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## **The Central Role of Vibrations in D. H. Lawrence's Short Story The Rocking Horse Winner: A Study in the light of Philosophy of Brahmakumaris**

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### **Abstract**

This paper deals with the study of the stifling atmosphere of lack created in the house by the vibrations of Paul's mother resulting in the death of Paul. It will be analyzed through the importance and effect of vibrations dealt with depth and minuteness in the philosophy of Brahmakumaris. Our outlook towards life gets completely influenced by what we perceive as vibrations. The story 'The Rocking Horse Winner' by D. H. Lawrence is imbued with the crippling influence of mother on the innocent mind of Paul, her son resulting in his fall into the habit of gambling, illness and subsequently death. This shows the deep psychological knowledge that Lawrence had of the working of human minds even though he was never a student of psychology.

**Keywords:** Brahmakumaris, luck, philosophy, Rajyog, Vibrations.

D. H. Lawrence has always invited a fair amount of criticism for his writings connected with sensual pleasure and its importance for human

beings. In this trend of critical wave, his certain other diverse works have not got as much critical acclaim or appreciation as they justly require. Many times, it so happens that a writer gets tagged with an epithet which always creates his images which are more or less similar in the minds of the readers. Such projected images or a reading of a writer's works in a predisposed manner can sometimes become detrimental to the multifaceted thematic richness of his works.

Vibrations play a major role in our wellbeing and happiness because either they bring closeness in relationships or mars their proximity.

Brahma Kumari Dadi Janaki, senior Rajyog teacher in the book Companion of God proclaims, "Through our thoughts, we are either gaining power or losing it. With pure thoughts power is generated, and with impure thoughts power is destroyed" (Companion, 102). It's the very recurrent repetition of the sentence that 'there must be more money' (Rocking Horse Winner, 125) which destroys the mental health of Paul who is basically a sensitive child. The thoughts of lack and unluckiness are spread by the mother who becomes instrumental in creating

unhappiness among her children and finally the death of Paul.

Renowned Rajyog teacher Brahma Kumari Sister Shivani has talked in detail about the important role that vibrations play in our relationships with others. In her awakening series with Suresh Oberoi she has said how vibrations determine the quality of our lives. In episode 19 of Being Love under Awakening With Brahma Kumaris series titled *Give Children Right Vibrations at Home*, she talks about the influence of vibrations on children; how children get affected by arguments between elders and their feeling of rejection due to this. (Being Love, episode 19)

In another episode number 16 of Soul Reflections, Sister Shivani talks about the negative influence of low vibrational thoughts and words on small children and even the babies whose catching power of vibrations is the maximum when they're babies (Soul Reflections, episode 16).

The premature aging of Paul in *The Rocking Horse Winner* is caused by several external factors. The novel starts with, "There was a woman who was beautiful, who started with all the advantages, yet she had no luck. She married for love, and the love turned to dust. She had bony children, yet she felt they had been thrust upon her, and she could not love them. They looked at her coldly, as if they were finding fault with her. And hurriedly she felt she must cover up some fault in herself. Yet what

it was that she must cover up she never knew" (124).

The first and foremost factor is the vibrations of the house in which the main characters lived. Paul and his two younger sisters, for instance, lived in a house that "came to be haunted by the unspoken phrase: There must be more money! There must be more money!" (125). What astonishes the readers the most is that "the children could hear it all the time, though nobody said it aloud" (125). The children did not understand what was going on. They felt scared, lonely, unprotected. They were aware of the fact that there was no one in the world they could rely on. It is horrifying that the children were afraid even to play as the voice "came whispering from the springs of the still-swaying rocking-horse, and even the horse, bending his wooden champing head, heard, heard it. The big doll, sitting so pink and smirking in her new pram, could hear it quite plainly, and seemed to be smirking all the more self-consciously because of it. The foolish puppy, too, that took the place of the teddy-bear, he was looking so extraordinarily foolish for no other reason but that he heard the secret whisper all over the house: "There must be more money!" (125) Although it was a bright house, it was literally a dark prison for the children. In order to render the insupportable stress the children had to endure. D. H. Lawrence repeats this phrase several times throughout the story.

