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The University of Montana

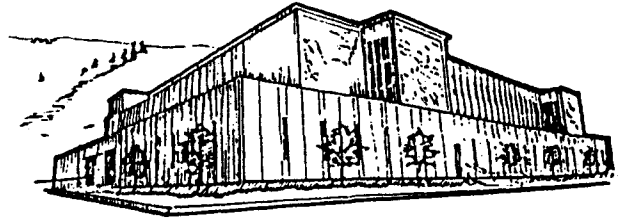
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Nature as Salvational Metaphysician

in D. H. Lawrence's *The White Peacock* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*

by

Christine K. Frame

B. A. The University of Oregon, 1991

presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Arts

The University of Montana

1994

Approved by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James P. ...", is written over a horizontal line. Below the line, the word "Chairperson" is printed.

Chairperson

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. C. Murray", is written over a horizontal line. Below the line, the text "Dean, Graduate School" is printed.

Dean, Graduate School

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Nature as Salvational Metaphysician in D.H. Lawrence's *The White Peacock* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (69 pp.)

Director: Douglas Purl



The White Peacock (D. H. Lawrence's first novel) can be viewed as a rough-draft of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (his last). As "book ends" to his several novels, they encompass his elemental philosophy: that modern society, by placing the "life of the mind" (thought, speech, and "progress") *over* the "life of the body" (touch, action, and harmony with nature) has lost the necessary balance between the mental and physical realms. Thus, modern culture remains in a deepening state of malady, in need of a cure.

In *The White Peacock*, George's experience reflects the illness of society. He serves as a rare example of an individual living a peaceful, integrated existence, attuned to both body and nature, despite the cerebral society surrounding him. Lettie, however, convinces him that his sensual life is deficient, and introduces him to the life of the mind. As a result of this "awakening," George's health, physical and emotional, deteriorates from this point until his untimely death due to alcoholism (the addiction indicating an attempt to return to his previous "unconscious" state). His experience warns of ruin unless we, as a society, recognize the equal essentiality of both realms, and reclaim the life of the body.

Connie's experience in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* exemplifies the remedy that modern culture seems not to possess. She become disillusioned with the life of the mind, and searches for fulfillment. The gamekeeper of the estate becomes her "savior" by awakening her to the virtues of the physical realm, thereby creating balance in her life.

Lawrence attempts to change the social attitude. In both *The White Peacock* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, he attacks cultural precepts that have left the individual alienated from nature (including body, spirit, other humans, and the harmony with the cosmos). In his writings, sexuality, "the closest touch of all touch," (LCL, p. 259) becomes the vivid symbol of this necessary unity. Through the body, the individual can begin to reconnect with nature. Lawrence offers this philosophy as a "new religion" whereby to regain the necessary balance that we, as a society, have lost.

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Introduction

The narrator in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* expounds on the "improper" handling of the novel: "The novel can glorify the most corrupt feelings, so long as they are *conventionally* 'pure' . . . The public responds now only to an appeal to its vices."¹ Unable or unwilling to acquiesce to the social hypocrisies, Lawrence laid siege on conventional morality. Thus it comes as no surprise that *Lady Chatterley's Lover* ("so obviously a book written in defiance of convention"²) remained banned in the United States until 1959. But Lawrence does not wish merely to expose social flaws. The narrator in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* explains that the novel ("properly handled") becomes an instrument that can

inform and lead into new places the flow of our sympathetic consciousness, and it can lead our sympathy away in recoil from things gone dead. Therefore, the novel . . . can reveal the most secret places of life: for it is in the *passional* secret places of life, above all, that the tide of sensitive awareness needs to ebb and flow, cleansing and freshening. (LCL, p. 94)

Lawrence views the novel as the perfect means by which to accomplish his end (that of delving into and exploring the "secret places of life"). The expansiveness of the novel form allows the writer scope to explore sensitive matters deliberately.

True to its author's bold nature, *The White Peacock* also surveys the expanse of the human experience. The work teems with profound perceptions of the male-female relationship and of the human psyche and its needs. Yet, "It is a novel more deeply

¹ D. H. Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (New York: New American Library, Inc., 1962) 94-95. (All subsequent references in parentheses after initial citation.)

² D. H. Lawrence, *Apropos of Lady Chatterley's Lover* (London: Martin Secker, 1931) 95.

undermined by its own gaps in understanding than, we may suspect, its author ever knew," states John Worthen in his introduction to *The White Peacock*.³ Ford Madox Hueffer experienced a similar reaction to the novel. However, he perceived something great beyond its flaws. Lawrence recalls the conversation with Hueffer: "When we were on an omnibus in London, he shouted in my ear 'It's got every fault that the English novel can have . . . But' shouted Hueffer in the 'bus, 'you've got GENIUS'."4

Because of the early novel's gaps and its author's greenness, Worthen suggests,

If *The White Peacock* were by another writer, it would perhaps by now have disappeared onto the dustier shelves of our secondhand bookshops, . . . But some pieces of writing are significant mainly because of what their authors go on to do after them. (Worthen, p. 28)

It is one such piece of writing and yet, I would argue, it is still more. Lawrence himself said of the novel in 1908, "Everything that I am now, all of me, so far, is in that."⁵ *The White Peacock* became the manifestation of Lawrence's self, disclosing his fundamental feelings and beliefs. Readers of Lawrence should not therefore discount the novel as a poor piece of writing. Rather, it should be appreciated for its presentation of Lawrence's philosophy, revealingly raw.

The White Peacock (Lawrence's first novel, begun at the age of twenty) can be considered a rough draft of his last novel, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (finished at the age

³ John Worthen, introduction, *The White Peacock*, by D. H. Lawrence (Great Britain: Cox & Wyman, Ltd., 1987) 32.

⁴ D. H. Lawrence, "Autobiographical Sketch," from *Assorted Articles*, (Secker, 1930), p. 149, as cited in John Worthen, introduction, pp. 12-13, op. cit.

⁵ Jessie Chambers, *D. H. Lawrence: A Personal Record* by E. T. (Cambridge University Press, 1980) p. 103, as cited in John Worthen, introduction, p. 12, op. cit.

of forty-three). The two novels essay (dare I say) *exactly* the same themes, with major differences merely in tone and refinement. After rereading *The White Peacock* in 1924 for the first time since 1910, Lawrence commented:

It seemed strange and far off as if written by somebody else. I wondered how I could have thought of some of the things or how I could have written them. And then I'd come on something that showed I may have changed in style or form, but I haven't changed fundamentally.⁶

* * * *

The White Peacock opens with Cyril watching "shadowy fish" in the "gloom of the mill-pond" amidst trees "too dark and sober to dally with the sun."⁷ *Lady*

Chatterley's Lover opens similarly but conspicuously, stating: "Ours is essentially a tragic age" (LCL, p. 5). What is this tragedy that Lawrence perceives? What are these "things gone dead" from which Lawrence would "lead our sympathy away in recoil"?

