

D. H. LAWRENCE



THE RAINBOW

D. H. Lawrence

The Rainbow

Enriched edition.

Introduction, Studies and Commentaries by Lily Wharton

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Introduction

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Between the felt weight of inherited custom and the quickening pulse of modern desire, *The Rainbow* arcs across generations as a struggle to reconcile the body's urgencies with the mind's ideals, the soil's rootedness with the horizon's call, and intimate love with the reshaping forces of a new century.

The Rainbow is a novel by D. H. Lawrence, written and published in 1915 during the early years of the First World War. Set in the English Midlands, it follows the Brangwen family across successive generations, tracing how relationships, work, and belief adapt to social and industrial change. Without disclosing its later turns, the book's premise is straightforward yet capacious: the lives of kin unfold as a continuous attempt to find a form of existence that feels truthful, vital, and free, within the limits and pressures of their time and place.

Its classic status rests on several intertwined achievements. Lawrence forged a daring mode of psychological realism that takes erotic energy, spiritual longing, and the rhythms of nature as serious subjects for the novel. *The Rainbow* expanded the scope of family fiction by presenting the private as inseparable from the historical, and it tested the boundaries of what could be written about intimacy. Though its initial reception was fraught, it steadily influenced the mainstream of twentieth-century English-language prose, opening space for candor about bodies and emotions and for a lyrical, symbol-rich style within narrative realism.

Formally, the novel blends panoramic breadth with intimate focus. Lawrence shifts fluidly between the external world—weather, work, landscape—and the inner weather of

thought and feeling, using a flexible third-person narration that brings readers near a character's perceptions without collapsing into solipsism. Symbolic motifs recur not as puzzles to decode but as living patterns that gather meaning through repetition. The multigenerational structure allows experiences to echo and refract across time, while the prose moves with a cadence that can be sensuous, incantatory, or briskly observational, depending on the emotional pressure of the scene.

Thematically, *The Rainbow* probes the tension between freedom and form: how to honor instinct and passion without dissolving the bonds that sustain communal life. It examines marriage and kinship as crucibles where personal radiance is tested by duty, habit, and expectation. It interrogates the promises and costs of education, the pull of the city against the tug of the fields, and the yearning for a more complete life—a fullness that might be spiritual, erotic, intellectual, or all at once. Always, Lawrence treats nature not as backdrop but as participant in human becoming.

The period of composition matters. Written amid the upheavals of the 1910s, the novel looks back on late nineteenth-century rural England while sensing the acceleration of modernity. The railways, factories, and schools that thread the Midlands bring new horizons and new constraints. The book's attention to changing gender roles and emerging professional paths reflects concrete social shifts, yet it resists reducing characters to historical symptoms. Instead, Lawrence dramatizes how public transformations filter into private rooms and fields, altering not just livelihoods but the textures of attention, speech, silence, and touch.

Its influence radiates beyond its own pages. *The Rainbow* stands at the threshold of high modernism, yet keeps faith with the vitality of everyday speech and the granularity of local life. It helped clear a path for novels that place interiority and sexuality at the center of serious art. It also

laid the groundwork for Lawrence's subsequent exploration of some of the same figures in *Women in Love*, extending its inquiry into love, power, and the modern. Later writers found in Lawrence a license to pursue intensity without apology and to treat human relationships as metaphysical adventures.

The book's early fate became part of its legend. Shortly after publication in Britain, *The Rainbow* was prosecuted for obscenity, and its circulation was suppressed. This episode did not diminish the novel's stature; rather, it underscored the cultural stakes of representing desire and domestic life with honesty. Over time, as critical attitudes changed, readers returned to the work and found in it not scandal but seriousness—a commitment to investigating how people might live more fully. The controversy, however, helps explain its place in debates about censorship, artistic freedom, and the social responsibilities of fiction.

Lawrence's characters are drawn with an intensity that refuses caricature. They are not mere types—farmers, teachers, dreamers—but particular people whose longings and frustrations are felt in the grain of their days. The family framework gives each life a context of inheritance and difference: children inherit habits, gestures, and land, yet they also invent themselves against those givens. Relationships become the medium through which the self is tested, risked, and sometimes renewed. Even when conflict arises, the novel's attention is less on blame than on the deep currents that drive human attachment.

