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Selfhood and the Primal Consciousness**

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ABSTRACT

“If I am to become an Angel,” ” says Tom Brangwen in *The Rainbow*, “it’ll be my married soul and not my single. It’ll not be the soul of me when I was a lad for I hadn’t a soul as would make me an angel then”, voicing an important Lawrentian truth. For Lawrence, “the great relationship” is the relationship between man and woman and the ultimate aspiration of life is to perfect one’s essential being which can only be achieved when an individual is able to polarize his or her primal consciousness with that of another. This paper traces the trajectory of Lawrence’s concept of love and selfhood through his novels. In his early novels such as *The White Peacock* (1911), *Sons and Lovers* (1913) and *The Rainbow* (1915), Lawrence displays a lot of faith in individual relationships which, in fact, become the medium for the self to realize itself. This belief becomes muted somewhere in the middle of his writing career. *Kangaroo* (1923) and *The Plumed Serpent* (1926), reflect a turning away from this belief as Lawrence struggles to realize the self through a belief in the greater self. However, in *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* (1928) Lawrence depicts how inter-personal relationships are important for an individual to be in touch with the “quick of the universe.” Once again there is a reaffirmation of faith. Lawrence, despite certain reservations, believes that selfhood can be realized through connection with another individual, and it is this connection that helps a person to establish an organic connection with the cosmos, to feel “the quick of the universe.”

Keywords: blood consciousness, primal consciousness, cosmos, selfhood, love

“If I am to become an Angel, it’ll be my married soul and not my single.
It’ll not be the soul of me when I was a lad for I hadn’t a soul as would
make me an angel then”
Tom Brangwen *The Rainbow*

Introduction

D. H. Lawrence stands tall amongst 20th century novelists. As a ‘modern’ author, Lawrence belongs to the same historical context as Ezra Pound, James Joyce, T.S. Eliot, W. B. Yeats and Virginia Woolf. However, while Eliot, Pound and Joyce experimented with form, Lawrence focused on the critical question of being, of achieving selfhood in a world disillusioned by war. Lawrence was a prolific writer and his works included novels, short stories, poems, essays, letters, and travel fiction. Lawrence’s initial reception by literary critics was cautious. Though one of his first stories, “Legend”, which was entered in a competition, was praised for its realism by a judge, many reviewers, already unhappy, with French realism, felt uncomfortable with Lawrence’s work (Draper 2-3). *The White Peacock* was criticized for its “its attempt to write about English rural life and colliery villages in the style of the French surrealists” (*Nottinghamshire Guardian* 21 February 1911 cited in Draper 3). His first set of poems *Love Poems* (1913) was received well and *Sons and Lovers* (1913) got some very good reviews yet he was again censured for “his neglect of form and his treatment of sex” (Draper 5).

It was Ford Madox Ford, whose original name was Ford Hermann Hueffe, editor of *The English Review* and *The Transatlantic Review*, who categorically placed Lawrence amongst the literary giants of that period. In fact, Ford in his novel *Portraits from Life* (1937) says “he had come across a genius who could write about the lives of the other half” (cited in Hubble 173). Middleton Murry, a close associate and friend of Lawrence truly respected Lawrence’s creative genius though his personal relationship with Lawrence was ambiguous (see Kaplan for further discussion). His work, *Son of Woman: The Story of D.H. Lawrence* was published in 1931, a year after Lawrence’s death in 1931. F.R. Leavis in *The Great Tradition* begins by saying that “except for Jane Austen, George Eliot, James and Conrad, there are no novelists in the English tradition worth reading (Leavis 1) but later concedes that Henry James, unlike Lawrence, “had no such immediate sense of human solidarity, no such nourishing intuition of the unity of life” (Leavis 163). With Graham Hough’s *The Dark Sun: A Study of DH Lawrence*, Lawrence was established as a visionary.