The character of Clifford in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is, in a sense, the personification of the cataclysm. In his *Apropos* of the novel, Lawrence describes Clifford's character as

purely a personality, having lost entirely all connection with his fellow-men and women . . . All warmth is gone entirely, . . . He is a pure product of our civilization, but he is the death of the great humanity of the world. He is kind by rule, but he does not know what warm sympathy means. (*Apropos*, pp. 93-94)

Clifford represents the whole of society and its self-inflicted demise. Modern culture

⁶ Edward Nehls, *D. H. Lawrence: A Composite Biography*, 3 vols. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1957-9), Vol. II, p. 116, as cited in John Worthen, introduction, p. 32, op. cit.

⁷ D. H. Lawrence, *The White Peacock*, ed. Alan Newton (Great Britain: Cox & Wyman, Ltd., 1987) 41.

produces polite individuals, one after another, who have no idea how to connect with each other (or with anything, for that matter) intimately -- spiritually or physically. And this enislement, for Lawrence, is the deadly disease of society.

This illness finds its roots in the evolution of society. Though humans were once closely tied to nature, to its rhythms, and to their own bodies through lifestyle, beliefs, and simple necessity, movements such as the Enlightenment, Rationalism, Industrialism, and above all Christianity have glorified the mind at the expense of the body. Thus, for example, thought takes precedence over action, talk over touch, and "progress" over aesthetic beauty.⁸ While such an emphasis encourages the development of our uniquely human qualities, it simultaneously ignores our basic needs. We may be thinking animals, but we are nevertheless animals at our fundamental level. We must meet the needs of our bodies (including touch by other individuals, by the sun, by the earth, etc.) and of our souls (including spiritual union with fellow humans, harmony with our surroundings, and peace of the soul). The mind and the body *should* be viewed as equally essential halves of the whole human being. But because society has given the needs of the mind precedence over those of the body and soul, individuals suffer and a re-balancing becomes imperative.

In both *The White Peacock* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Lawrence addresses the

⁸ Some examples:

1. Thought vanquishing action: "the young intellectuals of the day . . . all believed in the life of the mind. What you did apart from that was your private affair, and didn't much matter" (LCL, p. 30).
2. Talk replacing touch: [Clifford and Connie] "talked and wrestled in the throes of composition, and felt as if something were happening, really happening, really in the void. . . . And thus far it was a life: in the void. For the rest it was non-existence. . . . No substance to her or anything. . . . no touch, no contact!" (LCL, p. 18).
3. Progress effacing aesthetic beauty: The Prince of Wales [ostensibly the heir to the throne] states, "'If there were coal under Sandringham, I would open a mine on the lawns, and think it first-rate landscape gardening. Oh, I am quite willing to exchange roe-deer for colliers, at the price.'" But then, the Prince had perhaps an exaggerated idea of the beauty of money, and the blessings of industrialism" (LCL, p. 147).

issue through the depiction of characters as "types." He presents two basic types: the thinking, cerebral temperament, and the doing, sensual disposition -- or, the mental vs. the physical. The intellectual/cerebral prototype represents the brain, loquaciousness, and a lack of sexuality; the indoors and socially-, culturally-, industrially-oriented things; self-will, dependence, dishonesty with self, and an imposing personality; all leading to a sense of discontent, unhappiness, and hopelessness. On the other hand, the sensual, carnal prototype represents the body, passion, touch, and sexuality; the natural environment, including an animal-like instinctiveness; selflessness, independence, honesty, and an "unconscious awareness" of the feelings of others; all leading to a sense of peace, contentment, happiness, spirituality, and hope.

Although Lawrence reacts passionately against the disproportional emphasis of one vital human element over another, he seemingly becomes guilty of the same crime. He places the physical type in a more favorable light, however, as a counter-balancing tactic. He views overcompensation as a necessary stratagem in the crusade to regain balance.

Lawrence introduces this tragedy of modern culture to his readers via the protagonist of *The White Peacock*. George (a farmer, thereby in close communion with nature) lives a peaceful, "unconscious" existence until Lettie (a cerebral type) imposes her philosophy upon him, thus wakening him to life "in the mind." As a result, George's health, physical and emotional, deteriorates steadily from this point until his untimely death due to alcoholism (the addiction being a futile attempt to

regain his original unconscious state). George's character embodies the problems facing modern society and prophetically warns of inevitable ruin unless we reclaim life "in the body."

If *The White Peacock* depicts the disease of society, the domination of mind over body, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* portrays the cure. Connie, an intellectual type (and symbolically tied to society through her title) becomes disillusioned with the life of the mind. The gamekeeper of the estate (significantly a *protector* of nature) becomes her "savior" by teaching her the virtues of the life of the body, thereby bringing peace, fulfillment, and balance into her life. The earlier novel defines the problem and issues a warning; the later novel proposes a solution, because "We've got to live, no matter how many skies have fallen" (LCL, p. 5).

George

George in *The White Peacock* serves as a prime example of Lawrence's physical type. Cyril describes him as "stoutly built, brown eyed, with a naturally fair skin burned dark and freckled in patches" (WP, p. 42). His natural, earth-toned coloring suggests a predilection for the outdoors. His sturdy build equips him for physical labor. Thus it follows that he is a farmer, an occupation blending manual labor and nature. He lives in harmony with his own body and with the surrounding natural element.

In the opening chapter, George comes upon his friend Cyril who sits *thinking* about the nature around him, *brooding* over changes in the landscape since the "old days." George asks, "'Well, what is there to look at?" (WP, p. 42), suggesting a very different temperament from that of the contemplative Cyril. Recognizing the difference, Cyril remarks good-naturedly, "'I shall laugh when somebody jerks you awake.'" The idea that George lives in some state of unconsciousness becomes strengthened by his subsequent gestures: "He smiled comfortably and put his hands over his eyes because of the light." He doesn't care to see what a thinking person sees, and thus remains peacefully happy.

As George resides in an unconscious state and is attuned to nature, it comes as no surprise that he is referred to in bestial terms. Lettie calls George her "Taurus" (WP, p. 72), labelling him (in her cerebral eyes) as big, brutish, and implicitly stupid. And Leslie remarks while watching George callously dig a thorn from his hand, "'What a

hide you must have'" (WP, p. 94). George's affiliation with the bestial world becomes evident also in his concern for the well-being of animals. He is careful to move a nest of peewits' eggs as he ploughs (WP, p. 245), and he maneuvers the bull-calf by acting as its surrogate mother, as it were. It follows, "straddling behind him, its neck stuck out, sucking zealously at his middle finger" (WP, p. 304).

George's carnal nature reveals itself also in his thought-process, which seems to consist more of sensations than thoughts. After performing a piece on the piano, Lettie asks George how it made him feel and what he had thought about during the music. He ponders deeply over what should seemingly be a simple answer, and "trying to tell the exact truth" states, "'I thought how pretty your hands are -- and what they are like to touch -- and I thought it was a new experience to feel somebody's hair tickling my cheek'" (WP, p. 58). He does not attempt to produce a clever answer (he most likely does not even conceive of the possibility). He thinks at a basic, honest level, almost like a child. And, as a child, he experiences the world through sensations, not meditations.