Place is central. The Midlands landscape—fields, river, church, village, and the looming presence of industry—shapes the characters' sense of possibility. Weather seems to think alongside them; seasons gather meanings that bind private experience to natural cycles. The title's image gestures toward a spectrum of feeling and vision: a momentary bridge between earth and sky, matter and spirit. Lawrence uses such imagery not to decorate but to clarify,

letting physical detail bear philosophical weight. The result is a setting that is both grounded and emblematic, a world readers can walk and a pattern they can contemplate.

Reading *The Rainbow* is to encounter prose that wants to be equal to the intensities it describes. Sentences thrum with physicality and thought, and the novel's pacing alternates between contemplative stillness and sudden surge. It asks close attention—not because it obscures meaning, but because it trusts that complexity belongs to ordinary life. The reward is an enlarged sense of what fiction can do: register the tremors of feeling, render the dignity of work, and track the mysterious crossings between inner need and outer circumstance as they form a life's arc.

The Rainbow endures because its questions remain ours. How do we balance freedom with belonging, intimacy with autonomy, inheritance with change? In a world still negotiating gender roles, technological acceleration, ecological strain, and the search for meaningful work, Lawrence's vision feels freshly relevant. The novel's courage, beauty, and moral seriousness continue to invite readers into an active, reflective engagement with their own lives. It is a classic not only for what it once dared to say, but for how it still illuminates the paths between what we have been and what we hope to become.

Synopsis

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The *Rainbow* (1915) by D. H. Lawrence charts three generations of the Brangwen family in the English Midlands, tracing their shifting relationships to land, work, love, and belief from the mid-nineteenth century into the early twentieth. Beginning on a rural farm near the Trent, the novel follows how industrialization, education, and new social ideals reshape intimate life. Rather than a single protagonist, it offers a continuum in which parents and children confront similar longings under altered conditions. Lawrence's narrative moves steadily from the fields toward town and city, observing how external change unsettles inherited certainties while awakening new desires for personal freedom, understanding, and connection.

At the story's outset, Tom Brangwen, a farmer rooted in the rhythms of Marsh Farm, longs for a fuller, more articulate life than the one the soil alone affords. His path crosses that of Lydia Lensky, a widowed newcomer from continental Europe who brings with her an aura of distance and self-possession, as well as a young daughter. Their courtship suggests the possibility of union across cultural and emotional barriers. Lawrence presents Tom's attraction as a wish to bridge silence and difference, while Lydia seeks steadiness after upheaval. Their marriage becomes a test of how two inner worlds might accommodate one another without erasing what is distinct.

Domestic life with Tom and Lydia unfolds as a negotiation between temperament and circumstance. The household expands, the farm persists, and the couple's private search for intimacy deepens even as it meets periodic strain. Lydia's memories of a previous life remain partly opaque to Tom, and his urgencies can overwhelm her reserve. The

presence of Lydia's daughter, growing into adolescence, intensifies the household's oscillations between harmony and friction. Yet the narrative emphasizes continuity: the family's work, the seasons, and the persistent, if uneasy, desire for mutual recognition. In this setting, young Anna begins to form her own fierce sensibility, poised to contest and inherit her elders' passions.

Anna's adult life marks the novel's second movement. She marries Will Brangwen, a relative whose inward intensity complements and clashes with her own. Their union dramatizes a struggle for balance between bodily passion, domestic routine, and spiritual aspiration. Will is drawn to religious art and ritual, while the practicalities of earning a living pull the couple toward town and craft or design work. As their family grows, moments of rapture alternate with episodes of discord and power-play, illuminating how marriage can magnify both love and opposition. The narrative registers the couple's attempt to situate themselves between the stability of the past and the beckoning energies of modern life.

From this marriage emerges the novel's third focus, Ursula Brangwen, whose childhood curiosity broadens into a determined intellectual and moral awakening. Education opens vistas beyond the farm and the parish, bringing her into contact with new ideas, political debates, and the arts. She experiences intense attachments and the push-pull of dependence and autonomy, absorbing influences from mentors who model independence and critical thought. Lawrence traces her inner growth as she tests inherited beliefs about gender, authority, and vocation. Ursula's developing sensibility becomes a lens through which the narrative gauges the costs and promises of a society moving from rooted tradition toward urban, professional, and scientific modes of life.