Vibrations, according to the spiritual teachings given by Brahmakumaris, play a significant role in creating our emotional health.

What touches the readers the most is that despite getting money in the house the mother is not happy. Paul asks his mother the reason for not owning a car and using their uncle's car or hiring taxis. She tells him that it's because they were poor and his father was not lucky. He says, "Is luck money mother? She replies," No, Paul. Not quite. It's what causes you to have money." (125). Then he enquires from the mother what luck is and the mother says, "It's what causes you to have money." (125). He asks his mother if she's lucky? The mother replies, "I can't be if I married an unlucky husband." This worsens the situation for Paul because he already finds the attitude of the mother cold towards the children. Now the father is made the target of bringing unluckiness in the house thus breaking the bond of father son relationship. The child cannot understand what would make the mother happy. In a sincere effort to please the mother he makes a resolve to make himself lucky under any circumstances:

He went off by himself, vaguely, in a childish way, seeking for the clue to "luck." Absorbed, taking no heed of other people, he went about with a sort of stealth, seeking inwardly for luck. He wanted luck, he wanted it, he wanted it. When the two girls were playing dolls in the nursery, he would

sit on his big rocking-horse, charging madly into space, with a frenzy that made the little girls peer at him uneasily. Wildly the horse careered, the waving dark hair of the boy tossed, his eyes had a strange glare in them. The little girls dared not speak to him.

When he had ridden to the end of his mad little journey, he climbed down and stood in front of his rocking-horse, staring fixedly into its lowered face. Its red mouth was slightly open, its big eye was wide and glassy-bright.

"Now!" he would silently command the snorting steed, "Now, take me!"(125). He whipped the horse and he knew that if he forced the horse, it would take him to where there was luck. He would mount the horse again to reach the place where there was luck. The nurse asked him to stop riding the horse in that manner otherwise he would break it. But Paul continued riding the horse in a frenzied manner and the nurse stopped saying anything to him because he wouldn't listen.

He even risks his health to get money. The obsession to get more and more money in the house leads him to become obsessed with the luck that only riding the rocking horse could create. Riding that horse was in itself a very uncomfortable experience for Paul, but he still underwent it numerous times to win money for his fastidious mother. The vibrations of the house were horribly and frighteningly replete with lack, sorrow and dissatisfaction which created an atmosphere of fear and anxiety in the house without loving

relationships. The psyche of the small child could not comprehend what his mother required to be happy and this continuous anxiety to make her happy sapped his own joy and peace.

Paul developed his interest in horse racing through Bassett, their young gardener who was “ a perfect blade of the ‘turf’”(127). Bassett’s passion was horse racing events and through his talks, Paul also started enjoying gambling by putting money bets on the winning horses. From Bassett, his Uncle Oscar came to know about his obsession with winning money from horse races though Bassett told Uncle that Paul wanted to keep it a secret from everyone. He and Bassett were partners in that and Paul always decided the name of the winner horse by riding the rocking horse. While riding, Paul would go in a trance and then he would know the name of the winner horse.

When the activity of winning money went on for a long time, Uncle Oscar got fearsome over the mental health of Paul and his addiction towards gambling.

"Look here, son," he said, "this sort of thing makes me nervous." "It needn't, uncle! Perhaps I shan't be sure again for a long time." "But what are you going to do with your money?" asked the uncle.

"Of course," said the boy, "I started it for mother. She said she had no luck, because father is unlucky, so I thought

if I was lucky, it might stop whispering."

"What might stop whispering?"

"Our house. I hate our house for whispering."

"What does it whisper?"

"Why-why"- the boy fidgeted "why, I don't know. But it's always short of money, you know, uncle."

"I know it, son, I know it."

"You know people send mother writs, don't you, uncle?"

"I'm afraid I do," said the uncle.

"And then the house whispers, like people laughing at you behind your back. It's awful, that is! I thought if I was lucky-"

"You might stop it," added the uncle.

The boy watched him with big blue eyes, that had an uncanny cold fire in them, and he said never a word (131).