George interprets the world through a language he understands. For example, he explores love and sexuality in terms of nature. He mentions to Cyril, "'Do you know, when I was stooking up [sic], lifting the sheaves, it felt like having your arm round a girl'" (WP, p. 114). To a sensual disposition such as his, the line between nature and sex is a fine one, if it exists at all. Later, George asks Cyril, "'Can you smell violets?'" Cyril cannot, but George, his physical senses keen, soon discovers the source of the scent:

He sat down and picked three flowers, and held them to his nostrils, and inhaled their fragrance. Then he put them to his mouth, and [Cyril] saw his strong white teeth crush them. He chewed them for a while without speaking; then he spat them out and gathered more.

'They remind me of [Lettie] too,' he said. (WP, p. 224)

George uses not merely one, but several senses, thereby throwing himself more passionately into his sensual experience (note that he does not interrupt the feeling with speech). He mingles nature with sensuality and sexuality. For George, sex is as natural and as beautiful as a violet. As he is better acquainted with nature and sensuality than most, his attitude toward sex should be heeded.

From her cerebral viewpoint, Lettie perceives the beauty of life in the physical realm. She compares George's work in the fields to her indoor existence and says, "'I wish I could work here'" (WP, p. 94). Despite his unconscious state, George is also, in his own sensual way, quite aware of the pleasant existence that he enjoys:

'You feel so fine,' he said, pushing his hand through his open shirt front, and gently rubbing the muscles of his side. 'It's a pleasure to work or to stand still. It's a pleasure to yourself -- your own physique.' (WP, p. 94)

Lettie discerns the promise of bloom, growth and fruition within such an unconscious, physical existence: "She looked at him, full at his physical beauty, as if he were some great firm bud of life" (WP, p. 94).

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George and Lettie hold a strong yet peculiar attraction for each other. They reside

at opposite ends of the spectrum: While he serves as a prime example of the physical realm, she embodies the mental. Although she yearns for the beauty and peace of his physical sphere, she continually teases and taunts George about his carnal way of life, assuming that life in the body is (though preferable in many ways) generally inferior to the life of the mind. Lettie talks circles around George. Her loquacity, an unsavory characteristic of the mental type, is caricatured as she bursts into a "mad clatter of French, speaking high and harshly. The sound was strange and uncomfortable" (WP, p. 74). In the midst of her chatter, she repeatedly accentuates their differences in an attempt to show George the "flaws" of his physical realm, but all that her garrulousness appears to accomplish is to confuse or embarrass him. She accuses George of keeping half his senses asleep, half alive (note the irony). She scolds, "'You are like a stalled ox, food and comfort, no more'" (WP, p. 57). She attempts to exalt her own intellectuality by rudely likening him to an animal (again, a characteristically unintelligent one). And again, as she questions him about the piano piece she declares, "'you're either asleep or stupid'" (WP, p. 58), referring derogatorily to his unconscious state. Unlike George, Lettie cannot simply "live and let be," accepting if not appreciating their differences. Because she falls into the mental category and he into the physical, she experiences a false sense of superiority. She feels therefore impelled to impose her will and her way upon the unfortunate George.

The novel also contrasts George's child-like honesty with Lettie's artifice. While George guilelessly "tells it as it is," Lettie deceptively disguises her true emotions.

As a result, she interacts through confusing mind-games with those around her. For example:

It was Leslie's custom to bring her flowers. As he had not done so this day, she was piqued. He hated the scent and chalky whiteness of geraniums. So she smiled at him as she pinned them into the bosom of her dress, saying: 'They are fine, are they not?' (WP, p. 63)

Although George's interactions with others may seem simplistic and unsophisticated, his utter honesty shines through. His words leave no one guessing, nor do they cause hurt. Lettie, on the other hand, unwittingly turns her cleverness into a negative trait. In the place of honesty, she employs a deceptive stratagem to get what she wants, to the detriment of herself and others.

Interestingly, Lettie seems to deceive herself into believing that she encompasses the best characteristics of both the mental and physical realms, while remaining guiltless of any of the flaws. Her self-righteousness blinds her. She calls George "'The picture of content -- solid, healthy, easy-moving content -- ' . . . 'I shall never fret my fat away,' he said stolidly. 'No -- you and I --'" adds Lettie, "'we are not like Cyril. We do not burn our bodies in our heads'" (WP, p. 147). She does not realize that she praises herself (falsely) for the very trait for which she chastises George. Despite her intellectuality, Lettie seems not to understand those around her, or even (rather, *least* of all) herself.

Whereas Lettie's influence over George confuses and oppresses him, George's influence over Lettie confuses yet *liberates* her. George's passion and sensuality simply overflow, serving to awaken these instinctual feelings buried deep within Lettie. While looking through a book of pictures, they come upon Maurice

Griffenhagen's "Idyll." The image of a sensual, muscular, tanned man dressed in skins, passionately embracing and kissing a voluptuous woman in a field of poppies, functions to shift control of their interaction into George's hands. "'Wouldn't it be fine?' he exclaimed, looking at her with glowing eyes, his teeth showing white in a smile that was not amusement. 'What?' she asked, dropping her head in confusion" (WP, p. 72). It is now her turn to be confused, yet he has spoken hardly anything at all. She *senses* something in and from him -- something that she doesn't quite understand. This "something," this sensation that he was "breathlessly quivering under," is most obviously passion -- the emotion innate within his natural, sensual soul. And, true to his honest, open nature, "he looked up at her now, his eyes wide and vivid with a declaration that made her shrink back as if a flame had leaped towards her face. She bent down her head" (WP, pp. 72-73). To Lettie's cerebral nature, passion appears something fearful, overwhelmingly powerful. She attempts to make conversation, to gain a bit of control, but the intellect becomes submerged by the senses and the "make-belief conversation fell" (WP, p. 73). For a rare moment, they each allow themselves to lapse into this powerful, natural state:

It was a torture to each of them to look thus nakedly at the other, a dazzled, shrinking pain that they forced themselves to undergo for a moment, that they might the moment after tremble with a fierce sensation that filled their veins with a fluid, fiery electricity. (WP, p. 73)

But then Lettie, unaccustomed to this foreign element, "sought almost in a panic, for something to say"(WP, p. 73). She falls back on words to escape the force of passion. It is not until they look away from one another that they can once again make conversation. Thus the reader perceives a kind of power struggle in which the

senses overcome and overwhelm the intellect, where the physical dominates the verbal. And again, as they stand by the bush of mistletoe under a pretense of checking its fruitfulness, they embrace, kiss, and "instead of looking at the berries they looked into each other's eyes; . . . he looked upwards in confusion and said: 'There are plenty of berries.' As a matter of fact there were very few. She too looked up and murmured her assent" (WP, p. 152). Here, speech becomes insignificant in the shadow of touch.