In his works, Lawrence explores many themes such as love, sex, religion, nature, and industrialization. However his personal vision of being, of the ontological concept of the self is fully explored only in his novels. In *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, Lawrence comments, “We’ve got to rip the old veil of a vision across, and find out what the heart really believes in: after all and what the heart really wants, for the next future” (*Fantasia* viii) Some of Lawrence’s

early novels are *The White Peacock* (1911), *The Trespasser* (1912), *Sons and Lovers* (1913), *The Rainbow* (1915) and *Women in Love* (1920). In the twenties, he wrote other novels such as *Aaron's Rod* (1922), *Kangaroo* (1923), *The Boy in the Bush* (1924) and *The Plumed Serpent* (1926). His most controversial novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was written in 1928. In his novels, Lawrence explores "the great relationship" which for him is the relationship between a man and a woman and the ultimate aspiration of life is to complete one's essential being which can only be achieved when an individual is able to differentiate his or her primal consciousness from that of another and, in fact, he can only exist when he connects with another individual for "it is the relation itself which is the quick and central clue to life" ("Morality and the Novel," *Phoenix* 531-532). Lawrence's belief is that love and selfhood are bound together and it is through this relationship that one is in touch with "the quick" of the universe.

In *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*, Lawrence says that the "pristine consciousness" of an individual (*Psychoanalysis* 18) and the center of this consciousness is "the quick" located in the solar plexus. In the newborn "there is a lovely, suave, fluid, *creative* electricity that flows in a circuit between the great nerve centers in the mother and child" (*Psychoanalysis* 47-58) but the child discovers its own separate being and with it its own power. However, now there exists a duality in the "primal consciousness" of the infant. It is this dual polarity that exists between lovers where the lover must both assert his separateness as well as being joined in unison. As he says, "The goal of life is the coming into perfection of each single individual" (*Psychoanalysis* 106) and "sex union means bringing into connection the dynamic poles of man and woman" (*Fantasia* 242). This union, according to Lawrence has three results: "First, the flash of pure sensation and of real electricity. Then there is the birth of an entirely new state of blood in each partner. And then there is the liberation" (*Fantasia* 243-244). This consummation can, thus, be compared to a thunderstorm where the flash is followed by rain ("pure water") and then the mixing of this water with the water on earth ("new water"). The analogy further draws our attention towards his belief that the great relationship between man and woman, which leads to the birth of the primal consciousness, facilitates a union with the cosmic consciousness.

This belief of love and selfhood can be traced in Lawrence's novels. "If I am to become an Angel," says Tom Brangwen in *The Rainbow*, "it'll be my married soul and not my single. It'll not be the soul of me when I was a lad for I hadn't a soul as would make me an angel then" (*R* 137), voicing an important Lawrentian truth. In *The White Peacock* (1911), *Sons and Lovers* (1913) and *The Rainbow* (1915), novels written in the first half of his career, Lawrence affirms his faith in individual relationships, which, in fact, becomes the medium for the self to realize itself. This affirmation gets lost somewhere in the middle of his writing career where his own relationships get strained and where he senses how industrialization and the war have wrecked nature and humanity. *Kangaroo* and *The Plumed Serpent* belong to this phase of his writing career. However the belief is never totally lost as the deeply

controversial novel written towards the end of his writing career, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, ends with a muted affirmation of faith.

The Early Novels

The White Peacock, depicts the realism that critics of Lawrence have appreciated as well as criticized. The novel is set in the woods and fields near Hags farm in Nethermere, a mythical place in rural, pastoral England. Thus the novel is firmly placed in the pulsating physical natural world. The story revolves around the love triangle of George Saxton, a farmer, Lettie Beardsall, the narrator, Cyril's sister and Leslie Tempest who is the son of an affluent industrialist. The characters either belong to the rural world or aspire to strike a connection with it—the young farmer, George, his sister Emily, and the gamekeeper Annabel symbolize rural England while the narrator Cyril and his sister, Lettie seek fulfilling relationships in Nethermere. However, Nethermere itself is not quite as blissful as it appears to be. Bradshaw comments, “the reader knows that Nethermere is not the idyllic environment which Cyril's rhapsodic flights of fancy are geared to evoke” and before long we see that “normal growth has given way to freakish tumescence” (“Introduction” xi). He draws our attention to the Selsby coalmine where men descend into the depths of the earth with dismal regularity and intrusive sounds of the railways that cut across the mining fields. (“Introduction” xv).

