament for Bion," in Theocritus, Bion and Moschus, ed. and trans. Andrew Lang (London, 1906), p.201.

[31] Edmund Wilson, Axel's Castle (Glasgow : Collins-Fontana, 1931), p.93.

[32] Theocritus, Idyll I, ll.27-56, trans. Charles Stuart Calverley in An Anthology of World Poetry, ed. Mark Van Doren (London: Cassell, 1929), pp.253-4.

[33] "Winter. The Fourth Pastoral, or Daphne," in The Poems of Alexander Pope, ed. John Butt (London: Methuen, 1963), p.138.

[34] Harrison, p.2.

[35] Harrison, p.34.

[36] Ronsard, Adonis, ll.359-362; Harrison p.173.

[37] John Gay, "Friday, or the Dirge," ll.160-164; Harrison p.232.

[38] For a discussion of this development in the poem, see Margaret C. Weirick, "Myth and Water Symbolism in The Waste Land," Texas Quarterly, 10 (1967), 97-104.

[39] Jung, p.218.

[40] Boccaccio, Olympia, ll.274-275; Harrison, p.91.

[41] Petrarch, Galatea, ll.63-64; Harrison, p.74.

[42] Ezekiel 2:9 : "And I looked, and behold a hand was sent to me, wherein was a book rolled up : and he spread it before me ... and there were written in it lamentations, and canticles, and woe." Also Ezekiel 3:3 : "And I did eat it: and it was sweet as honey in my mouth."

[43] Sannazaro, Phyllis, ll.72-74; Harrison, p.109.

[44] Arnold Kettle, An Introduction to the English Novel (London: Hutchinson Univ. Library, 1962), p.102.

[45] The Diary of Virginia Woolf, Vol.3, 1925-

1930, ed. Anne O. Bell (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), p.34. Only volume quoted.

[46] F.R. Leavis, "After 'To the Lighthouse,'" Scrutiny, 10 (1942), 297.

[47] Virginia Woolf, To the Lighthouse (London: Granada Triad, 1978), p.149. Edition used throughout.

[48] Walter Allen, The English Novel (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965), p.351.

[49] M.C. Bradbrook, "Notes on the Style of Mrs Woolf," Scrutiny, I (19 2-33), 38.

[50] Virginia Woolf, "The Narrow Bridge of Art," in Granite and Rainbow (London: Hogarth, 1958), p.22.

[51] Bell, pp.18-19.

[52] Glenn Pedersen, "Vision in 'To the Lighthouse'," PMLA, 73 (1958), 585-600: "It was Mrs Ramsay who has 'blundered'"; "The father should not be outside the window, looking at the mother and son in the window; the husband and wife should be together, the son with them both, but not between them, and most of all, not between the mother's knees"(!).

[53] Moments of Being: Unpublished Autobiographical Writings of Virginia Woolf, ed. Jeanne Schulkind (Sussex: The Univ. Press, 1976), p.94.

[54] Virginia Woolf, "Professions for Women," in The Death of The Moth and Other Essays (London: Hogarth 1942), p.151.

[55] Bell, p.208.

[56] Virginia Woolf, The Common Reader 1 (London: Hogarth, 1925), p.150.

[57] Sir Leslie Stephen, Mausoleum Book (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), p.23.

[58] Queen Victoria, Letter to the King of the Belgians, reported in Lytton Strachey, Queen Victoria (London: Chatto and Windus, 1931), p.193; p.196.

[59] Virginia Woolf, Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown (London: Hogarth Press, 1928), p.6.

[60] See J.W. Draper, The Funeral Elegy and the Rise of English Romanticism (London: Frank Cass and Co., 1967), for an account of this genre.

[61] Lord Alfred Tennyson, In Memoriam A.H.H., Part 51, Poetical Works (London: Collins, n.d.), p.412.

[62] Mr Bennet and Mrs Brown, p.20.

[63] Matthew Arnold, Thyrsis, 11.9-10, in Matthew Arnold: A Selection of His Poems, ed. Kenneth Allott (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1954), p.232.

[64] Thomas Hardy, "After a Journey", 11.9-10, in Thomas Hardy: Selected Poems (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978), p.381.

[65] The Letters of Virginia Woolf 1923-1928, eds. Nigel Nicolson and Jeanne Trautmann (London: Chatto and Windus, 1982), p.385.