Another example of the physical realm's potency can be seen through the juxtaposition of George and Leslie, Lettie's other interest. Lettie is positioned between Leslie (representing the cerebral sphere) on the one hand, and George (the carnal) on the other. Each male attempts (at least Leslie does) to win her in his own way (George just "is"). In one instance, Lettie and Leslie are talking by the pond and Cyril, a little way off, can hear Leslie's voice "begin to murmur like a flying beetle that comes too near" (WP, p. 100). The sound of his speech is constant, droning, and a bit grating. But down in the yard, George begins to sing and "This interrupted the flight of Leslie's voice, and as the singing came nearer, the hum of the low words ceased" (WP, p. 100). George's spontaneous, heartfelt song drowns out Leslie's irritating utterance. George's carefree, sensual way overpowers Leslie's cerebral manner, and succeeds in getting Lettie's attention.

Although sensuality may get her attention, Lettie still fears and resists the power of physical intimacy. She asks George for help in getting down from the tree bough and offers her hands as the means. "He, mistaking her wish, put his hands under her

arms, and set her gently down" (WP, p. 100). (Not only does this scenario demonstrate George's physical nature, but also his instinctive tenderness -- an important quality which will be discussed below). Lettie's fear of touch becomes negated by George's prevailing sensuality, and she is thus drawn by him into the physical realm.

A dance between George and Lettie again illustrates the magnetic potential of the physical realm when given the chance to operate. George takes charge, leading Lettie through the dance (an activity of the sensual sphere). He is the momentum, as Cyril reports:

her feet began to drag; . . . I could see her lips murmur to him, begging him to stop; . . . at last her feet trailed; he lifted her, clasping her tightly, and danced twice around the room with her thus. Then he fell with a crash on the sofa, pulling her beside him. His eyes glowed like coals; . . . she was quite overcome. (WP, p. 148)

Not only does he lead her through the dance, he literally carries her, suggesting once again the strength of his carnal force, which is ample for two. Afterwards, "he looked up at her from his position on the sofa, with a peculiar glance of triumph, smiling" (WP, p. 149). Such language (she feeling "overcome" and he experiencing a sense of "triumph") implies the aforementioned "power struggle" between the realms, and demonstrates the powerful influence of the sensual realm over the intellectual. And Lettie teasingly refers to him as a "great brute," but "her voice was not as harsh as her words" (WP, p. 149). Although she still uses the same derogatory language when indicating George's physical nature, her tone suggests a developing respect and perhaps a recognition of the virtues of the sensual realm.

* * * *

Agnes D'Arcy, Lettie's friend, presumes of George: "I'm sure he doesn't know what a happy pastoral state he's in" (WP, p. 300) This peaceful lack of consciousness becomes endangered however in the face of Lettie's persistent encroachments. She has experienced the beauty and potency of the sensual realm, but does not give in. She insists on wakening George to the life of the mind.

While again looking at pictures, Lettie commends the way in which a certain artist "sees the mystery and magnificence that envelops us even when we work menially" (WP, p. 71). She continues: "If I hoed in the fields beside you . . . you'd be just that colour in the sunset, . . . and if you looked at the ground you'd find there was a sense of warm gold fire in it" (WP, p. 71). She likens herself to the artist: "I *do* know and I *can* speak" (WP, p. 71). But is this really best, to be conscious of all and to then verbalize everything? She continues to rebuke George vehemently for living in the physical realm: "You are blind; you are only half-born; you are gross with good living and heavy sleeping. . . . Oh, but you make me feel as if I'd like to make you suffer. . . . You have to suffer before you blossom in this life" (WP, p. 71).

Does Lettie understand the things of which she speaks? She accuses George of being blind, but, as noted earlier, her self-superiority obstructs her *own* "vision." She admonishes him for not understanding the significance of his natural surroundings. But he's *out there*, and she's not. She says, "*If* (my italics) I hoed in the fields

beside you,' " -- but she does not. She merely *talks* about it. The human ponderously walking through the forest may *think* he's at one with nature, but the deer that eats, sleeps, and dies in the forest *is* at one with nature. George, having more of the "animal" in him, is part of nature. But Lettie, although she can talk about nature, is not.

George takes all of Lettie's words in. "As he sat listening, his eyes grew wide and his lips were parted, like a child who feels the tale but does not understand the words" (WP, p. 71). Even as he is being chided for his lack of consciousness, he receives her words through feeling, not intellect. Yet this, for George, is the beginning of the end.

Later, George asks Lettie if she doesn't think that the "free kind of life" is best -- indicating by his phrasing that he does. She "explains" to him however that there in the country

you can't live as you like -- . . . You're like a bit out of those coloured marble mosaics in the hall, you have to fit in your own set, fit into your own pattern because you're put there from the first. But you don't want to be like a fixed bit of mosaic -- you want to fuse into life, . . . to have some things burned out of you. (WP, p. 113)

What do these words accomplish? Isn't she asking a satisfied person to be *dissatisfied*? She tells him that in the country "you can't live as you like" promptly after he tells her that *he* thinks it's best. She "corrects" his assumption, stating that he must have "some things burned out" of him. But all that eventually burns out of him (after heeding her advice) is his will to live.

She inflicts this philosophy upon him as they sit in the boughs of a tree picking

apples. The significance of such a setting becomes in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* more fully revealed. In the later novel, Tommy Dukes ("who was more or less Connie's oracle" [LCL, p. 52]) finds a metaphor for the tensions between the mind and the body in the image of a tree. He theorizes, "'While you *live* your life, you are in some way an organic whole with all life. But once you start the mental life you pluck the apple'" (LCL, pp. 35-36). Not only does the metaphor bring to mind an image of decay, but it also carries connotations of the Garden of Eden, thus implying that to pluck the apple, to move from a state of harmony between mind and body to a cerebral existence is a *sin* -- a sin which, as the end of *The White Peacock* affirms, brings death.

After Lettie's lecture, Cyril notices that "There was a painful perplexity in [George's] brow, such as I often perceived afterwards, a sense of something hurting, something he could not understand" (WP, p. 74). Such a change from George's "comfortable" smile at the beginning of the book causes the reader to question the soundness of Lettie's philosophy. George, who had not long ago been at full ease in his life of fieldwork, hearty meals, and sound sleep, now complains of life in the valley of Nethermere. He asks, "What is there to stop here for? . . . everything round you keeps the same, and so you can't change yourself -- . . . And what is there that's worth anything? -- What's worth having in my life?" (WP, p. 113). That the life of which he complains happens to be the dream of many only serves to heighten the pathos of the situation. Lettie has reached out and plucked the apple for him.

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Cyril, a mental type, as evidenced by his contemplative mood at the beginning of the novel, also contributes to George's awakening. Unlike Lettie's, however, Cyril's instruction leads George to enlightenment, not discouragement. Cyril gives an account of their interaction:

I would give him the gist of what I knew of chemistry, and botany, and psychology. Day after day I told him what the professors had told me; of life, of sex and its origins; . . . this autumn fruited the first crop of intimacy between us. I talked a great deal of poetry to him, and of rudimentary physics. He was very good stuff . . . he heard all I had to say with an open mind, and understood the drift of things very rapidly, and quickly made these ideas part of himself. (WP, p. 106)

There are several crucial differences between the way in which Lettie "awakens" George and the way in which Cyril goes about doing so. Cyril shares the knowledge that he has to offer *in George's realm*: they discuss matters of the mental realm as Cyril helps George with his work in the fields. Cyril meets George half-way, whereas Lettie stands her ground, demanding that George cross over to her "side."

