



Ursula- Skrebensky Relationship in D.H.Lawrence's The Rainbow: A Conflict Between Sexuality and Identity

KEYWORDS

Rainbow, Stereotype, Ursula, Personal Relationship, Sexuality, Identity, Love, Lust

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ABSTRACT *The present paper is a study of Ursula-Skrebensky relationship in the famous American novel The Rainbow by D.H.Lawrence. The nature of relationships and how they affect the people involved is perhaps the most important theme running through The Rainbow. Lawrence questions the social stereotypes associated with relationships between a man and a woman, the idea of two becoming one in the traditional sense, instead focusing on the individual's journey for fulfilment in what can be a limiting and adversarial relationship. This is most evident in Ursula- Skrebensky relationship, which ends as a result of fierce fight between Ursula's search for sexual satisfaction and search for identity.*

The Rainbow is one of the greatest creations of the great genius D.H.Lawrence. Lawrence, a novelist blessed with prophetic vision, respected no established veins of thought and recognized no customary modes of expression. He actually wanted to use novel as a vehicle for communicating his vision of life. His presentation of human psychology lends a special charm to his most autobiographical creations. Published in 1915, The Rainbow, is a deep rooted study of human psyche and is rightly recognized as the complete and exquisitely organized form of Lawrence's views about family relationships. Lawrence meant The Rainbow to be a novel about relationships is manifested in the title of the first chapter: "How Tom Bragwan Married a Polish Lady." A careful reading will make it easy to perceive Lawrence's perception of power over passion in a marital relation. Paradoxically, it is passion that comes first- the passion for power that is inherent in human animals.

Influenced by Freud, Lawrence has very minutely depicted man-woman relationship with their minute psychological movements. Two of his essays 'Morality and the Novel' and 'Why the Novel Matters' seem to form a theoretical base for his moral vision of the human relations. He writes:

The whole is greater than the part and therefore, I, who am man alive, am greater than my soul or spirit, or body, or mind, or consciousness, or anything else

Lawrence had been a keen student of human relationship, which has been a topic of panoramic interest among the most literary figures writing in fiction. Lawrence says, "The business of art is to reveal the relation between man and his crumbiest universe, at the living moment." (Lawrence, Moral-ity 128)

Although Man-Woman relationship is only one aspect of the whole relationship between a human being and his crumbiest universe, but is the main subject of Lawrence and he traces this relationship over three generations of Brangwens. In The Rainbow to be precise there are three major relationships that have been depicted- the relationship between Tom and Lydia, Will and Anna and Ursula and Skrebensky. But the third generation i.e. Ursula and Skrebensky has managed to gain a special attention of both Lawrence and of the readers. The Ursula- Skrebensky episode that concludes The Rainbow is obviously a most important one in the Lawrence canon, yet if examined closely it is extremely confused.

The third part of the novel consists of that double part of the novel which Lawrence introduced in order to prepare Ursula for her later encounter with Anton Skrebensky. It is perhaps Ursula-Skrebensky relationship that makes Mark-

Kinked Weekes says, "The Rainbow is the first revelation of Lawrence's full strange powers as a novelist." (Kinkead 92). Lawrence has finely shown how this relationship comes into existence only due to the libidinal drive and how mere sensuousness is unable to carry the burden of this relationship.

Ursula, the heroine of the novel, just like other Brangwen women, has a quest and curiosity to look for something outside the world of Marsh farms. Deprived of love as she is, since her childhood because Anna always remained busy with her motherhood and Will constantly rebuked her for her mischiefs. Thus wondering in the search of love she encounters Skrebensky who becomes the centre of her attraction.

