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## REVIEW ARTICLE

### THE DYNAMICS OF SELF AND SOCIETY IN D. H. LAWRENCE'S THE RAINBOW

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# The Dynamics of Self and Society in D. H. Lawrence's *The Rainbow*

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David Herbert Lawrence is moulded by the spirit of his age. He is a man of strong individuality and egoism. He reacts sharply against the established conventions of the age. Therefore in his case, the primary facts that influence his works are his personal experiences and convictions, which at times corresponded with the tendencies of his age. Giving this belief *The Rainbow* explores the man-woman relationship in all its aspects, creative as well as destructive. The total dependence of the man on the woman, the dominance of the woman upon the man can have tragic overtones. Instead of a liberating effect the man-woman relationship can prove stultifying-a nullity. Marriage then could become an arena where the concerned parties are involved in a deadly conflict for supremacy. Lawrence believed that husband and wife should not impose restrictions on each other. Rather, they should trust each other and sex should be a medium of emotional satisfaction. Intermingling of the dynamics of self and society can be seen in *The Rainbow* which is the example of Lawrence's genius. In his essay "Of Being and Non-Being" Lawrence outlines the central importance of the man-woman relationship to the regenerative process:

"In life, then, no new thing has ever arisen, or can arise, save out of the impulse of the male upon the female, the female upon the male.....as in my flower, the pistil, female is the centre and swivel, the stamens, male, are close clasping the hub, and the blossom is the great motion into the unknown, so in a man's life, the female is the swivel and centre on which he turns closely, producing his movement." (A selection from the Phoenix, 561.)

D. H. Lawrence believes in the regeneration of the human soul. One has to break away from the hide bound social consciousness. The first step in this regenerative process is a total break away from the unreal world. Lawrence himself found his British surroundings unfit for this kind of development. Therefore, he moved to Italy and other places where people were not artificialised by their environment. The woman accelerates the regenerative process in man, brings him forth into "being". It is in his relationship with

his female friends and his own mother that his dynamics of self and society come into force.

*The Rainbow* is a forerunner to Lawrence's dynamics of the regenerative process. Given the new areas of interest, the form and texture of the novel undergoes a change. It becomes more rhythmic and dynamic. The dynamics of self and society play a very important role in such an environment. Individual identity and freedom of expression are more important to Lawrence than following the age old worn out mores of society with the increasing threat of mechanism the community and traditional mores were increasingly destroyed. The breakdown in any viable social contact left the individual to his dynamics and own devices, having very little to fall back upon. The family saga of the Brangwens assumes not only those generations are generated but that the relationship between husband and wife is the central fact of human existence, that the living nucleus of this relationship is the act of sexual union is infinitely serious, complex and difficult. Therefore, the assertion of self-dynamics and the impact of social dynamics on the growth and spiritual development of an individual are also important.

*The rainbow* is an explicitly symbolic novel which shows the impact of social dynamics on various relationships that exists in the novel. A change in social values and customs is also seen to effect individual choice of intimacy and personal relationship. Lawrence believes strongly in Self-Dynamics to give shape and direction to life in such a scenario. At the very outset of the novel we are introduced to the dual movements which will qualify the novel. The horizontal life sustaining movement, characterizing what is above and beyond. The subtle difference wrought by the effacement of the agrarian and the introduction of the mechanical principle is to be seen in the different interests of men and women respectively. *The Rainbow* is a novel of passion. Tom Brangwen is isolated in his awareness of love being the primordial passion. He desired, "to find in a woman the embodiment of all his inarticulate, powerful religious impulses. He has something to lose which he was afraid of losing, which he was not

sure even of possessing. Lawrence shows here how dynamics of self-confront with dynamics of society. The business of love was at the bottom of his soul, the most serious and terrifying of all to him." (Keith Sagar : *The Art of D.H. Lawrence*, 48.)

Lydia Lensky enters the novel alone on a country road with "her curious, absorbed, flitting motion," as if she were passing unseen by everybody. She has a disturbing influence in Tom Brangwen's life. She symbolizes the adventure into the unknown. This journey into the unknown requires valiant effort on part of Tom as he has to left his self (dynamics) merge with the otherness (social dynamics) in Lydia. It is only after this merging of self that he may get the much needed regeneration of his self. Tom Brangwen has to come to terms with his relationship with Lydia Lensky. In order to possess the "otherness" in her he must let himself go, become the instrument of the life force which would carry him into the unknown. In every episode in the novel a point is raised at which principal character is made to realize that his awareness of the meaning and form of his experiences is inadequate.

Most of the characters in *The Rainbow* receive the call to enter upon the transfigured life; but their responses vary. Tom and Lydia submit and are saved. Their coming together after two years of married life was the entry into another circle of existence; it was the baptism to another life-it was the complete confirmation.