Working with George in the fields, Cyril, in turn, tastes of the physical realm. He thereby receives through George the peace of life "in the body." Another example of George's sensual offering occurs when after swimming George takes it upon himself to dry the contemplative Cyril, who, lost in thought, has forgotten to finish the task himself. Cyril describes: "laughing he took hold of me and began to rub me briskly . . . to get a better grip of me, he put his arm around me and pressed me against him. . . . It satisfied in some measure the vague, indecipherable yearning of my soul"

(WP, p. 294). Cyril facilitates the development of George's intellect while George fulfills Cyril's visceral need of touch, resulting in the completion of each individual.

The sharing between Cyril and George leads to intimacy. Through their interaction they are drawn closer together, whereas Lettie's interference with George only tears them further apart. While Lettie's prompting leads George down a path of confusion and loss (and herself into a state of discontent) Cyril recalls how as he and George worked and talked, "Life was full of glamour for us both" (WP, p. 296).

The author juxtaposes Lettie's and Cyril's relationships with George so as to demonstrate the way in which individuals of opposing "types," sensual and intellectual, can not only successfully interact, but can also enjoy the benefits of a more complete, fulfilling experience. The key lies not in the *changing* of one person, but in the *expansion* of each individual.

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George is now almost fully cognizant of the impact created by Lettie's words. He reminds Lettie:

. . . you began it. You played with me and showed me heaps of things -- and those mornings -- when I was binding corn, and when I was gathering the apples, . . . -- I can never forget those mornings -- things will never be the same -- You have awakened my life -- I imagine things that I couldn't have done. (WP, p. 172)

He says that he can never forget those mornings, as if in some way he wishes he could. And implied by his use of the term "awakened" is his awareness of his once

unconscious state, to which opened-eyes will never allow him return. Lettie also realizes, albeit too late, just what an impact her words have made. And her immediate response is appropriately one of apology: "'Ah! I am very sorry, I am so sorry'" (WP, p. 172).

George's statements indicate the confused state of his mind. Concerning their relationship, George tells Lettie of his belief that "'I was only a warmth to you, . . . So you could do without me. But you were like the light to me, and otherwise it was dark and aimless. Aimlessness is horrible'" (WP, p. 385). Such words reflect skewed thoughts. After all, was his life prior to the awakening dark and aimless? It seems just the opposite. Before Lettie's encroachment, his life consisted of work and play under the sun, and of contentment. Feelings of aimlessness came upon him with the intrusion of Lettie and her stream of words.

George is again shown yet more pictures. Cyril introduces him to Aubrey Beardsley's "Atlanta" and the tailpiece to *Salome*. George's present state of bewilderment can be discerned from his reaction: "'I feel like somebody else -- or else really like myself'" (WP, p. 225). His first response to the sensual pictures reveals the profound change that has taken place within him. He no longer dwells in the sensuous realm, evidenced by the fact that sensuous stimulation causes him to feel "like somebody else." He's not sure who he is. He's been emotionally removed from his native element and placed into a completely foreign one. His confusion evolves into a state of lament: "'I hope I shan't wake up to the other things'" (WP, pp. 225-226). And when Cyril asks why not, he replies, "'Oh, I don't know -- only I

only I -- well I'd -- I'd thought about it different -- like some pictures . . . Not all that soft stuff -- plainer'" (WP, pp. 229-230). As he discerns her resolve to remain in the cerebral sphere, disappointment overtakes him. Yet passion carries him forward in his task. He opens up to her and shares his innermost feelings: "'You don't know, Lettie, now the old life's gone, everything -- how I want you -- to set out with -- it's like beginning life'" (WP, p. 231). Vulnerably, he admits his need of her and speaks of commencement, implying that true life requires a harmony of both realms. He wants her to come with him to a farm in Canada, a life closer to nature, a plunge into the physical domain. However, he feels that she, as a mental type, is an integral part of this new life. This suggests a sharing, an expansion of each individual through the intimate combination of two halves, such as Cyril and George had achieved.

George's procrastination, however, has eliminated the possibility of such fulfillment. Lettie is now engaged to Leslie and has thereby ruled out life in the physical sphere. She remonstrates, "'Look at me now, and say if it's not impossible - - a farmer's wife -- with you in Canada'" (WP, p.231). The phrase "'Look at me *now*'" implicates hesitation as the culprit. There had been a time when the union of George and Lettie seemed promising. Lettie had been drawn to the sensuality within George, but George did not open himself up and share his feelings and desires. Cyril explains the mistake to George: "'You should have insisted and made your own destiny . . . You should have had the courage to risk yourself'" (WP, pp. 262-263). In order to achieve the peace of intimacy with another, one must have the bravery to

endure vulnerability. And George did not, until it was too late. Lettie explains to George, "'The threads of my life were untwined; . . . and you didn't put out your hand to take them and twist them up into the chord with yours. Now another has caught them up'" (WP, p. 285).

As George realizes the magnitude of his mistake, he becomes affected physically, in accordance with his carnal nature. Cyril notices, "He was very pale, and when he was pale, the tan on his skin looked sickly" (WP, p. 263). His tan, a manifestation of his physical nature, is now out of place. George is now in a sense deprived of both realms. As the realization of his loss sinks in, he gets worse. He becomes violently sick to his stomach and afterwards Cyril marvels over the way in which "his strength had gone, and his splendid physique seemed shrunken; he walked weakly" (WP, p. 287). George then falls into a deep sleep in the barn. But this symbolic attempt to return to the physical realm (the image of the barn suggesting an animal-like harmony with nature and sleep signifying a return to the peaceful unconscious state) proves only temporary.

Later, as George attempts to communicate his suffering to Lettie, she avoids any personal attribution, busying herself by combing his hair. She tries to lure him to a much lighter topic, commanding him to "'Stand up and look what a fine parting I have made in your hair'" (WP, p. 385). She does not realize, however, the symbolism which this simple act reveals: George must now face the "parting" which Lettie has made in his life. He must acknowledge the gap between his former physical state and his new mental one, for between the two he remains -- at a loss.

Despair overtakes George and he becomes bitter. When asked about his plans for Canada, he replies, "'I'm not going. What should I go for? There's nothing at the end of it only a long life; . . . it's work and sleep and comfort, -- half a life; . . . I might as well be Flower, the mare'" (WP, p. 253). In his new, awakened state he views his former dream as unfulfilling. He lacks the means (Lettie and the balance of the mental realm) however to make it complete.

Teasingly, Alice likens Lettie, Meg, and herself to the three goddesses and George to Paris. When asked to hand over the apple, he replies, "'I haven't got any apple -- I've eaten mine'" (WP, p. 244). In his present state he feels he has nothing left to offer, and no means by which to choose his fate. He has plucked the apple, thus separating himself from life of the body, but no longer has the apple or life of the mind. His utter despondancy becomes evident as he admits to Cyril, "'I feel as if I never shall go back -- to the land'" (WP, p. 348).