Skrebensky is an engineer in army, on a month's leave. Being aristocratic, sure and established in demeanor, he gives her a sense of outer world. It is he, for whom, she feels the first impulse of love and he brings to her that admired aristocratic isolation that she associated maleness with. As Lawrence writes, "The sons of God who lay with the daughters of men, and who were not servile children of Adam" (Lawrence, T.R. 299). The necessary struggle and the necessary disillusion that follow, are certainly doctrinal, yet count among the most magnificent of Lawrence's fictional achievements. Lewis, of course, simplifies it to fit his thesis: Skrebensky is a bethamite (Lawrence, T.R. 328-29) and so belongs to "mechanism" and "will" to functional man so he is sexually inadequate. Skrebensky thinks in utilitarian way only:

The good of the greatest number was all that mattered.
That which was the greatest good for them all,
Collectively was the greatest good for the individual.
(Lawrence, T.R. 328)

Skrebensky starts visiting Yew cottage very frequently and Ursula feels proud in his presence and they both fall in love. For them, a delicious, exciting game it was. Daring, reckless and dangerous they knew it was because each of them was playing with the fire and not with love. A sort of defiance of the whole world possessed both of them. The climatic scene of love making on dunes, Ursula mad at her crisis is unlike anything in any other novel. Presumably about the two stack yard scenes, Lawrence probably wrote the second one, first. Ursula is seized by 'a sudden lust', a cold brilliant desire again and again. The language insists upon cold, crystalline brilliance and the sad destructiveness of all the powers that are hostile to living sex. Skrebensky is no doubt physically attractive but "He is too little of a whole personality, ever to be able to achieve a proper relationship with a woman" (Daiches 148). After the first physical consummation of their love takes place, Ursula is overcome with slow horror. She is filled with overleaping fear of her self.

She is filled with a frenzied desire that what has happened should not be remembered, never be thought of, never be for one moment allowed possible. (Lawrence, T.R. 331)

She loves his beautiful body and the texture of his face but gets dissatisfied when talks to him. Their love now contained a developing germ of death. She now wants to be Anton's slave but she also has a feeling that as a distinct male Anton has lost his core. She knows that the female in her has triumphed over him and that she has broken him. It is really difficult for her to understand that why he feels so annihilated. She loves his beautiful body and the texture of his face but gets dissatisfied when talks to him. Their love contained a developing germ of death. Skrebensky is, no doubt, physically attractive but, "he is too little of a whole personality, ever to be able to achieve a proper relationship with a woman" (Daiches 148). The fact is this, he is too limited a being, he can neither love a whole woman in Ursula, nor can help her to expand, to transcend her limits. He has no genuine male self to oppose her. She realizes, "He cannot be a sun to her moon; but he is a mere shadow and darkness which moonlight destroys" (Spillka 48). He, himself wonders why he can not love whole of a woman; her body and her soul together.

When with Anton, Ursula feels triumphant but somewhere in her deeper self, she also feels disillusioned. But after Skrebensky's departure for South Africa, she records all her impulsive thought in her diary and calls to him from her heart where ever she goes. In the mean time she develops a lesbian relationship with her mistress Winifred Inger, but very soon she gets rid of this relationship. Through this relationship her desire of establishing a relationship of equity can be easily noticed. The equality which she could never get while making love with Skrebensky. It was Skrebensky's nothingness which forced her towards lesbianism.

Although initially excited by Skrebensky's return after six years; Ursula soon realizes that she can no longer be the same with him.

She knew vaguely, in the first minute that they were enemies come together in a truce. Every movement and word of his was alien to her being.

(Lawrence, T.R. 445)

Skrebensky is too rigid, too mechanic and his rigidity is symbolized in his profession as a soldier. He has no real identity, with his small and subsidiary personal movements he is very much content to be 'just a brick' in the whole great social fabric. Thus when with him, Ursula realizes that Skrebensky has created a deadness around her, a sterility as if the world were ashes. For Skrebensky the social function of man is only an escape from the painful labour of being something. In fact he accepts his place in life with a mechanical and unadventurous complacency. Thus is not for nothing that Ursula often feels Skrebensky to be like nothing. Because strangely nothing he was.

Although on his return, Ursula goes with him to Paris and Rouen, but whenever he talks of engagement and marriage, her response is very passive and in the end there comes her final denial for the marriage.

He said, "I suppose we ought to get married." "I don't think I want to marry you." She said With her brow doubled. (Lawrence, T.R. 466)

This is apparent that Ursula, who is otherwise bound in a strong attraction towards Skrebensky, because of his sense of nothingness, finds it impossible to have a successful long term relationship with him. Actually she now feels that in annihilating him, she has destroyed herself too. She resented this close, physical, limited life if herded domesticity.