Will and Anna Brangwen are also studied in a largely marital context; Anna Brangwen is not only an entire generation, but entire breed different from Lydia. The temperamental differences between husband and wife become all too apparent. Will's soft inarticulations drives the skeptical articulate Anna wild, and her verbal assault on her husband drives him to a retaliatory fury: "She...clung to the worship of human knowledge." He on the other hand, "blind as a subterranean thing", just ignored the human mind and ran after his own dark souled desires, following his own tunneling nose." (*The Rainbow*, 115.) The basic problem in their relationship is being that they were opposites rather than complementary. Lawrence shows here that dynamics of self and society must complement each other otherwise the situation will be like that of Will and Anna. There is no faith between them. They never trust the qualities or virtues as they fought all the time. As a result of this deadlock between Will and Anna Brangwen, there is not much chance for their regeneration. The Rainbow of hope seems far away for them. "She did no service to his work as a lace-designer, not to him as bread-winner. Because he went down to the office and work every day – that entitled him to no respect or regard from her, he knew. Rather she despised him for it..." (*The Art of D.H. Lawrence*, 173.) Anna responds to the man in Will but rejects utterly his social roles as husband and bread-winner. As a result of this incomplete merging between Will and Anna Brangwen, Will finds an incomplete and partial fulfillment. Here also

dynamics of self and society play a vital role in this partial fulfillment of desires between Will and Anna.

The promise of *The Rainbow* partially fulfilled by the first couple Lydia and Tom Brangwen is rejected by the second couple Will and Anna Brangwen,. The dynamics of both self and society play vital role here in creating some hope for regeneration of self which is otherwise not pure. Anna and Will get some solace out of their relationship if not complete fulfillment of their desires. Thus, Lawrence through the dynamics of self and society shows us that the hope for a better tomorrow is still not lost. The seed of hope is passed onto the third generation.

It remains to be seen whether Ursula Brangwen will respond to the call issuing forth from the unknown to enter upon the transfigured life. Ursula like Tom Brangwen realizes that love was the only reality in a shifting world, "...Ursula asked her deepest questions of her grandmother, "Will somebody love me, grandmother?" "Many people love you, child. We all love you." "But when I am grownup will somebody love me?" "Yes, some man will love you child because, it's your nature. And I hope it will be somebody who will love you for what you are, and not for what he wants of you. But we have a right to want what we want." (*The Rainbow*, 263.)

Ursula's final disillusionment with Skrebensky stems from the fact that he was desperately seeking in Ursula "only what might make up for his unmaning sense of loss." (TR, 462.) He has nothing to offer her except a parasitic dependency. Ursula has accepted the promise of many a false rainbow before she finds the true one. Ursula's first suitor Anton Skrebensky offers her return to the "horizontal world" of the Marsh. But she is unable to accept this vision: She was a traveler on the face of the earth, and he was an isolated creature living in the fulfillment of his own senses. The first generation had taken the rhythm of its life from the seasons, the natural cycle of birth, death and friction-pagan almost with only the faint glimmer of spiritual aspiration. The second generation on the contrary takes its rhythm from the church-year. Ursula faces problems of adjustment in a context specifically urban. She is emancipated and uprooted, free in a manner inconceivable to her parents or grandparents. Ursula has no one except Skrebensky to take care of her needs. Lawrence shows here that the dynamics of husband and wife must merge for the revival of their selves. The dynamics of self and society once again formed part of this relationship of third generation.

The tragedy is revealed in Skrebensky's abject failure to satisfy Ursula. he can merely serve the British Empire, not come luminous and commanding to a woman. .Essentially-in-spirit- Skrebensky, like all the Skrebenskys of the world is null and void. Skrebensky's failure is an offshoot of Lawrence's quarrel with the aristocracy of birth. Lawrence shows that how personal or self-dynamics are affected by the

dynamics of society. Skrebensky has inherited a little but the true qualities of aristocracy, of "natural aristocracy" rest with Ursula, the newly emancipated daughter of the working class. He fails Ursula in the ultimate analysis because "his life lay in the established order of things... at the bottom of his heart the self's soul that aspired and had true hope of self-effectuation lay as dead, still born... a dead weight in his womb." (TR, 331.)

Ursula uses Skrebensky and then annihilates his very personality so that he lapses cold and dead. A fierce, white, cold passion which is really a relationship between Ursula and Aphrodite. He is merely an outlet for her self-contained, uncreative corrosive burning deadly lust. The impact of their hollow relationship is clearly visible in the novel. Nothing fruitful comes out of this merger of the dynamics of self and society in the form of Ursula and Aphrodite. Both of them remain rigid on their stand not to allow other partner to impose anything which may weaken their stand. As a result, both of them get no pleasure out of their relationship.

When she finds herself with Skrebensky's child she almost caves in, believing that she is pursuing a will-o-the-wisp: What did the self, the form of life matter? only the living from day to day mattered, the "beloved existence in their body, rich peaceful complete, with no beyond, no further trouble, no further complications." (TR, 490.) She humbly asks Skrebensky to take her back. She realizes that deeply corrupted by her experience in the day time world, she had lost touch with the vital world, her promiscuity with Skrebensky was no generous gift of love but only a confession of mutual weakness, an increasingly unsatisfactory escape into sex from the unprecedented problems of the modern consciousness. She now realizes that her own dynamics lie in her knowledge that this world and all relations here are temporary. They only act as hurdles in her path of spiritual regeneration. Yet the impact of dynamics is evident in her relationship with Aphrodite.

*The Rainbow* is finally, not about consummation but about promise. This promise is based on healthy relationship between different characters in the novel. Here we see the dynamics of self and society merge into one another. The rainbow Ursula sees at the very end of the novel heralds a new dawn.

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