Ursula's coming-of-age includes an evolving relationship with Anton Skrebensky, a young man oriented toward

service and public duty. Their attraction is genuine yet unsettled by differing visions of fulfillment. He identifies with order and participation in national institutions, while she resists being contained by prefabricated roles. The pair's conversations and separations articulate a recurring question in the novel: whether love can flourish without one partner subsuming ambition to the other's path. Through Ursula and Anton, Lawrence examines the appeal and the constraints of conventional marriage within a world that offers education and work to women yet still polices their desires and horizons.

Seeking self-possession, Ursula pursues study and later classroom work, encountering the machinery of institutional authority firsthand. Teaching reveals bureaucratic habits that, to her, seem to diminish the living minds in her care. The city and its factories underscore a broader sense of depersonalization that contrasts with her childhood's organic rhythms. Personal crises intensify her confrontation with fear, vulnerability, and resilience, pressing her to weigh security against authenticity. The narrative here is less about external action than about testing a consciousness: how Ursula composes a viable ethic for herself amid pressures from family, work, and romance, and how the new century's promises complicate old moral vocabularies.

Across its three generational arcs, the novel considers the tension between rootedness and mobility, ritual and experiment, submission and self-assertion. It explores varieties of love—conjugal, familial, erotic—and the spiritual hunger that persists whether expressed through religion, art, or a renewed attention to the natural world. Women's experiences are foregrounded as they navigate opportunities and constraints reshaped by education and modern labor. Lawrence's prose links bodily life to psychic intensity, treating sexuality neither as scandal nor as mere symbolism but as a channel for knowledge and conflict. The Brangwens' repeated reach toward fuller being suggests

continuity beneath historical change and the recurrent human hope of renewal.

First published in 1915, *The Rainbow* endures for its unsentimental portrait of growth amid social transformation and for its bold treatment of intimacy and female self-definition. Its narrative culminates without tidy resolution, instead emphasizing the ongoingness of becoming that continues in the companion novel *Women in Love*. The book's early censorship reflected anxieties about its candor, yet its lasting significance lies in how it enlarges the English domestic novel to include psychological depth and the pressures of modernity. Without prescribing answers, it invites readers to consider how individuals might reconcile desire, work, and belonging while remaining open to change.

Historical Context

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D. H. Lawrence situates *The Rainbow* in the English East Midlands, largely in rural Nottinghamshire, across the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth century. The narrative unfolds within a social order dominated by the Church of England, the patriarchal family, and an expanding market economy tied to the British Empire. Local authority was exercised through parishes, landowners, and, increasingly, school boards and municipal councils. Law and custom reinforced hierarchical relations between men and women, masters and workers, urban and rural life. Against this framework, the novel tracks generational change, showing how the rhythms of farm, village, and nearby industrial towns intersected with national institutions and imperial horizons.

Mid-nineteenth-century agriculture in England was reshaped by market integration and mechanization. Enclosure had long consolidated landholdings, but new tools—most notably the reaper and improved threshing—made work more regular and more capital-intensive. Tenant farming, hiring fairs, and seasonal labor persisted, yet rail-borne competition encouraged specialization and cash-cropping. This world prized continuity, kinship, and custodianship of the land. Lawrence's portrait of farm families reflects the dignity and limits of that economy: close dependence on weather and markets, intimate ties to parish and kin, and the gradual encroachment of money values and centralized authority into what had been a predominantly customary way of life.

The East Midlands experienced intense industrialization in the nineteenth century. Coal mining and ironworking expanded along the Erewash Valley, while Nottingham's lace and hosiery trades drew workers from surrounding

villages. Factories and collieries transformed employment patterns, drawing agricultural labor into wage work regulated by the clock. Smoke, rail sidings, and terraced streets altered landscapes and health. The *Rainbow* absorbs this setting: characters cross the boundaries between farm and town, encountering the discipline of machines and the anonymity of crowds. Lawrence's emphasis on bodily vitality and inward feeling can be read as a response to an industrial order that prized efficiency, hierarchy, and measurable output.