When we are first introduced to George, he is “pok[ing] out an old papery nest of those pretty field bees” from which he casually picks out the dead larvae and throws them into the water (WP 6). His familiarity with the land is strong and when he is seated on a sofa in his farmhouse, his attention is drawn to his “thick fingers,” “the muscles of his bare arm” and his “re-brown skin” (WP 7) His friend, Cyril whose voice alternates with Lawrence's own narratorial voice, is condescending towards George even as he envies his robustness. Lettie who belongs to the upper class falls in love with the earthy George but deserts him for a spiritually dead Leslie Tempest. Leslie appears to be inadequate as a lover and Lawrence relates this to his disconnect with the rustic, organic world. This is in contrast to George's physicality which is reflected both in his work and in his language. In fact, in many ways George foreshadows Mellors in *Sons and Lovers*. He harvests the fields and milks cows, both images of fecundity and speaks the local dialect. Yet, George like Lettie is untrue to himself and marries Meg. Finally Lettie's insipid and loveless marriage to Leslie is as destructible as George's marriage to Meg who, fortified by her children, utterly destroys the man –woman relationship that for Lawrence is the most critical.

Nevertheless in all these failed relationships the belief in emotional awareness as the most significant first step towards a realization of cosmic consciousness never wavers. As Alastair Niven says , “But the most central choice of all is whether to be ourselves, to fulfill what is instinctively required for ourselves, or whether to follow the requirements of ‘society’ and to do what

is expected of us (Niven 18). The relationships fail because by being untrue to their elemental selves, each individual betrays both himself and the union which should lead to the duality and the polarization of being. Thus each couple is in a lifeless marriage for a “marriage is no marriage that is not basically and permanently phallic, and that is not linked up with the sun and the earth, the moon and the fixed stars and the planets, in the rhythm of days, in the rhythm of months, in the rhythm of quarters, of years, of decades and of centuries” (“A Propos” 325-327). Thus the eternal and timeless quality of the bond between a man and a woman both reflects the infinite and connects the individual to the boundless and ceaseless cosmos.

Sons and Lovers takes the class conflict of *The White Peacock* a step further. Gertrude Coppard falls in love with Walter Morel the miner, but the passion soon dies as the drudgery of living off his meager salary becomes a reality. Mrs. Morel attention shifts from Walter to her son William: “A wave of hot love went over her to the infant. She felt as if the naval string that had connected its frail little body with hers had not been broken...” (SL 45). William moves to London where, tragically, he dies of pneumonia. However, even before his death, we see him moving away from his mother and, later, like Lettie and George choosing a partner he does not really care about, thus undergoing a spiritual death. After William’s death, when Paul falls sick, Mrs. Morel is forced to shake herself out of her grief and focus her attention on her second son. But her stifling control of Paul’s life makes Paul dependent on her. The novel traces Paul’s journey of selfhood through the painstaking journey from adolescence to adulthood. He falls in love with Miriam, who is strong like his mother. She inspires his art. However, he cannot love her sexually, possibly because her personality resembles Gertrude Morel’s. In the chapter “The Defeat of Miriam,” Paul embarrassed and ashamed tells Miriam that he cannot love her physically. Finally, the narrator sums up: “He had come back to his mother. Hers was the strongest tie in his life” (SL 253). With the other woman in his life, Clara, he has a strong passionate relationship. However, the relationship fails because Paul fails to connect to her emotionally. Unlike Lettie, George and William, Paul strives to get into an authentic relationship though neither of his two relationships comes to fruition because of the internal schism in him. Thus the novel takes us one step forward in the definition and attainment of selfhood. Towards the end we see Paul in the dim city lights moving away from everything that has imprisoned him in his adolescence. Interestingly, the one character in the novel that validates his authentic self is Mr. Morel. He marries Gertrude because of the strong passion they had for each other “He saw again the passion she had had for him. It blazed upon her for a moment” (SL 226). However, while Gertrude, split between her love and her class consciousness, coldly isolates himself from her husband, Walter Morel remains true to his feelings at every point whether it is the “old glow” that he feels for his wife or the “ruin he had made during these years (SL226) or “the helpless[ness] and the horror” at Gertrude’s death (SL 447).