[66] D.H. Lawrence, "The Crown," in Phoenix II (New York: Viking Press, 1968).

[67] I think this may account for complaints about the "stylistic failure" of the last section

of the novel, for example, that of Marvin Mudrick, "The Originality of The Rainbow," in D.H. Lawrence: A Collection of Critical Essays (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1963), p.45: "this concluding section ... has been most vexatious and unrewarding for readers; it is unduly repetitive, it is occasionally content to make points by assertion rather than by incident, it sometimes mistakes mere detailed documentation for thematic illustration and development, its tone sometimes verges on stridency."

[68] See Colin Clarke, River of Dissolution: D.H. Lawrence and English Romanticism (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), p.45: "In The Rainbow ... the vitalistic virtues - spontaneity, untamed energy, intensity of being, power - are endorsed and celebrated."

[69] D.H. Lawrence, "The Crown", p.389.

[70] See Keith Sagar, The Art of D.H. Lawrence (London: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1978), p.48: "We are never aware of Tom taking any decisions, exerting his will in any way. He does nothing. Rather things happen to him."

[71] As does Graham Hough, The Dark Sun: A Study of D.H. Lawrence (London: Duckworth, 1975), p.71: "But when Ursula ... has an intuition of regenerating power in her visionary encounter with the wild horses, when she sees the vision of the rainbow with which the book ends ... we can only feel that this is quite insufficiently based, nothing in the book up to now has led up to it."

[72] D.H.Lawrence, "Study of Thomas Hardy," in Phoenix (London: Heinemann, 1936), p.409.

[73] See Roger Sale, Modern Heroism (Los Angeles: California Univ. Press, 1973), p.60: "If Lawrence knew anything it was that the light cast by the completest consciousness described only a circle."

[74] See Mark Kinkhead-Weekes, "The Marble and the Statue: The Exploratory Imagination of D.H. Lawrence," in Imagined Worlds (London: Methuen, 1968), p.382: "love ... is the impulse to move from being to knowing, from undifferentiated oneness to perception of what is not-self, and to define the self by this process into individuality."

[75] D.H. Lawrence, "Study of Thomas Hardy," in Phoenix (London: Heinemann, 1936), p.449. And p.137.

[76] D.H. Lawrence: The Complete Poems (Harmondsworth: Penguin 1977) Poems quoted in this chapter are from this edition.

[77] D.H. Lawrence, "Within the Sepulchre", IV of The Crown, in Phoenix.

[78] See George H. Ford, Double Measure: A Study of the Novels and Stories of D.H. Lawrence (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965), p.152: What were Skrebensky's inadequacies? What were Ursula's demands from life and from love? No relationship in Lawrence's fiction is more baffling than this one."

[79] This comparison seems to be validated in Lawrence's letter to Waldo Frank, dated 27 July 1917, in The Collected Letters of D.H. Lawrence, ed. Harry T. Moore (London: Heinemann, 1962) p.519: "I knew I was writing a destructive work, otherwise

I couldn't have called it The Rainbow - in reference to the Flood. And the book was written and named in Italy, before there was any thought of war. And I knew, as I revised the book, that it was a kind of working up to the dark sensual or Dionysic or Aphrodisic ecstasy, which does actually burst the world, burst the world-consciousness in every individual. What I did through individuals, the world has done through the war."

[80]See Keith Sagar, The Art of D.H. Lawrence (London: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1978), p.56: "Ursula faces the problems of adjustment and emancipation in a specifically urban and twentieth century environment. The first danger is that she will be beaten down by the system but the second and even greater danger is that she will seek her absolute within her own ego, exploiting others to serve her lusts."

[81]D.H. Lawrence, The Virgin and the Gipsy (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980), p.242.

[82]D.H. Lawrence, Fantasia of the Unconscious (London: Heinemann, 1937), p.54.

[83]Thus I believe that H.M. Daleski, The Forked Flame: A Study of D.H. Lawrence (London: Faber & Faber, 1965), p.125, is misreading the novel's conclusion when he says: "What must be adjudged a weakness in the book ... is the form given to the vision of the rainbow; being made new herself, it is her facile assumption that she will find the world changed to measure."

D.H. Lawrence, "Study of Thomas Hardy", p.441.

[85]D.H. Lawrence, Lawrence, Lady Chatterley's Lover (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980), p.123.

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