Transport and communications broadened horizons. From the 1840s, railway building knit the Midlands into national markets, allowing perishable goods and passengers to move quickly between village and city. The telegraph, and later the telephone, accelerated information flow, while postal services became more reliable and affordable. For families like those in the novel, this meant easier migration for work, visits to urban centers, and a new sense that distant opportunities—and threats—were near at hand. The *Rainbow* registers how such mobility unsettled settled life: courtship, employment, and education no longer depended only on parish ties but on choices mediated by schedules, fares, and timetables.

Religious life structured belief, work, and moral regulation. The Church of England, with its parish system, rites, and schools, remained the established church, while Nonconformist chapels—Methodist, Baptist, and others—were strong in mining and lace districts. Victorian evangelical norms emphasized restraint, duty, and respectability. Scientific developments challenged inherited faiths: Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859) sparked debate about creation and the authority of scripture, while biblical higher criticism entered educated discourse. The *Rainbow* mirrors these tensions, contrasting institutional religion and moral surveillance with a search for

spiritual immediacy, bodily knowledge, and personal authenticity outside church-sanctioned forms.

Marriage, property, and gender roles were defined by law and custom but changed over the period the novel spans. Ideals of separate spheres positioned men as breadwinners and women as domestic guardians, reinforced by church teaching and social convention. Yet reforms altered women's legal status: the Married Women's Property Acts (1870, 1882) allowed wives to own earnings and property, and divorce became more accessible after mid-century legislative changes. These shifts did not dissolve patriarchy but created new spaces for autonomy. The *Rainbow's* women test those spaces, dramatizing the pressures of respectability and the growing possibility—socially and legally—of self-direction within and beyond marriage.

Education reforms decisively reshaped everyday life. The Elementary Education Act of 1870 established school boards and a framework for universal elementary schooling in England and Wales; fees were effectively abolished in the 1890s, and the 1902 Education Act reorganized oversight and expanded secondary opportunities. Teacher training colleges professionalized the classroom, and girls increasingly accessed schooling that could lead to paid work. The *Rainbow* reflects this institutional world through experiences of schooling, examinations, and the authority of headmasters and inspectors. Discipline, attendance, and standardized curricula embody the modern state's reach into childhood, while education opens paths for ambition, especially for young women.

Industrial capitalism reconfigured class relations and collective organization. In mining districts, trade unionism strengthened from the 1860s, with local and national miners' associations gaining influence. Textile and lace workers likewise organized, though labor remained precarious, with periodic strikes, lockouts, and depressions. Political reform—most notably franchise extensions in 1867

and 1884—brought more working men into electoral politics, strengthening civic engagement and municipal reform. The *Rainbow's* social field registers these pressures: wage bargaining, status anxieties, and the moral weight of respectability. Characters traverse class boundaries through work, education, and marriage, reflecting a society both mobile and constrained by entrenched hierarchies.

The British Empire formed the global horizon of late Victorian and Edwardian life. Military careers, colonial administration, and trade linked provincial Britain to overseas territories in India, Africa, and beyond. Conflicts such as the South African War (1899–1902) absorbed officers and volunteers and saturated the press. Imperial curricula and civic rituals cultivated loyalty and adventure, while dissenters criticized conquest and racial hierarchies. The *Rainbow* registers this imperial context through the allure and cost of service abroad, and through the way empire promises escape from provincial limits while entangling individuals in bureaucratic and martial systems that demand obedience and suppress local attachments.

Urban growth altered culture, consumption, and leisure. Towns like Nottingham expanded with terraced housing, gas and later electric lighting, and public transport, including trams. Department stores and co-operative societies changed shopping habits; public parks, libraries, and music halls diversified leisure. Municipal authorities invested in sanitation, schools, and baths, signaling new expectations of civic welfare. The *Rainbow's* movement toward town spaces reflects these material changes. Characters encounter spectacles, crowds, and the new freedoms and alienations of urban life. The city offers choice and anonymity, yet it also imposes routines and impersonal authority, intensifying the search for meaning that the novel dramatizes.