For Lawrence, the consciousness of the self or being is the birth of an individual and the relationship that facilitates this birth is the “great relationship”. Paul Sheehan in *Modernism, Narrative and Humanism* examines the similarities and differences between Heidegger’s and Lawrence’s concept of being or the self. According to Sheehan, both Lawrence and Heidegger have been influenced by the concept of “Western decline.” For both, “humanist transcendence” is the answer to this; however, whereas for Heidegger this results in a “deprivation-- of a relationship with being” (Sheehan 94), thus revealing the “urge to escape” (Sheehan 93), Lawrence wishes to transcend this through “a sense of connection to all living things” (94). Sheehan goes on to discuss Lawrence’s belief in the restorative power of sex and consciousness is renounced at the point where religion and sex unite. Lawrence’s novels: *The Rainbow*, *Women in Love*, *The Plumed Serpent*, and *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* all have references to the strong connection between religion and sex. For Lawrence, sexual love must be brought into the realm of the sacred for it to be in harmony with the organics of the universe. Thus the self can be understood only in its relationship with the other. This new self which emerges with this connection is best exemplified in *The Rainbow* which, in fact, is Lawrence’s richest novel in its depiction of personal relationships.

According to Lawrence, “Love is a difficult, complex maintenance of individual integrity throughout the incalculable processes of interhuman-polarity (*Psychoanalysis* 118). This struggle is portrayed very well in *The Rainbow*. The novel which straddles three generations of the Brangwen family examines the struggle for selfhood and love. When Tom Brangwen first sees the Polish woman Lydia Lensky, she is wearing a black bonnet and a black coat (*R* 27). Alistair Niven ascribes to her qualities of mystery and darkness (Niven 70) whereas Leavis comments that she brings otherness and foreignness to the Brangwens. She represents a “world that was beyond reality” (*R* 27) and Tom is drawn by an unknown and inscrutable power force as he struggles with incomprehensible spiritual yearnings which he seeks to fulfill through his union with her depicts the desire to connect in order to be reborn. Lydia’s otherness allows Brangwen to affirm his own identity: “She caused the separateness and individuality of all the Marsh inmates” (*R* 240). Lawrence considers this distance between two individuals to be essential for a relationship to be fulfilling. However, their relationship wavers in its intensity as Brangwen seeks another woman in the second year of their marriage. But Lydia pulls him back and in the sexual consummation that ensues they rediscover each other only for the relationship to change again with the birth of a child.

Anna and Will Brangwen continue the search for “blood-intimacy” and “religious aspiration.” (Spilka 98). Will is “large, looming, a kind of godhead, he embraced all manhood for her” like “some mysterious animal that lived in the darkness under the leaves” (*R* 191) yet Anna attempts to maintain her separateness in the early years of their marriage. There are moments when their love-making is in tune with the cosmos “whilst time roared off, forever far-off” (*R* 143) but still each senses a space in their union: “Why was there always

space between them, why were they apart” (R 121). Ultimately, the marriage degenerates as neither is able to bridge the gap. In a letter to Russel written on 8th December 1915, Lawrence discusses the concept of blood consciousness: “There is a transmission, I don’t know of what, between her blood and mine, in the act of connection. So that afterwards, even if she goes away, the blood-consciousness persists between us (2L 470)”. Interestingly, Lawrence identifies blood consciousness with the primitive:

I have been reading Frazer’s Golden Bough and Totemism and Exogamy. Now I am convinced of what I believed when I was about twenty – that there is another seat of consciousness than the brain and the nervous system: there is a blood-consciousness which exists in us independently of the ordinary mental consciousness. (2 L112)