Finally there occurs their final breakdown. They were like two dead people who dare not recognize each other; dare not see each other; It was all over between them and they actually felt relieved after this break down. Lawrence has recorded Skrebensky's feelings after their breakdown like this:

What a simple thing it was to be rid of her. How friendly and simple everything felt to him. What false thing had she be forcing on him.

(Lawrence, T.R. 496)

The Ursula- Skrebensky episode that concludes *The Rainbow* is obviously the most important one in the Lawrence canon, yet examined closely it is extremely confused as well as confusing. After Skrebensky's departure for India, Ursula realizes that she is pregnant with his child. She writes him letter from the deepest sincerity of her heart expressing her wish to be his wife, but by the time he receives her word Anton is knot with someone else.

As Ursula lies ill, feverish, she realizes even in her delirium the falsity in her attraction to Skrebensky, recognizing that he has not touched her inner most sense of self; she is tormented in her fever by the questions of why she still feels bound to him.

What extraneous thing bound her to him? There was some bond put upon her. Why could she not break it through? What was it?

(Lawrence, T.R. 506)

But even in her delirium does not accept that the child must bind her to Skrebensky. She may be pregnant by Skrebensky but this has nothing to get bound to him again. She thinks why she can not have a child of herself? It is radical departure from the attitude of Mrs. Morel in 'Sons and Lovers', who feels she must tolerate Walter Morel for the sake of children. But instead this, Ursula begins a fight to become herself again, her fight grows larger and larger ; she at last succeeds and sees herself cult free becoming naked and clear, kernel thrusting forth the powerful shoot.

The crisis in her illness is passed over and she sleeps, when she awakes she knows, of course, there is no child. But

If there had been a child, it would have would have, made little difference...she would have kept the child herself, she would not have gone to Skrebensky. Anton belonged to the past.

(Lawrence, T.R. 508)

Ursula's final encounter with horses symbolizes her return to her potent self, which she has compromised by writing to Skrebensky. In the end, there occurs the final image-The Rainbow, a befitting emblem of her achievement which promises her new and free future.

She saw in the rainbow the earth's new architecture, the old, brittle corruption of houses and factories, swept away, the world build up in a living fabric or truth, fitting to the over- arching heaven.

(sager 68)

So in the end Ursula triumphs- not as Anna had, in order to subdue Will, but to create a self of her own.

In *The Rainbow* Lawrence challenges the customary limitations of language and convention to carry into the structures of his prose, the fascination with boundaries and space that characterize the entire novel. Condemned and suppressed on its first publication on its 'unpatriotic spirit'

It is clear that Ursula-Skrebensky relationship started as a mere strong attraction and as impossible it was, none of the

two could pull it for long time on the basis of sensual basis. Ursula, being a lover of human individuality finds it impossible to go with a person like Skrebensky who is nothing but a mere brick in the social scenario. This relationship is an excellent attempt on the part of Lawrence to show that integrated personality is the first principle of balance between flesh and spirit and satisfactory human relationship. He believes that the principle of polarity is the basis of entire creation, that light-darkness, male-female and love-hate etc. are always in conflict and conflict must be resolved through adjustment with every pole standing intact. None is to be exalted at the cost of other. But this is what actually happens in the case of Ursula and Skrebensky and their relationship finally meets a big failure. And hence Sexuality, passion and love is suppressed by the search for identity.

Conclusion:

The relationship between man and woman is at a great forefront in *The Rainbow*. Lawrence has shown a fundamental lack of understanding between man and woman. This lack of understanding is often complicated by the intense sexual relationships. Ursula and Skrebensky have a difficult time forming partnerships, sharing their thoughts and feelings with each other. The central figure of Ursula becomes the focus of Lawrence's examination of relationships and the conflict they bring, and the inextricable mingling of the physical and spiritual. Suffused with biblical imagery, Ursula in *The Rainbow* addresses searching human issues in setting of precise as well as vivid details.

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