



**Lack of Tenderness: The Main Culprit for the Relationship between Husband and Wife in
*Lady Chatterley's Lover***

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Abstract

This article presents the case of Chatterley and Clifford, the two main characters in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, to consider tenderness a basic working emotion to shape human relationship. The lack of tenderness causes emotional as well as physical distance in relation, especially that of male-female's relation. The first part of the article reviews tenderness. The second part reviews how tenderness and lack of tenderness affects male-female relationship in the selected novel, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. On the basis of a careful analysis of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, the present writer tries to prove that the lack of tenderness is the main culprit for the broken relationship between husband and wife: a major one of the relations between man and woman in human society and mutual tenderness elicits people awakening to a new way of living in an exterior world that is uncracking after the long winter hibernation. Lawrence, through revelation of Connie's gradual awakening from tenderness, has made his utmost effort to explore possible solutions to harmonious androgyny between men and women so as to revitalize the distorted human nature caused by the industrial civilization.

Keywords: relationship, husband and wife, tenderness, main culprit, Connie

I

Tenderness plays a very vital role in connecting people and making human relationship workable. Wojtyla explains that the essence of tenderness is found "in the tendency to make one's own the feelings and mental states of another person" (quoted by Kalawski 201). This is a common experience in romantic relationships, as men and women feel closely involved with the inner life of their beloved ones', entering into the other person's feelings and state of mind.



Tenderness also seeks outward expression. It is not enough to have an awareness of what is going on inside the other person. A person also tends to seek to communicate that sense of closeness to his/her beloved.

Tenderness may be quite selfless and innocent when it is based on concern for another person and what that person is going through interiorly. However, Wojtyla warns that outward gestures such as an embrace or a kiss can lose their altruistic character and quickly fall into utilitarianism once they are used primarily as a means to one's own pleasure. Once "the need to gratify one's own feelings" (203) begins to overshadow genuine selfless concern for the other, expressions of tenderness have crossed over into egoism and will prevent love from fully developing.

And crossing that line into egoism is something we can easily fall into, for two reasons. First, as Wojtyla reminds us, the love between men and women is driven in large part by sensuality and sentimentality, which are never fully satisfied and which are constantly demanding ever-greater amounts of pleasure. Given our fallen human nature, therefore, outward expressions of tenderness may be sought more for the emotional or sensual pleasure we receive than out of a selfless desire to enter into the inner life of the other person. As Wojtyla explains, "Various forms of tenderness can easily diverge from love of the person, and stray in the direction of sensual, or at any rate, emotional egoism" (205).

Second, the subjective aspects of love (the powerful emotions or sensual pleasure we experience) develop much more quickly than the objective aspects (virtue, friendship, selfgiving, responsibility). Since the emotion of love is often experienced as a sudden and powerful explosion, many are tempted to give or receive outward expressions of tenderness before those objective aspects of love have had a chance to develop (Wojtyla 205). And, as we've seen in previous reflections, those objective aspects are crucial to ensure that the relationship remains at the level of self-giving love and does not fall into utilitarianism. That is why premature acts of tenderness are very harmful to love, for they create only "an illusion of love, a love which in reality does not exist" (205).



II

One of the concepts related to tenderness is love. Love is conspicuously absent from basic emotion lists. Shaver et al. (81-96) have presented several arguments for the inclusion of love as a basic emotion. However, they agreed with Ekman (45-60) that the word “love” often does not refer to an emotion but to a disposition to respond emotionally. Shaver et al. pointed out, however, that the emotional disposition of love is punctuated by “surges” of emotion. These surges are temporally discrete in the way other basic emotions are.

In addition, Shaver et al. (81-96) noted that the term “love” means different things under different circumstances. In other words, there are several varieties of love. Based on attachment theory, Shaver et al. (81-96) distinguished among love as attachment, love as caregiving, and love as sexual attraction. Each of these three types of love may occur by itself, or it may combine with one or both other types. Shaver et al. suggested that different types of emotion “surges” may correspond to the different types of love. Frijda proposed that, “tenderness can be regarded as the impulse toward tender—that is, care-giving behaviour or else as the acute act of recognition of an object as a fit object for such behaviour” (83). To summarize the conceptual relationship between tenderness and love, whereas love is a disposition to respond emotionally, tenderness is a momentary emotional experience. In addition, whereas there are different varieties of love, tenderness relates specifically to caregiving. This caregiving function of tenderness strengthens human relationship.