In the essay on Melville written in 1916, Lawrence rages against the “white mental consciousness” which has drained our “blood consciousness” (see LaChapelle for further discussion of Lawrence’s ideas of blood consciousness 81-99). In the opening pages of *The Rainbow*, there are many references to “blood intimacy” (R 6-7) and when Tom sees Lydia, he is palpably aware of “another center of consciousness [i]n his breast, or in his bowels” that “connect[s] them, like a secret power” (R 37). For Lawrence, the desirable outcome of a union between the self and the other is the transformation of the self. But in the novel, the blood consciousness that Lawrence discusses with Russel fails to give birth to a significant transformation in the protagonists.

Ursula and Skrebensky’s relationship in *The Rainbow* has phases where they enjoy a rich and fulfilling relationship though later she wonders, “love—love-- love, what it means? What does it amount to? So much personal gratification” (R 473). However, Ursula remains unfulfilled for she still has to learn that love cannot be associated with an assertion of power. In fact, she wrecks Skrebensky even as she hurts herself. Finally, the novel does not leave us with a conclusion as Ursula imagines that a man created by God will come to her out of the eternity “to which she herself belongs” (R 96). In any case, what the novel wishes to convey is that the ability to establish a strong and fulfilling relationship with the opposite sex is the means to discovering oneself. Moreover, this can only happen if the relationship also establishes a connection with the cosmos. As Ursula says, “Self was an oneness with the infinite” (R 439).

The Rainbow is replete with images of the pastoral, fecund world. Ursula possesses the “glimmering core of fecundity” (R447). Ursula’s and Skrebensky’s union is like they were “one stream, one dark fecundity” (R 448). However, towards the end of the novel, they emerge from this dark pastoral world into the “lights and the machine-glimmer beyond” (R449) and finally Skrebensky sees “the horror of the City Road” (R 455). *Women in Love* followed *The Rainbow* and here Lawrence shifts from the depiction of the pastoral world to the depiction of cold barrenness of industrialization. The

book revolves around the two sisters Ursula and Gudrun Brangwen and the two men Birkin and Gerald. The book is semi-autobiographical as the two couples mirror Lawrence and Frieda and Middleton Murry and Katherine Mansfield. In the novel, Ursula's and Birkin's love comes to fruition while Gerald and Gudrun's relationship is destroyed and finally Gerald falls off a mountain in the Alps and freezes to death. Though the two sisters appear to have a strong bond initially, later they have starkly different perspectives on love Ursula believes that she must sever all other ties to be true to her love, Birkin, Gudrun does not appreciate this and the rift between the two sisters appears complete when Ursula turns away in disgust at Gudrun's response to Gerald's death. Initially Birkin's and Ursula's relationship is based on a power struggle. Ursula complains that Birkin does not love her, that he does not want to "serve" but wants her to be his "thing" (WL 290). Birkin is furious at this polarization of the male and female ego. He wants her to "drop [her] assertive will and to "let [her]self go" (WL 250-251). While Ursula wants Birkin to love her "absolutely, with complete self –abandonment," but he "[does] not believe in final self-abandonment (WL 264). However, in the course of the novel, Birkin must realize that it is the relationship that will help him discover himself so that finally they can both exist in "a new paradisaal unit" (WL 369)). Clifford comments on "Birkin's realization of the suspension of the self, of the first person singular pronoun, 'I'" and gives the example of Birkin's skeptical questioning: "How could he say 'I' when he was something new and unknown, not himself at all?" (Clifford 135). As both Ursula and Birkin move towards each other and they reach a true communion. However, despite the affirmation depicted in this relationship there is a dark pessimism displayed in Gerald and Gudrun's relationship. Interestingly, Ursula is closely associated with nature as is Birkin: "A cow "breathe[s] wet hotness on Birkin's hand" (WL 31). On the other hand, Gudrun and Gerald distance themselves from nature. While holding Winifred Crich's pet rabbit Bismarck, Gudrun feels disgusted by "the mindlessness and the bestial stupidity of the struggle" the animal puts up and a "heavy cruelty well[s] up in her" (WL 140). This cruelty is starkly visible in Gerald when he violently controls pushing the spurs into her bleeding wound (WL 112). Finally, when Gerald falls off the barren slopes of snow and dies we are told that "something broke] in his soul" (WL 474).