It's really a pity that at the age when children enjoy their childhood games and remain engrossed in their innocent world, Paul burdened himself with the work of creating luck, something that takes a toll on his physical as well as mental health. Sister Shivani very aptly points out how our thoughts create our destiny because negative and painful thoughts create those types of realities for their creators (Soul Reflections, episode 16).

Senior Rajyog teacher Bk Suraj Bhai ji in the episode “ How to Build Personality with Positive Vibrations” says that our thoughts affect our brain and then they reach the atmosphere and affect the people around us and nature So if we create negative thoughts owing

to our adverse conditions, they on reaching the outside world come back after getting multiplied and the situation worsens for us ( ). The same thing happens in the story because the more Paul wins the money, the worse his situation starts becoming.

Paul had gained five thousand pounds from horse races and he asked Uncle Oscar not to tell his mother. He wanted to give her a pleasant surprise on her birthday because it was arranged with the family lawyer that he would give the mother one thousand pounds every year. She would have good income for the next five years. She would be told by the lawyer that a relative of hers had left five thousand pounds for her.

Paul's mother had her birthday in November. The house had been "whispering" worse than ever lately, and, even in spite of his luck, Paul could not bear up against it.

On her birthday, the mother received a letter from the lawyer. Contrary to what he had expected, the mother reacted in a cold manner. There was no sign of happiness on her face:

She was down to breakfast on the morning of her birthday. Paul watched her face as she read her letters. He knew the lawyer's letter. As his mother read it, her face hardened and became more expressionless. Then a cold, determined look came on her mouth. She hid the letter under the pile of others, and said not a word about it.

"Didn't you have anything nice in the post for your birthday, mother?" said Paul.

"Quite moderately nice," she said, her voice cold and absent.

She went away to town without saying more (133).

Afterwards Uncle Oscar informed Paul that his mother asked the lawyer if he could give her the whole five thousand pounds because she was in debt. He asked Paul about his opinion on this and Paul told his uncle to let his mother have all the money.

Interestingly after Paul's mother got all the money, things got horrible for Paul:

Then something very curious happened. The voices in the house suddenly went mad, like a chorus of frogs on a spring evening. There were certain new furnishings, and Paul had a tutor. He was really going to Eton, his father's school, in the following autumn. There were flowers in the winter, and a blossoming of the luxury Paul's mother had been used to. And yet the voices in the house, behind the sprays of mimosa and almond-blossom, and from under the piles of iridescent cushions, simply thrilled and screamed in a sort of ecstasy: "There must be more money! Oh-h-h; there must be more money. Oh, now, now-w! Now-w-w- —there must be more money! -- more than ever! More than ever!"

It frightened Paul terribly (132). Though he studied Latin and Greek with his tutor, his full concentration was on winning more money. He discussed

a lot about it with Bassett. Unfortunately, he lost a hundred pounds and in another race, he lost fifty pounds. He had become "wild-eyed and strange, as if something were going to explode in him" (132).

His uncle advised him to forget about horse racing and his mother was also concerned about his excessive agitation. She wanted him to stop indulging in horse races and go to the seaside for some relaxation.

But Paul refused to go to the seaside as Derby was approaching. He requested his mother not to send him away from the house before Derby. The mother agreed to do so with the promise from him that he wouldn't worry about such races in future.

"Oh no," said the boy casually. "I won't think much about them, mother. You needn't worry. I wouldn't worry, mother, if I were you."

"If you were me and I were you," said his mother, "I wonder what we should do!"

"But you know you needn't worry, mother, don't you?" the boy repeated.

"I should be awfully glad to know it," she said wearily.

"Oh, well, you can, you know. I mean, you ought to know you needn't worry," he insisted.

"Ought I? Then I'll see about it," she said (133).

As the saying goes Care kills the cat, Paul got severely anxious to win the Derby because the vibrations of the requirement of more money were

increasing with time and in a way they were maddening him.