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Following his rude awakening into the "thinking realm" succeeded by rejection from Lettie, George, in a *sense*, makes a determined turn-around. He begins this new burst of "life" by attempting to rectify his biggest flaw: cowardice. Now, "His one idea was to do the thing that he was half-afraid to do. His passion -- and it was almost intoxication -- was to dare to play with life" (WP, p.321). Whereas his former passion was the attainment of Lettie, his new passion has become the

conquering of that which has denied him of her. His new passion simply consumes him, revealing the magnitude of damage inflicted upon his inner being. His desire to conquer fear is, however, a futile one, as really cowardice had defeated him long before he resolved to battle it.

Drink, on the other hand, proves at least a temporary solution. He tells Cyril, "you can always have a Johnny Walker. That's the best of courting at the Ram Inn" (WP, p. 267). Alcohol creates an illusion for George, with which he can at least try to shield himself from reality. As he yields to his craving, Cyril chides him, hinting at moderation. "'What for!' [George] replied, indulging himself like a spoiled child and laughing" (WP, p. 202). Through alcohol, he can recapture a bit of the childlike lightheartedness of his former unconscious state. Cyril describes a drunkenly inert George: "He looked like a tired boy, asleep" (WP, p.205). Not only can George numb his conscious state, receding into a childlike state of mind, he can actually escape it (temporarily) through alcohol-induced slumber. Drink serves as George's most effective buffer against cognizance of his wretched state.

But alcohol is not nearly enough. He must surround himself with "quick fixes" to deaden the pain. And Meg is unfortunately one of these. Had George met and pursued Meg while yet reposing in his previous unawakened state, perhaps all would have been fine. She also belongs to the sensual realm. Cyril illustrates:

I think I have never seen a woman who had more physical charm; there was a voluptuous fascination in her every outline and movement; one never listened to the words that came from her lips, one watched the ripe motion of those red fruits. (WP, p. 200)

Whereas Lettie's words proved dangerously poignant, Meg's are simply meaningless.

Meg is the epitome of sheer physicality, her every movement and the red of her lips signalling potential passion. Yet George pursues her only *after* his courtship with Lettie has failed. He had unwittingly wanted a partner from the mental realm (a union which, handled properly, would bring balance) but feels he must now settle for the physical type. For George, Meg is merely "easy and lovely. [He] can have her without trembling" (WP, p. 312). In other words, she fires no passion in him, as did Lettie.

Circumstances between George and Meg are all right, initially. He finds her "quaint and naive" and speaks of how she "amused him and delighted him" (WP, p. 325). But she is part of the realm from which George has been alienated, and while George speaks of her as being "quite uneducated, and such fun," Cyril detects a disparity: "I looked at him as he sounded this note. . . . There was in him something of the prig. I did not like his amused indulgence of his wife" (WP, p. 326). Instead of appreciating and respecting that which the physical realm offers, George presumes to give himself airs (as did Lettie) as somehow superior in his wakened state. Commenting on the subsequent discontent within their marriage, Cyril summarizes, "Thus their natures contradicted one another" (WP, p.379). And not only does their discongruity serve to amplify George's misery, it simultaneously kills Meg's virtue: her powerful sensuality. Just as George becomes deprived of life in the body as a result of ill-balanced interaction with the cerebral world, Meg suffers similar consequences: she becomes dissatisfied and unhappy as a result of the change in George. Her discontent manifests itself physically in the loss of her sensual charm as

she grows stouter throughout the novel.

George finds another distraction in horses. The narrator juxtaposes Lettie's recession into a "small indoor existence with artificial light and padded upholstery" (an environment indicative of the mental life) with George's flourishing success in horse-dealing (WP, p.371). His horse-dealing then functions as an attempt to tie himself back to the natural, animal-like existence he once enjoyed. He handles the horses in a very physical manner, "laying his hand upon them, running over their limbs"(WP, p. 350), a gesture reminiscent of his earlier tenderness with the animals of Strelley Mill. And this particular preoccupation gives George a sense of power: "They were quiet, yet responsive; he was their master and owner. This gave him real pleasure" (WP, p. 350). They provide George with perhaps the only sense of control over his troubled life. It is thus no surprise then that the "glossy, restless animals interested him more than anything" (WP, p. 350).

At the same time, however, things associated with his horse-dealing cause frustration and disjunction in his mind. For instance, when George and Tom Mayhew (the man from whom George learned to deal horses) come to London on business, they meet Cyril. While Cyril represents the cerebral realm, Mayhew represents the opposite: he's a "remarkably handsome, well-built man" (WP, p. 360) who works with animals for a living. Cyril and Mayhew do not blend well. Cyril reports, "Later, he told George I was a damned parson. On the other hand, I was content to look at his rather vulgar beauty . . . and to listen to his rather ineffectual talk, but I could find absolutely no response" (WP, p. 360). Cyril continues, pointing out the

way in which "George was go-between. To me he was cautious and rather deferential, to Mayhew he was careless, and his attitude was tinged with contempt" (WP, p. 360). This incident creates a manifest example of the dilemma within George. Although horse-dealing and the companionship of Tom Mayhew feel comfortable and natural to George, he can no longer receive full satisfaction from the things of the physical realm. Lettie (a representative of culture) introduces George to the mental realm under the assumption that the life of the mind transcends the life of the body, thus causing him to lose respect for the realm to which he natively belongs (hence his contemptuous attitude toward Mayhew in the presence of Cyril). And although he holds great respect for the things of the cerebral sphere (indicated by his deferential manner towards Cyril), he cannot be a part of that domain.

As a result of the excursion to London, during which he encounters both Lettie and the squalor of the poor, George discovers yet another diversion. He develops a "wild devotion to the cause of the downtrodden" (WP, p.372). The fact that Lettie and the poor of London are paralleled as George's two major concerns on the trip leads the reader to the notion that his preoccupation with the needy serves simply as a deflection of devotion. On the podium, "He spoke *passionately* [my italics] of the monstrous denial of life to the many by the fortunate few. He talked at Lettie most flagrantly" (WP, p. 375). His passion has been transferred, at least temporarily, from the desire for Lettie to the cause of the poor. Yet it is not difficult to see the way in which his fervor is "indirectly directed" at Lettie. This passion for Lettie becomes especially apparent in George's "frightful battles" with Leslie (the man who

won Lettie) over the nationalization of industries. (Note his increasing use of words as opposed to his predominant use of body language, previously.) Lettie writes to Cyril on the way in which "'George is rather more than a match for Leslie, which, in his secret heart, makes our friend gloriously proud'" (WP, p. 376). He distracts himself from his initial loss by winning smaller, rather ineffectual battles.