Scientific and medical discourses redefined the body and sexuality. Late nineteenth-century public health campaigns targeted contagion and housing, while emerging psychology

and sexology—debates associated with figures like Havelock Ellis—brought intimate behavior into scientific and legal scrutiny. Respectability politics guarded against open discussion of desire, especially for women. The *Rainbow*'s frankness about erotic experience collided with prevailing norms, not because it sensationalized, but because it insisted on embodied knowledge as central to spiritual and social life. The novel's treatment of intimacy, maternity, and selfhood thus intersected with contemporary controversies over morality, degeneration, and the regulation of bodies.

Literary culture was itself in transition. The late Victorian social novel gave way to experimental forms associated with early modernism, privileging interiority, symbolic patterning, and fractured chronology. Writers such as Thomas Hardy had already tested the limits of respectability with their depictions of desire and social constraint, provoking critical and legal backlash. By the 1910s, censorship remained potent, particularly regarding sexual representation. The *Rainbow* participates in these shifts: its psychological intensity, mythic imagery, and focus on private experience align with broader experiments in European narrative. Its reception, however, shows that formal innovation offered no protection against moral prosecution.

Lawrence's background anchors the novel's world. Born in 1885 in Eastwood, Nottinghamshire, he grew up between a coal-miner father and a mother with aspirations toward gentility and education. That tension—between manual labor and cultural refinement, between village loyalties and broader horizons—infuses his settings and character types. He studied and taught before turning fully to writing, giving him direct experience of classrooms, inspectors, and the bureaucratic language of improvement. The landscapes, dialects, and domestic rituals he records in *The Rainbow* are grounded in a region he knew intimately, lending

documentary force to a work otherwise devoted to inward transformation.

The timing of publication intensified controversy. Released in 1915, during the First World War, *The Rainbow* appeared amid heightened surveillance of dissent and morality. Although wartime censorship primarily targeted military information, the atmosphere bolstered moral crusaders. Later that year, the novel was prosecuted under the Obscene Publications Act of 1857; the publisher withdrew it, and authorities seized and destroyed over a thousand copies. For years it was effectively unavailable in Britain. The case illustrates how sexual candor and spiritual heterodoxy were policed, and how legal and commercial mechanisms could silence a book that challenged dominant narratives of duty, purity, and patriotic conformity.

Women's activism provides crucial context for the novel's female trajectories. The organized suffrage movement expanded dramatically after the 1890s, with groups such as the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies and, from 1903, the more militant Women's Social and Political Union pressing for political rights. Campaigns also targeted access to higher education, professions, and control over marriage and reproduction. While *The Rainbow* predates the partial enfranchisement of women in 1918, it echoes the ferment that made such change imaginable. Its heroines' conflicts with school authorities, family expectations, and sexual double standards belong to a broader struggle for autonomy in work, citizenship, and intimate life.

The Edwardian years were marked by volatility beneath a veneer of prosperity. Britain faced labor unrest, debates over Irish Home Rule, and anxieties about international competition. The arms race and alliance politics pushed Europe toward the catastrophe of 1914, while domestically, welfare reforms and taxation fights signaled a reconfiguration of state and society. *The Rainbow* captures this unsettled mood without dwelling on parliamentary

crises. Its characters sense a world that no longer fits inherited scripts, where the authority of church, patriarch, and empire is felt yet no longer commands assent. This atmosphere of impending transformation shapes the novel's urgency and its ambivalent hope.

Read as social document and critique, *The Rainbow* mirrors the passage from agrarian communal life to industrial modernity and tests the institutions that governed that passage. It exposes how church, school, factory, and army shape bodies and desires, while insisting on an inner life that resists reduction to role or rule. By anchoring its drama in verifiable shifts—legal reforms, education policy, imperial service, urban growth—Lawrence's book becomes a record of historical pressure as well as a challenge to it. Its controversies confirm the point: the novel's vision unsettled its era because it made visible the human costs of its dominant arrangements.

Author Biography

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David Herbert Lawrence (1885–1930) was an English novelist, poet, short-story writer, and essayist whose work bridged late Victorian realism and early twentieth-century modernism. Writing across multiple genres, he examined the tensions between industrial modernity and the natural world, the pressures of class, and the complexities of desire and intimacy. His unflinching treatment of sexuality, emotion, and personal freedom made him one of the most controversial literary figures of his era, attracting both censorship and ardent advocacy. Lawrence's novels, poems, travel books, and criticism formed a coherent, ambitious project: to probe how individuals might live more intensely and authentically amid the spiritual dislocations of modern life.