As Derby was getting nearer, Paul's anxiety was also growing with it. Lawrence writes:

He hardly heard what was spoken to him, he was very frail, and his eyes were really uncanny. His mother had sudden strange seizures of uneasiness about him. Sometimes, for half an hour, she would feel a sudden anxiety about him that was almost anguish (134).

Two days prior to the Derby, Paul's mother had gone out to a night party with her husband. But in her heart, she was feeling worried about Paul due to his obsessive behaviour in connection with horse races. In between the dance, she went downstairs to call Miss Wilmot, the nursery-governess to ask about the well being of her children, especially Paul. The governess told her that they were all fine and sleeping in their rooms. At about one o'clock at night, the couple returned and the first thing that Paul's mother did was to go to her son's room to see if he was fine. But she was shocked to see him riding the wooden horse in the middle of the night:

Then suddenly she switched on the light, and saw her son, in his green pyjamas, madly surging on the rocking-horse. The blaze of light suddenly lit him up, as he urged the wooden horse, and lit her up, as she stood, blonde, in her dress of pale green and crystal, in the doorway.

"Paul!" she cried. "Whatever are you doing?"

"It's Malabar!" he screamed in a powerful, strange voice. "It's Malabar!" His eyes blazed at her for one strange and senseless second, as he ceased urging his wooden horse. Then he fell with a crash to the ground, and she, all her tormented motherhood flooding upon her, rushed to gather him up.

But he was unconscious, and unconscious he remained, with some brain-fever. He talked and tossed, and his mother sat stonily by his side. "Malabar! It's Malabar! Bassett, Bassett, I know! It's Malabar!"

So, the child cried, trying to get up and urge the rocking-horse that gave him his inspiration.

"What does he mean by Malabar?" asked the heart-frozen mother.

"I don't know," said the father stonily (134).

Uncle Oscar informed her that it was the name of the horse who was running for the Derby.

It's important to note here that though the house reiterated with the words that there must be more money, the mother never deterred from enjoying her life. She had time, energy and money to go to parties with her husband and dance. Whereas Paul, the sensitive and innocent child lost his childhood joy for the sake of bringing more money in the house. Where was the need to get so much money when the

family was pulling on well clearing the debts with the passage of time. Wen Yuan and Luo Yaodan rightly note that "Hester, as a person, is empty inside; as a mother, she is dereliction of duty. Moreover, Hester's desire sows the seed of Paul's tragic life. A naive child finally becomes a gambler" ( Analysis on Real Love in the Rocking-Horse Winner from the Image of Hester and Paul, Art and Performance Letters (2021) 2: 96-98 Clausius Scientific Press, Canada, 97).

The condition of the boy was worsening:

The boy, with his rather long, curly hair, was tossing ceaselessly on the pillow. He neither slept nor regained consciousness, and his eyes were like blue stones. His mother sat, feeling her heart had gone, turned actually into a stone (134).

His mother gave Bassett the permission to see Paul hoping that perhaps he could bring some improvement in Paul's condition. Bassett told Paul that he had become the winner of over eighty thousand pounds since Malabar had won the race.

"Malabar! Malabar! Did I say Malabar, mother? Did I say Malabar? Do you think I'm lucky, mother? I knew Malabar, didn't I? Over eighty thousand pounds! I call that lucky, don't you, mother? Over eighty thousand pounds! I knew, didn't I know I knew? Malabar came in all right. If I ride my horse till I'm sure, then I tell you, Bassett, you can

go as high as you like. Did you go for all you were worth, Bassett?"

"I went a thousand on it, Master Paul."

"I never told you, mother, that if I can ride my horse, and get there, then I'm absolutely sure-oh, absolutely! Mother, did I ever tell you? I am lucky!"

"No, you never did," said his mother (136).

That night, Paul died because he couldn't recover from brain fever. The stress of winning money took a toll on his mental health. In the end, his Uncle Oscar said to her:

"My God, Hester, you're eighty-odd thousand to the good, and a poor devil of a son to the bad. But, poor devil, poor devil, he's best gone out of a life where he rides his rocking-horse to find a winner" (136). Unfortunately, Paul was sacrificed by his mother at the altar of God of mammon.

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