Yet underneath this pseudo-socialist life, George continues to die inside. As Connie realizes in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, England was producing "a new race of mankind, over-conscious in the money and social and political side, on the spontaneous, intuitive side dead, but dead" (LCL, p. 143). George can be considered a micro-study of the social phenomenon that Connie ponders: while he remained yet in his unconscious, sensual state, he was teeming with spontaneity (for example, when Emily suggests a dance, George "suddenly sat straight and got up: 'Come on!' he said. He kicked off his slippers, regardless of the holes in his stocking feet, and put away the chairs" [WP, p. 148]). Unfortunately he has transformed into exactly that of which Connie complains: an individual over-conscious (a problem in itself) in the money (George writes to Cyril, "'Last week I made over five pounds clear, . . . and yet now I'm as restless and discontented as I can be'" [WP, p. 340]) social and political side (his overzealous concern for the poor and with the nationalization of industries). George's original sensual nature has been eclipsed by the prevailing social standard: that matters of culture and the intellect take precedence over those of the body and emotions, and should therefore be pursued. But because these culturally-correct concerns are foreign to George's nature, his pursuance of them

leaves his true self neglected, and he will thus spiritually die.

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Just prior to George's "turn-around," he unwittingly prophesies his own fate. He creates a metaphor for his future out of the image of a sycamore, telling Cyril, "'When . . . we are left from here, I shall feel like that, as if my leading shoot were broken off. You see, the tree is spoiled. Yet how it went on growing. I believe I shall grow faster. I can remember the bright red stalks of the leaves as [father] broke them off from the bough'" (WP, p. 295). The poignancy of his choice of metaphor becomes clear (at least to the reader, if not to George) when you consider his original natural state. He was, in a sense, living a whole, complete, organic life until the "awakening" severed his life into two domains. Like the sycamore, he does "grow" faster, but it's an unnatural, compensatory growth (namely, his "quick fixes"). His original sensuality remains intact (the tree) but it is now separated from his mind (the lead shoot). The lead shoot becomes stripped of its "bright red stalks of leaves," just as his mind becomes deprived of the peaceful unity with passion and *living*.

But Lettie, perhaps also unwittingly, better captures the truth of George's situation in her knowledge of the elm tree. She explains, "'you'd think it's in full leaf, wouldn't you? Do you know why it's so prolific? . . . it is dying, so it puts out all its strength and loads its boughs with the last fruit. It'll be dead next year'" (WP, p. 279).

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Early in the novel, Lettie lectures George: "'You have to suffer before you blossom in this life. When death is just touching a plant, it forces it into a passion of flowering'" (WP, p. 71). This is George's experience, yet it is not to be desired, as Lettie supposes. He does not blossom or flower. He dies. This seems to suggest that he was already in bloom in his sensual, incognizant realm. When death (the intrusion of the conscious life) touches his "tree" (the peace of the unconscious life) he, almost in a panic, scrambles for "something" -- what it is he does not know -- before he inevitably withers and dies.

George writes to Cyril, "'I seem eager for something, but I don't know what it is. Sometimes I wonder where I am going'" (WP, p. 340). His words hint at an awareness of his situation. Can he, consciously or unconsciously, sense death looming? If so, he's looking for a life preserver, but knows not where to turn. Drink helps to mask his problem temporarily, but obviously poses no permanent solution. And Meg, rather than keeping him afloat, sinks with him. She degenerates from a woman with utmost physical charm and a "voluptuous fascination in her every outline and movement" to a nagging, complaining wife with an "imperious" voice, grown stouter, and seeming to "dominate everything." Horse-dealing serves to give him a sense of control, but working once again within the physical realm eventually only emphasizes the incongruity of his life. His devotion to politics proves to be only a psychological surrogate, an avoidance tactic, for his underlying dilemma. And even

Lettie, the focus of his passion, who near the end of the novel seems to George at first "with her quick chatter . . . wonderful in her culture and facility" (WP, p. 332) becomes to him not much more than "so much unreasonable rustling of pieces of paper" (WP, p. 364).

George discovers each potential solution to be only an illusion, and eventually ends up where he began, with the most deadly substitute of all: alcohol. His utter disillusion and despair become most apparent when George, in a drunken state, shares with Cyril, "'there's nothing I want to do, and nowhere I want to go, and nobody I want to be near. Then you feel so rottenly lonely, Cyril. You feel awful, like a vacuum'" (WP, p. 368). In his despondency, he begins to gain a better understanding of himself. Concerning the evasive "something" he theorizes, "'I wanted something that would ha' made me grow fierce. That's why I wanted Lettie - I think'" (WP, p. 368). He never achieves his "something;" the balance between the physical and mental spheres eludes him. He achieves only a better understanding of himself and his fate: he observes, "'Is'll rot'" (WP, p. 368).

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Just as George's initial awakening evokes pain and confusion in his life, his second awakening, the full realization of his tragic state, procures his demise. It is this second recognition that he cannot bear, so he drinks in order to evade it. It is the alcohol, however, that kills his physical body. Thus indirectly his cognizance

destroys his corpus -- the mental overcomes and eliminates the physical. And the effects are pathetic. George, who earlier in the novel is described as eating "industriously," while frequently "recharging his plate," now cannot even eat. He sits at the table watching the other men eat largely: "The sight of their grand satisfaction, amounting almost to gusto, sickened him" (WP, p. 407). The body that Cyril once described as "well proportioned, and naturally of handsome physique, heavily limbed" (WP, p. 294), could now be mistaken for a corpse. Cyril notes, "His hand as I shook it was flaccid and chill" (WP, p. 391), and "his face was discoloured, and rather bloated, his nose swollen. . . . His arms seemed thin, and he had bellied, and was bowed and unsightly (WP, pp. 405-406). Death is not only near, but circling him. The eyes that formerly glowed with passion have become "heavy and seemed to recoil in the agony of shame" (WP, p. 397). And the previously sensual George who had little use for palaver, speaking chiefly through his eyes and body, has become even worse than Lettie with her "unreasonable rustling of pieces of paper" and her social evenings of "bubble-blowing." Cyril dubs George's new mode of communication a "harsh, almost imbecile loquacity" (WP, p. 408).

Alice indicates that George's present condition is even worse than death. She admits, "'I wished our Georgie dead; I do now, also, I wish we only had to remember him'" (WP, p. 401). To Cyril, however, he seems already dead:

He looked and sounded, so worthless Like a tree that is falling, going soft and pale and rotten, clammy with small fungi, he stood leaning against the gate, while the dim afternoon drifted with a flow of thick sweet sunshine past him, not touching him. (WP, p. 409)

His peaceful carnal state has been killed and left to rot. The sun, the most powerful

symbol of nature, which at one time embraced George daily, does not, cannot recognize him now. There is simply nothing left to which the natural, physical realm can relate.

The example of George demonstrates the way in which the mental realm of culture and the intellect, when allowed to dominate, can overcome and even eliminate the physical realm of the individual's senses and emotions. Such a phenomenon leaves society unbalanced. Its individuals become over-developed in one aspect of their humanity, getting in a sense beyond themselves intellectually, financially, or politically, while remaining unfulfilled in the other, losing touch with the natural world and their own bodies and spirits, resulting in a sense of loss. Such a state of malady cries out for a remedy. . . .