Lawrence grew up in the coal-mining district of Nottinghamshire, an environment that left a lasting imprint on his imagination and social vision. He attended local schools and trained as a teacher at University College Nottingham, reading widely while beginning to publish poems and stories. Early encouragement from the editor and critic Edward Garnett aided his transition from teaching to a literary career. Lawrence absorbed influences from English Romantic poetry and the psychological probing of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century thought, later articulating his positions in essays that engaged with myth, instinct, and the unconscious. From the outset, he positioned himself against mechanical conformity and spiritual complacency.

His first novel, *The White Peacock* (1911), announced recurring concerns with landscape, desire, and social constraint, followed by *The Trespasser* (1912). Ill health

curtailed his brief teaching career, pushing him toward full-time writing. *Sons and Lovers* (1913) established his reputation, praised for its psychological intensity and its portrait of industrial life in the English Midlands. Alongside fiction, he brought out early poetry collections such as *Love Poems and Others* (1913) and *Amores* (1916), as well as plays that explored domestic conflict and working-class experience. Even before the First World War, Lawrence was developing the personal, sensuous style that would define his mature work.

War years heightened both his artistic ambition and his difficulties with authority. *The Rainbow* (1915), a multigenerational novel about desire, education, and social change, was prosecuted for obscenity in Britain, withdrawn from circulation, and savaged in parts of the press. Wartime suspicion of his views and movements constrained his life in England. He continued the narrative arc of *The Rainbow* in *Women in Love*, drafted during the war but published in 1920, intensifying his critique of industrial civilization and emotional repression. These controversies deepened his determination to write with candor about the body, power, and freedom, even as legal and economic pressures mounted.

In the 1920s, Lawrence traveled widely, a self-described “savage pilgrimage” that shaped a remarkably varied body of work. His novels ranged from *Aaron's Rod* (1922) and *Kangaroo* (1923), set in Australia, to *The Plumed Serpent* (1926), set in Mexico. Poetry reached a peak in *Birds, Beasts and Flowers* (1923), while travel books such as *Twilight in Italy* (1916), *Sea and Sardinia* (1921), and *Mornings in Mexico* (1927) mixed observation with philosophy. His criticism included *Studies in Classic American Literature* (1923) and explorations of psychology in *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* (1921) and *Fantasia of the Unconscious* (1922). Shorter fictions expanded his range and readership.

Lady Chatterley's Lover (1928) capped his long engagement with class, intimacy, and the body. First published privately abroad, it circulated in expurgated forms in the English-speaking world and quickly became emblematic of censorship battles. After Lawrence's death, unexpurgated editions prompted landmark obscenity trials, most famously in Britain in 1960, reshaping legal and cultural understandings of literature and sexual frankness. The novel's explicitness was inseparable from his larger artistic aim: to restore immediacy, tenderness, and honesty to human relations within a mechanized society. Defenders praised its moral seriousness; detractors condemned its language and ideas, ensuring an enduring, polarized reception.

Chronic illness, particularly tuberculosis, shadowed Lawrence's later years. He spent extended periods in warmer climates, wrote steadily despite declining health, and died in 1930 in the south of France. By then he had produced an extensive oeuvre spanning novels, stories, poems, plays, travel writing, and essays. His influence persists in debates about the representation of sexuality, the critique of industrial modernity, and the search for more embodied forms of life. Subsequent generations of writers and critics have revisited his experiments with voice, symbolism, and landscape, finding in them both provocation and insight. Lawrence remains a central, contested figure in twentieth-century literature.

The Rainbow

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Chapter 1

How Tom Brangwen Married a Polish Lady

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I

The Brangwens had lived for generations on the Marsh Farm, in the meadows where the Erewash[1] twisted sluggishly through alder trees, separating Derbyshire from Nottinghamshire. Two miles away, a church-tower stood on a hill, the houses of the little country town climbing assiduously up to it. Whenever one of the Brangwens in the fields lifted his head from his work, he saw the church-tower at Ilkeston[2] in the empty sky. So that as he turned again to the horizontal land, he was aware of something standing above him and beyond him in the distance.

There was a look in the eyes of the Brangwens as if they were expecting something unknown, about which they were eager. They had that air of readiness for what would come to them, a kind of surety, an expectancy, the look of an inheritor.