Kangaroo and the Plumed Serpent

His mid-career novels *Kangaroo* and *The Plumed Serpent* are written after *Women in Love* and reflect his anger and bitterness with Western civilization its mindless colonization and brutal wars. Moreover, at this point his disenchantment with his own marriage is huge (see Maddox's *The Story of a Marriage*, for an account of Lawrence and Frieda's tempestuous and very often violent marriage). *Kangaroo* depicts the anguish of a man who feels alien in his own community. The novel is semi-autobiographical as Lawrence reveals the pain he felt from being treated like an outsider because he had a German wife,

Frieda Weekly. Lawrence married Frieda in July 1914 and the war started a month later. Lawrence and Frieda were denied passports and were even asked to leave Cornwall. The novel set in Australia has at its central theme the marital relationship of Somers and his wife, Harriet. When Somers first reaches Australia, he feels that the whole country “li[es] mysteriously within the Australian under dark, that peculiar lost, weary aloofness of Australia” (K 13). Australia, then, symbolizes a pre-European aboriginal culture. It is also the seat of a different kind of consciousness. For Somers, kangaroo symbolizes another sort of consciousness deeper than human consciousness” (K 340). This consciousness is the “blood consciousness” of the earlier novels set in opposition to the spiritually barren modern consciousness. Somers and Harriet’s relationship is set against this background. Their relationship is both nurturing as well as smothering. Scherr comments on Somers’ keenness to “sacrifi[ce]” the “human” Harriet because he is overcome by the intrinsic isolation of mankind (see Scherr 137). Here he is the precursor of Kate’s misogyny in *The Plumed Serpent*. He rejects her love “for the greater mystery of the dark God beyond a man ...but so much more obscure, impersonal... (K 327). Lawrence’s words in *The Rainbow*: “In the closest kiss, the dearest touch, there is the small gulf which is nonetheless complete because it is so narrow, so nearly non-existent” (R 225) take on a darker meaning here and in *The Plumed Serpent* this disillusionment with personal relationships is starkly evident.

The Plumed Serpent is set in Mexico which Lawrence visited in 1923. Kate, the heroine of the novel, is a forty-year-old widow with grown up children. Disappointed and disheartened by her own relationships, she seeks a new life. She “realize[s] that human love has its limits, that there is a beyond” for which “we must be born again” (PS 54). Lawrence sees Kate’s cynicism about human relationships as a consequence of too much intimacy. She mirrors Lawrence here in a desire to explore different forms of connection. In Mexico, she meets Don Ramen and Cipriano who are attempting to revive the pre-Christian worship of the Plumed Serpent, Quetzalcoatl, the god of sun, morning star and the wind. Lawrence’s quest for the other to complete the self is vividly shown in *The Plumed Serpent* where Kate’s Western knowledge and awareness has to grapple with the significant other in the Mexican world. Through Kate wavers in her commitment and relationship with the other and, finally, withdraws she nonetheless experiences this impersonal union. At the dance of Quetzalcoatl, she understands what she wants an impersonal union which allows her to connect with the infinite: “Men and women alike danced with lowered and expressionless faces, abstract, gone into the deep absorption of men into greater manhood, women into greater womanhood” (PS 128). Cipriano falls in love with Kate but the relationship is hardly explored at a personal level. Kate primarily marries the ancient phallic mystery. The marriage proposal itself is defined impersonally and objectively. Cipriano in one of their conversations comments:

‘Why should you not be the woman in the Quetzalcoatl pantheon? If you will, the goddess!’

‘I, a goddess in the Mexican pantheon?’ cried Kate with a burst of startled laughter.

‘Why not?’ said he.

‘But I am not Mexican,’ said she.