Human relationship is the thematic center of Lawrence fictional writing. As Marsh exactly observes “the quest for a perfect male-female relationship can be called the central subject of Lawrence’s fiction” (96). His novels mainly study the causes at the back of the shifting human relationships: why relationships fail, especially that between a woman and a man and how healthy and balanced relationships can be developed and maintained in “an essentially tragic age” (Lawrence 1). He looks into different features of relationships—parents-child’s relation, man-woman’s relation, man’s relation with his surroundings and nature, the relation between intellect and instinct, and the appropriate base for the marriage relationship. Lawrence, in his novel writing, seeks a harmonious relationship, based on balance between intellect and instinct, and body and



emotions. *Lady Chatterley's Lover* insists that the most significant of all relationships, is male-female's relationship. The relationship between man and woman is the most recurring theme in his writing.

III

Lady Chatterley's Lover is the last novel of Lawrence and one of his most notorious novels. The story of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* chiefly deals with a woman named Connie (Lady Chatterley) who marries Clifford, an aristocratic man who becomes paralyzed and impotent due to injuries from fighting in the war. Connie develops an affair with the gamekeeper, Oliver Mellors, and as their relationship becomes deep and full of meanings, she becomes more and more disconcerted and detached by her superficial and shallow relationship with Clifford. So, Connie begins the tale as a Lady Chatterley, the spouse of Clifford Chatterley: an aristocratic coal miner and ends it as a beloved and future wife of Mellors: a gamekeeper of Clifford estate. But what should be held responsible for the failure of Chatterleys's love and marriage? The present writer intends to argue that among all the reasons, the lack of sensual tenderness is the main culprit for the failure of love and marriage between the husband and wife.

At the very beginning of the story, we are told that "ours is an essentially a tragic age" and human relationships are badly scattered and disturbed because of war and industrialization.

War turns Clifford into "more or less in bits" (Lawrence 1), shattered physically, impotent sexually, rigid only in the knowledge of his own supremacy to the working men he utilizes in his coalmine and in his bodiless intellectuality as a writer. All this sets a tone of bleakness and despair for the story. Through the narrator's descriptions, a mechanistic corruption, war, overintellectuality, ignorance of touch seems to pervade the setting, tainting all that they come in contact__ especially human relationship. All of them not only corrupt natural environment but also cause lack of tenderness, which leads to the split of relationship between man and woman, especially the husband and wife relation in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.

The novel opens with Connie imprisoned situation within the "thick walls" of Wragby. The walls seal all but the intellectual life, and Connie senses confined by the culture and conversation of



Wragby houses and by the emptiness, tightness of the men of her generation, “they were so tight, so scared of life” (Lawrence 7). Neither Connie's husband nor the lover she takes, Michaelis, could make her free of her agonized situation “it was like being inside an enclosure, always inside. Life always a dream or frenzy, inside an enclosure” (42). Connie knows that little thing to do was to pass the porches and portals (87), but it is not until she is seduced by her husband's gamekeeper that brings her out of suppression. However, coming out of that “enclosure” is not that easy and simple for Connie. It is very difficult for her to leave her husband and go for her love. Although, there is no tenderness, warmth and harmony in Chatterleys' relationship, but still they have habit of each other and habit to Clifford is “more vital than any occasional excitement” (32). Moreover, according to Clifford it is the habit not tenderness that enables two individuals “to vibrate so intricately to one another” (32) and the actual secret of marriage is not sex; at least not the simple purpose of sex. Connie is living with her husband pretty happily, as her husband convinces her that they are interwoven in a marriage and if they glue to it, they will easily arrange “the sex thing”, the way they arrange going to a dentist.