They were fresh, blond, slow-speaking people, revealing themselves plainly, but slowly, so that one could watch the change in their eyes from laughter to anger, blue, lit-up laughter, to a hard blue-staring anger; through all the irresolute stages of the sky when the weather is changing.

Living on rich land, on their own land, near to a growing town, they had forgotten what it was to be in straitened circumstances. They had never become rich, because there were always children, and the patrimony was divided every time. But always, at the Marsh, there was ample.

So the Brangwens came and went without fear of necessity, working hard because of the life that was in them, not for want of the money. Neither were they thriftless. They were aware of the last halfpenny, and instinct made them not waste the peeling of their apple, for it would help to feed the cattle. But heaven and earth was teeming around them, and how should this cease? They felt the rush of the sap in spring, they knew the wave which cannot halt, but every year throws forward the seed to begetting, and, falling back, leaves the young-born on the earth. They knew the intercourse between heaven and earth, sunshine drawn into the breast and bowels, the rain sucked up in the daytime, nakedness that comes under the wind in autumn, showing the birds' nests no longer worth hiding. Their life and interrelations were such; feeling the pulse and body of the soil, that opened to their furrow for the grain, and became smooth and supple after their ploughing, and clung to their feet with a weight that pulled like desire, lying hard and unresponsive when the crops were to be shorn away. The young corn waved and was silken, and the lustre slid along the limbs of the men who saw it. They took the udder of the cows, the cows yielded milk and pulse against the hands of the men, the pulse of the blood of the teats of the cows beat into the pulse of the hands of the men. They mounted their horses, and held life between the grip of their knees, they harnessed their horses at the wagon, and, with hand on the bridle-rings, drew the heaving of the horses after their will.

In autumn the partridges whirled up, birds in flocks blew like spray across the fallow, rooks appeared on the grey, watery heavens, and flew cawing into the winter. Then the men sat by the fire in the house where the women moved about with surety, and the limbs and the body of the men were impregnated with the day, cattle and earth and vegetation and the sky, the men sat by the fire and their

brains were inert, as their blood flowed heavy with the accumulation from the living day.

The women were different. On them too was the drowse of blood-intimacy, calves sucking and hens running together in droves, and young geese palpitating in the hand while the food was pushed down their throttle. But the women looked out from the heated, blind intercourse of farm-life, to the spoken world beyond. They were aware of the lips and the mind of the world speaking and giving utterance, they heard the sound in the distance, and they strained to listen.

It was enough for the men, that the earth heaved and opened its furrow to them, that the wind blew to dry the wet wheat, and set the young ears of corn wheeling freshly round about; it was enough that they helped the cow in labour, or ferreted the rats from under the barn, or broke the back of a rabbit with a sharp knock of the hand. So much warmth and generating and pain and death did they know in their blood, earth and sky and beast and green plants, so much exchange and interchange they had with these, that they lived full and surcharged, their senses full fed, their faces always turned to the heat of the blood, staring into the sun, dazed with looking towards the source of generation, unable to turn round.

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

77 A historic market town just south of London, often associated with royal ceremony because several medieval English kings were crowned nearby; the book's evocations of palaces and barges draw on Kingston's long-standing riverside and ceremonial associations.

78 A quoted line from Edmund Spenser's *Prothalamion* (1596) frequently evoked in English literature to summon the gentle, ceremonial imagery of the Thames; here it helps Ursula imagine the stately, historical London life she aspires to.

79 The Life Guards are part of the Household Cavalry, an elite British cavalry regiment with ceremonial duties as well as a military role; mentioning a character in the Life Guards signals a soldier serving in a prestigious unit rather than an ordinary infantry posting.

80 A teacher employed without a formal training certificate; in Britain at this period uncertificated posts allowed schools to hire graduates or matriculated candidates at lower pay but without the professional training now expected of certified teachers.

81 A government department responsible for overseeing schools and education policy in Britain; in the early 20th century the Board was the central authority with which teachers and local schools identified, so the phrase signals Ursula's sense of official, national recognition of her role.

82 A literal description of corporal punishment by cane, a common disciplinary method in many British schools of the period; the sound and practice underscore the physical, authoritarian regime of classroom discipline that Ursula resists and later adopts.