‘You may easily be a goddess, said he, in the same pantheon with Don Ramon and me.’ A strange, inscrutable flame of desire seemed to be burning on Cipriano's face, as his eyes watched her glittering. Kate could not help feeling that it was a sort of intense, blind *ambition*, of which she was partly an object: a passionate one also: which kindled the Indian to the hottest pitch of his being.” (PS 234)

He then tells her “You marry me. You complain you have nothing to do. Then marry me. Marry me, and help Ramón and me” (PS 234). Later, she feels “as if she had some other name, she moved within another species. As if her name were, for example, Itzpapalotl” (PS 235). However, her old self resurfaces as is apparent in her conversation with Theresa. When Teresa tells Kate, “My souls is with Ramon” (PS 408), Kate responds by saying, “Surely it is better for one to live one’s own life” and “to keep [one’s] own soul and be responsible for it” (PS 408-409). Finally, in fear, she withdraws from the impersonal world of Quetzalcoatl.

Lady Chatterley’s Lover

The movement towards a more personal form of connection is spelt out by Lawrence in a letter to Brynner in March 28 where he says of *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*: “the new relationship will be some sort of tenderness, sensitive between men and men and women and women” (2 L 112). Relationships once again become important and in “Apropos to Lady Chatterley’s Lover” Lawrence says, “Let us get prepare now for the death of our present ‘little’ life, and the re-emergence in a bigger life, in touch with the moving cosmos” (“Apropos” 329) for “We must get back into relation, vivid and nourishing relation to the cosmos and the universe” (“Apropos” 329). (In *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, this is one of the central themes. The novel tells the story of Connie Reid and her barren and lifeless marriage to Clifford Chatterley. After a month long honeymoon, Clifford leaves for the war but returns within a year paralyzed and maimed. Connie and Clifford are “attached to each other in the modern, aloof way” (LCL 15) yet she senses “how little connection he had with the people” (LCL 15). Not only does Clifford see “his own men”, the miners as objects, he is also afraid of being seen the way he is—dismembered and disfigured. The war is thus seen a critical reason for this isolation echoing Lawrence’s comment “the bitterness of war may be taken for granted in the characters (“Foreword” to WL 485). “Disconnect[ed]” and “rest[less]”, Connie has an affair with Michaelis, whom she finds a “gentle” and

“detached” lover (*LCL* 26). However, Michaelis’ sterile intellectualism parallels Clifford’s soulless materialism. Both are isolating and life denying. Connie has to learn to identify herself with the organic universe, so she can be in touch with the “quick of the universe”. It is Mellors, the gamekeeper, with whom she is able to achieve this union. When Connie first sees Mellors, he is washing himself. The image stays in her mind and later she seeks him out. Both Mellors and Connie find the relationship regenerative. Keith Sagar discusses the restorative power of nature in their relationship (Sagar 187). After seeing the hens in the coops, Connie feels “forlorn and unused, not female at all” (*LCL* 113). She seeks identification with the generating creatures and slowly yields to the healing power of the organic world. The birth of “a tiny, perky chicken” heralds the rebirth of nature in her (*LCL* 114). In their lovemaking, Connie experiences “[the phallic power] [that] connects us with the stars and the sea and everything” (*LCL* 132 and “the dark thrust of peace, and a ponderous, primordial tenderness, such as world was made in the beginning” (*LCL* 174). The solution to the materialistic, modern world “over-conscious in the money and political and social side” (*LCL* 153) is a discovery of connection between two individuals. It is only when Connie discards all barriers between herself and Mellors that she discovers the unknown, eternal life of the universe.

Interestingly, the ending of *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, like the earlier novels, is ambiguous. Though Mellors and Connie have discovered each other in a fulfilling relationship, their future is unclear as Clifford has refused to grant a divorce. However, despite the uncertainty, their strong bond provides hope. Finally, the promise of the unborn child reinforces the affirmations in the novel. Lawrence, despite certain reservations, believes that the man-woman relationship is critical to realizing the self and to establishing an organic connection with the cosmos, a connection that is of decisive significance to Lawrence.

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