

An Exploration of Marital Strife in D.H. Lawrence's *The Rainbow***D.GOLDA¹, DR.J.GIFTLIN IYADURAI²**

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Abstract

David Herbert Lawrence is an original and a remarkable creative thinker who has made significant contribution to the development of the English novel. In *The Rainbow* Lawrence deals with the conflicts and the battle of sexes on an almost epic scale. He usually sees human relationship as a form of conflict and explores love and hatred, attraction and repulsion, quarrels and reconciliation inherent in a relationship. The crux of the novel revolves around the three generations of the Brangwen family who have settled for many generations in the valley of the Erewash. The research paper attempts to elaborate the various quarrels, tensions and adjustments present in the generation. The Brangwens of each generation are by nature stubborn and energetic, self-reliant, and aggressive. Tom Brangwen marries a Polish woman, a widow with a little daughter, Anna. She belongs to the second generation, grows up and marries Tom's nephew, Will Brangwen and finds complete fulfillment for herself in child-bearing, giving up the adventure of the unknown. The novel attempts to explain the complexities of relationship of Will and Anna and their efforts to come to terms with each other to find harmony. Their eldest daughter, Ursula who is a part of the third generation revolts against her mother's confined existence and her child-bearing attitude. She is basically imaginative and passionate and falls in love with a Polish aristocrat, Anton Skrebensky. He is not genuine in his love, abandons her and gets married to another girl. The aim of the paper is directed in exploring the battle of sexes and the marital discord present in their personal relationships.

Keywords: Marriage, Relationship, Conflicts Frustration, fulfillment.

The Rainbow is the history of three generations of Brangwen. It is an attempt to discover the necessary conditions for a meaningful life. Lawrence honestly scrutinizes both failures in marriage and the frustrations and achievement of true beings. Both male and female are seen dependent on each other and marriage records a clash of two opposed modes of being. When the conflict results in unity the marriage becomes a success and a basis for individual fulfillment.,

In Lawrence novels the ground for the conflicts varies so much from character to character. He describes the conflicts between man and woman because they tend to be the problem of today for the establishment of a new marital relation. *The Rainbow* is a study of marriage. Lawrence brings his new insight into both conflict and consumption in marriage. He points out that some conflict found in marital life cannot be overcome by human failure. In the novel the men and women marry their opposites. He desires to examine the conflicting forces within the being. He believes that man comprises of male and female his being where the male always struggles for predominance. A woman similarly consists of male and female with the female being struggling for pre- dominance. There is battle of sexes in all the three generations.

In the first generation there is the marriage of Tom Brangwen with Lydia Lensky , a Polish widow. The novel begins with an account of the Brangwens who have lived for generations on the marsh farm. Tom Brangwen represents his male ancestors and at the same time different from them. He is more sensuous and turns his attention towards a foreigner. His marriage to Lydia represents movement towards the unknown. Lydia is strikingly different from the traditional Brangwen women. It is not merely that she is a lady and a foreigner but she represents a new conception of womanhood. Her first marriage with a polish surgeon is not a successful one. But she is awakened through Tom to a life of the senses. Tom and Lydia come together through sheer attraction of opposites. Lydia is an absolute romantic mystery to Tom from the very first meeting. The only thing that gives him satisfaction is the fact that she is a foreigner. The marriage is not an easy one as his wife often lives in her old memories and in addition hates his wife's concern for the children by her first husband and her child bearing attitude.

They were such strangers; they must for ever be such strangers, that his passion was a clanging torment to him. Such intimacy of embrace, and such utter foreignness of

contact! It was unbearable. He could not bear to be near her, and know the utter foreignness between them, know how entirely they were strangers to each other (383)

Tom becomes jealous of Lydia for not devoting her full attention to him. He feels that she does not love him and becomes frustrated because complete fulfillment has been denied to him. Though he feels that she does not wholly belong to him, he is ever drawn to her. His wife's foreign origin her pregnancy and her language create problems of maladjustment. Despite their quarrels they make it up. Lydia who is a foreigner can be compared to Lawrence wife Frieda who is German. She is withdrawn and enigmatic. She stands for his wife. Tom himself is an explorer like Lawrence. The temperamental difference between Tom and Lydia is similar to Lawrence and his wife."Tom Brangwen's and Lydia Lensky is the first relationship which Lawrence examines, and perhaps in no other novel did he establish the perspective of a central relationship so firmly (Niven 69) The whole novel of *The Rainbow* revolves round the story of love and marital life of the Brangwens. In the novel there is a steady change in human relationship between man and woman from one generation to another in the course of life spread over three generations. The first generation man, Tom Brangwen loves and likes his wife Lydia for her own sake and her children for their sake. William, the second generation man loves Anna, his wife, as satisfier of his carnal passion and Anna loves him because he is the father of her children. In the third generation Anton Skrebensky does not love Ursula but her body, and similarly Ursula too wants him all physically. *The Rainbow* is indeed one of the masterpieces of Lawrence. His concern is "with three couples' engagement in what he sees as the essential struggle for a satisfactory relationship, both between the man and the woman, and between the male principle (physical-intuitive-unitive) and the female principle (idealistic-rational-individualistic)"(Prichard 67)