Though apparently Connie seems happy and convinced in her marriage, unaware of her sexual being, facilitating Clifford in his writing, however, wild restlessness takes place in her when ignored corner of her being is scratched by Micheal, one of the visitors to Clifford's house. Nevertheless, he is interested just in his own pleasure. He is not a man to help her in full realization of her body. On one hand, Micheal makes her aware of her body and on the other hand insults her by ignoring her pleasure and satisfaction. So after her humiliating incident with Micheal, Connie becomes very restless and disturbed and starts feeling hollowness inside with the bareness and lack of meaning in her life. She craves not just for the physical contact that Clifford being crippled, and too absorbed in his books and thoughts, is incapable of giving her but she also needs and looks for tenderness and warmth, however, “Clifford was not like that. His whole race was not like that. They were all inwardly hard and separate, and warmth to them was a bad taste” (Lawrence 60). This inwardly hardness and separateness, makes Connie detached from her husband, who is ‘all mind’. There is a dreadful anxiety, expertly expressed, in dilemma of Connie: “on one side we see the lack of tenderness in her life, a space, a ‘void’ needing to be filled; on the other hand, we go in



her consciousness and experience her life as a dream, an awakened 'trance-like state' that caused frustration but is terrified of change" (thecriterion.com). Connie "knows she is out of connection," as her wasting marriage has led her to lose "touch with the substantial and vital world".

Her body was going meaningless, going dull and opaque, so much insignificant substance. It made her feel immensely depressed and hopeless. What hope was there?

The mental life! Suddenly she hated it with a rushing fury, the swindle! (Lawrence 59)

Now she is in search of somebody who can give meaning to her meaningless life and to complete her. In such restlessness walking in the nearby woods of Wragby, she meets Mellors who is living a secluded life. Mellors's secluded life and separation from his sensual wife direct them into a relationship that is made little by little and is based upon tenderness, physical passion and mutual respect. When Connie meets Mellors, she finds safe haven in his arms and experiences regeneration and restoration of her life and womanhood. Jointly they shelter themselves from the confusion and anarchy of the outside world and go to the shelter of the inside world of realization and fulfillment. However, the realization and fulfillment is not that easy. Connie's transformation takes place in a set of tensions and an artistic dualism: tenderness against indifference and stiffness, wood against stone, nature against culture, frankness against manipulation or fertility against infertility, flesh against intellect. These tensions powerfully mark the first phase of the novel where Wragby Hall symbolizes infertility and spiritual and emotional apathy, will and intellectual control; while the hut signifies the free play of the instinct and sensuality, the safe haven of tenderness. Connie hangs between the two worlds, leaving the stiffness for tenderness is the main decision, which is never easy for Connie. The two worlds cannot interrelate: Clifford interrupts nature with his motorized wheelchair as much as Mellors is an intruder and outsider inside Wragby Hall. Perhaps the most remarkable opposition is between silence and talk. As Connie and Mellors draw back into the secluded world of the hut, the author insists on the tranquility and the silence of the place, focuses on the internal and emotional feelings since both characters are escapees from "the outer world of chaos" (Lawrence). That is why enclosures are in abundance in the novel: a bedroom, the hut, the cottage, the clearing, an enclosed yard, as many shelters from psychological suffering. Mellors is "afraid of society" (Lawrence) while Connie shrinks back from the "insanity of the whole civilized



species." They both remain in pure silence, even vagueness since they hardly ever call each other by names.

IV

The novel shows three stages in Connie's relationship with her husband and Mellors. In the first stage, she rejects Clifford, acting in a response to a wasted bond of marriage, she gets place of safety with Mellors. The second stage starts when Connie restores in the serene world of her lover's hut. Finally, in the third stage she escapes Wragby Hall as she leaves to spend holidays in Venice. There she decides never to go back to the lifeless world of Clifford. This decision is taken more easily by Connie because being away from Wragby Hall she can think again about her commitment to Mellors while their relationship is increasingly revealed and discussed as a scandal which really puts a stop to her from returning to her husband. Then the novel's central struggle transfers from that between a lady and a gamekeeper to that between Connie and Mellor's promise to each other and the antagonistic force to their relationship.

Connie's relationship with Mellors becomes stronger and stronger and she starts rejecting her previous mode of life and everything, which is represented by her husband. Mellors has given her a superb happiness and a sense of liberty and life. The relationship of Connie and Mellors presents the image of complete wholeness of being in which both partners are fulfilled while Connie's relation with Clifford, lacks both physical as well as emotional tenderness.

Industrial revolution and war, up to some extent, can be held responsible for Clifford's lack of sensual tenderness; however, on a whole he is not a tender person. This is clear the way he suggests Connie to get a lover outside of a marriage. So lack of sensual tenderness plays a decisive role in the dissolution of wife and husband relationship.



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