83 A member or supporter of the campaign for women's suffrage in Britain; by the early 20th century 'suffragette' typically denoted activists pushing for women's voting rights, and the word signals Maggie's political engagement with that movement.

84 In English country-house settings a 'hall' typically denotes a manor or large house; Belcote Hall here functions as the landed residence whose owners employ caretakers. The detail that the hall is 'too damp to live in' and that the Schofields act as caretakers and gamekeepers signals a decline in the gentry's living standards and explains why working families are based on the estate grounds.

85 Primulas are flowering plants in the genus *Primula* (including primroses and cowslips) commonly cultivated in British gardens and hothouses. Mentioning primulas helps evoke the horticultural setting and the gardeners' specialist knowledge of ornamental plants.

86 'Mesmeric' refers to mesmerism or 'animal magnetism,' a form of hypnotic theory originating with Franz Mesmer that was widely discussed in the 18th and 19th centuries. In literature the phrase is often used figuratively to describe a trance-like or hypnotic condition of fascination or loss of will.

87 'Christabel' is a narrative poem by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, associated with the Romantic and Gothic traditions; it was composed around the turn of the 19th century and is famous for its atmosphere of enchantment and interruption (it remains unfinished). Quoting or reading this poem in the scene underlines the story's mood of mysterious emotion and imaginative awakening.

88 The 'Garden of Eden' is the biblical paradise from the Book of Genesis, often used as a cultural shorthand for an idealized natural state of innocence and abundance.

Ursula's casual likening of the garden to Eden signals her romantic longing for a pure, generative place and frames her feelings about domestic and natural life.

89 A local education committee was the municipal or county authority responsible for schools and educational appointments in a given area; the Nottingham Education Committee would oversee schools and staffing in and around Nottingham. The passage's reference to the committee creating 'hand-work instructor' posts reflects early-20th-century expansion of practical and vocational instruction under local educational administration.

90 Wilton carpets are a well-known type of woven carpet originally made in Wilton, Wiltshire, from the 18th century onward. Mentioning a 'good Wilton carpet' signals middle-class respectability and a family's pride in a durable, fashionable household furnishing.

91 A 'servants' bedroom' refers to a small, plain room in a house set aside for live-in domestic staff. The phrase reflects the period household arrangements and social hierarchy that shape Ursula's modest private space.

92 The Intermediate Arts was an intermediate university-level exam (often abbreviated I.A. in older British systems) taken after matriculation and before the B.A. degree. In the novel it indicates Ursula's route through a staged degree process rather than immediate professional training.

93 The Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), founded in 1903 by Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst, was a prominent British militant suffrage organisation campaigning for women's votes. Dorothy's involvement situates the characters in the early-20th-century suffrage movement and signals political activism in the social circle.

94 Jean Racine (1639–1699) was a major French classical tragedian whose measured, formal style was a staple of European literary education. Ursula's emotional reaction to Racine reflects the period's reverence for classical drama as an intense moral and aesthetic experience.

95 Livy (Titus Livius) was a Roman historian and Horace (Quintus Horatius Flaccus) a Roman poet; both were central authors in a classical school curriculum. Their appearance in the text underlines Ursula's classical Latin studies and the traditional academic canon she encounters.

96 Beowulf is the great Old English (Anglo-Saxon) epic poem, commonly studied in Anglo-Saxon or early-medieval literature courses. Its mention signals that the college curriculum includes historical language and literature studies reaching back to early medieval England.

97 A pillar-box is the British freestanding public postbox (usually cylindrical and painted red) introduced in the 19th century for depositing mail. Ursula's act of dropping a letter into a pillar-box describes a routine postal practice familiar to British readers and anchors the scene in everyday civic life.

98 In Dr. Frankstone's debate electricity is invoked as an example of a physical phenomenon whose workings were increasingly familiar to scientists and the public in the early 20th century. The comparison reflects contemporary intellectual debates over vitalism versus mechanistic explanations of life, using electricity as a scientific metaphor.

99 In botany 'pith' refers to the soft central tissue of plant stems often used in dissections or preparations, and a 'razor' is the fine cutting instrument used to make thin sections. The phrase describes routine laboratory practice