Lawrence sees conflicts in all human relations and is of view that resolution or reconciliation of these conflicts is essential for human wholeness or fulfillment. Lydia is senior to Tom in age and she becomes a shadowy figure because of her former husband. Tom's physical beauty attracts her. Strong and silent, she sometimes resembles Lawrence's own mother who wants something better for her children. Lydia does not dominate Tom but she certainly shows him the way she expects to be treated Lawrence is deeply concerned at the

maladjustments of life, the suppressions and the deformities of modern life. Will Brangwen seems a dark, almost evil thing, pursuing Anna, hanging on to her, burdening her. She wants to give anything to have him removed. There are times when it seems because of their marital conflicts everything has been shattered, but the very next day she will love and rejoice in the way he crosses the floor, he is sun, moon and stars in one. At twenty eight William is the sensual male seeking pleasure, and Anna decides to become the sensual female ready to give him that pleasure. The Brangwens of the second generation have more complex souls, their reactions and responses are more subtle, the causes of conflict between them are deeper, and their frustration turns bitter. The disintegration of their marriage may be said to symbolize the gradual breaking down of the traditional way of life which has been going on slowly but steadily. The relationship of Will and Anna of the second generation of the Brangwens is not smooth. There are conflicts between them. Their love for each other which is dominant in the beginning slowly turns into hatred and horror.

After a long bout of hostility, Anna at last closed with him. She had now four children, all girls. For seven years she has been absorbed in wifedom and motherhood. For years he had gone on besides her never really encroaching upon her. Then gradually another self seemed to assert its being within him. He was still silent and separate (510)

Will and Anna quarrel fiercely and continuously though, they know very well that they love each and cannot live without each other. Anna's Pregnancy make will think that her yearning in life is fulfilled but he has to remain unfulfilled and unsatisfied. Their conflict comes to peace when they accept each other as separate identity and no longer craves for domination or possession. Williams has sensual likings which Anna gives him in abundance. Lawrence's solution to overcome the conflict in man-woman relationship is based on reconciliation or adjustment for the wholeness or fulfillment of the individual. Ursula who belongs to the third generation , lives her life as she likes. She wants to be independent and belongs to the sophisticated society. She is not able to maintain a perfect relationship with her lover Anton Skrebensky because her thoughts are totally different from that of her grandmother. She does not have any interest in marriage and is not able to get united with Skrebensky. The novel is a family chronicle. It shows the continuity of marital conflicts from one generation to another, Will

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Brangwen has passion for the church and its arrangements and he has to face crisis in his relation with his wife. The Brangwen women who aspire for a world of activity and unknown come face to face with marital conflicts. Anna wishes to enjoy her marital life with Will by not submitting to him. He too has a belief in male supremacy hence arises the conflict between them. Anna belongs to the conventional world and she is self satisfied as being a child' bearer. Her husband's desire for sensual satisfaction makes her consider him as subhuman and unnatural. He seems to her like a tiger waiting to pull her down and eat her body. Anna talks to will as to a child and demands that she could be left alone as and when she wishes to do so. Hers is a separate existence apart from his. Both of them fail o achieve a balanced relationship and therefore frequently indulge in destructive conflict. Ursula Brangwen is very much different from her grandparents Tom and Lydia for she reject marital relationship with Anton Skrebensky and yearns to be totally free and emancipated. As an artist Lawrence preserves the realities of life and organizes it into significant patterns and as a thinker he probes deep in search of truth.

In Lawrence's wholeness, of course, there is the marvelous intelligence of the great artist: his capacity for an impersonal depth of response has an immensely wide and varied application. But the vividness in his rendering of all the varieties of life, human and non-human, is this depth-depth that involves an impersonal wholeness (Leavis 142).

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