Connie

Connie enters adulthood as a product of modern culture. As she and Hilda attend school at Dresden, they meet young men and fall in young love. It is not, however the thrill of first kisses and first touches that interests them: "It was the talk that mattered supremely: the impassioned interchange of talk." They do not offer their virginity to the boys who make them blush or tremble, rather,

they had given the gift of themselves, each to the youth with whom she had the most subtle and intimate arguments. The arguments, the discussions were the great thing: the love-making and connection were only a sort of primitive reversion and a bit of an anti-climax. (LCL, p. 7)

First sex is an anti-climax, then later in their experience its status degenerates to "accident." It's not only the talk that matters, however: "The beautiful pure freedom of a woman was infinitely more wonderful than any sexual love" (LCL, p. 7). Hence thought, talk, and free will prevail in the sisters' minds over intimate physical contact. Like Lettie, they subscribe to the social standard set before them.

This attitude affects their opinion of males. In their minds, "men lagged so far behind women in the matter. They insisted on the sex thing like dogs" (LCL, p. 7). Connie and Hilda first label men with the baseness of animals, and then charge them with a childish disgruntlement: "A man was like a child with his appetites. A woman had to yield to him what he wanted, or like a child he would probably turn nasty and flounce away" (LCL, p. 7). Because they've placed the mind so far over the body, men with healthy, natural desires become, for the sisters, base and

immature.

Yet at the same time, Connie and Hilda feel threatened by this other "species":

In the actual sex-thrill within the body, the sisters nearly succumbed to the strange male power. But quickly they recovered themselves, took the sex-thrill as a sensation, and remained free. Whereas the men, in gratitude to the women for the sex-experience, let their souls go out to her. (LCL, p. 9)

The language makes it clear that the sisters struggle to preserve an unnatural resistance, while the men allow themselves to do that which comes naturally.

The sisters *think* their way into opposition with men. They "discover" that

A woman could take a man without really giving herself away. Certainly she could take him without giving herself into his power. Rather she could use this sex thing to have power over him. . . . she could prolong the connection and achieve her orgasm . . . while he was merely her tool. (LCL, p. 7)

Connie and Hilda have turned sexuality into a virtual war, with one side "winning" and one side "losing." But what does all this talk and "freedom" (freedom being in this case merely an euphemism for self-will) amount to? The reader learns that "Before Christmas of 1914, both their German young men were dead: whereupon the sisters wept, and loved the young men passionately, but underneath forgot them" (LCL, p. 9). Connie and Hilda achieve no real connection with their men because they don't *allow it to be*. Thus, any potential meaning, any possible significance between themselves and their lovers, becomes impossible. Their "passion" is an illusion which they soon forget because it is a passion misplaced, a passion "in the mind."

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Soon after Connie and Clifford marry, he takes up writing, and Connie assists. "He talked everything over with her monotonously, insistently, persistently" and "at first she was thrilled" (LCL, p. 16). She seemingly enjoys the life of the mind. Accordingly, she enjoys listening to the "intellectual" discussions of Clifford's circle of friends, also. They discuss a myriad of issues, while Connie listens silently. (Note the fact that they talk, but she listens, suggesting that Connie is perhaps not innately the mental "type.") In one particular discussion she hears their views on sex. Charles May, a member of the circle, inquires, "We're free to talk to anybody; so why shouldn't we be free to make love to any woman who inclines us that way?" (LCL, p. 31). Here, sex becomes just one more form of communication; nothing more, nothing less. Connie also hears the opinion of Hammond:

We don't want to follow a man into the W. C., so why should we want to follow him into bed with a woman? And therein lies the problem. If we took no more notice of the one thing than the other, there'd be no problem. (LCL, p. 30)

Sexual intercourse is thus compared with the excrement function: a fact of life that must be dealt with. It is a matter of no great importance, to be kept (almost shamefully) private. These "culturally correct" intellectuals seemingly have no respect for natural physical intimacy. They have pushed so far into the mental realm that sex has lost its beauty and become not much more than a task.

Although Connie has an "immense respect for thought," she begins to feel that "there was a cat, and it wouldn't jump" (LCL, p. 34). She senses something lacking in all their talk. In fact, she begins to suspect their thought as being nothing *but* talk:

"Clifford's mental life and hers gradually began to feel like nothingness. . . . It was words, just so many words" (LCL, p. 47).

Her dissatisfaction begins to manifest itself physically (as did George's) -- a clue that Connie has "sensual potential": "exasperation and irritation had got hold of her lower body" (LCL, p. 70). Another suggestion of a latent sensuality within Connie can be detected simply from the description of her physique: she's a "country-looking girl" -- thus linked physically to the natural environment -- and appears "a little old-fashioned and 'womanly.' She was not a 'little pilchard sort of fish,' like a boy, with a boy's flat breast and little buttocks" (LCL, p. 18). She's full-figured, just as the sensual George is "stoutly built."

Although she has a rounded, robust, "womanly" shape, she looks at her naked form in the mirror and thinks: "what a frail, easily hurt, rather pathetic thing a human body is, naked; somehow a little unfinished, incomplete!" (LCL, p. 65). She's balked, feeling she lacks something. That "something" must be vital, as without it her body was "flattening and going a little harsh . . . it was a little greyish and sapless . . . opaque" (LCL, p. 65). At this point, ideas begin to connect in her mind and she becomes angry. Her sense that the intellectuals' attitudes toward sex is superficial, combined with the disappointment over her bodily changes, culminates in bitterness. She "burned a cold indignation against Clifford, and his writings and his talk: against all the men of his sort who defrauded a woman even of her own body" (LCL, p. 66). Connie intuits that the life of the mind somehow threatens a vital element within her, and she fights to prevent its ruinous domination.

In retaliation, she delves into a clandestine sexual relationship with Michaelis. However, she enters the liaison on her former terms: he becomes her sexual "tool." Although for a time he had a "curious sense of pride and satisfaction" and she was "terrifically cheerful at Wragby," (LCL, p. 28) this is not the "something" for which she searches. This notion is confirmed when after intercourse Michaelis sneers, "You couldn't go off at the same time as a man, could you? . . . You'd have to run the show" (LCL, p. 51) -- (and the author adds: "Because after all, like so many modern men, he was finished almost before he had begun," implying that the problem is *not* simply one-sided). Ignorant of these feelings in Michaelis (or in any man, for that matter) "this speech was one of the crucial blows of Connie's life" (LCL, p. 51). This had been her attempt to answer the emptiness of life in the mind, and the bottom has simply fallen out. What, then, is left? "She began to be afraid of the ghastly white tombstones. . . . She felt the time not far off when she would be buried there" (LCL, p. 71).

Connie becomes not only uncomfortable with life in the mental realm, but develops a repulsion from it. Her sensual nature is awakened but stifled by all the talk and thought surrounding her. Connie pulls away from Clifford: "Now the mental excitement had worn itself out and collapsed, and she was aware only of the physical aversion" (LCL, p. 90). The language suggests that the founding layer within a human is the carnal nature; thus the cerebral aspect builds (or at least should) out of this physical foundation. Life in the body precedes all else; it is fundamental to the human animal. A union built solely upon mental activity has no base, and will

inevitably, as theirs does, collapse.

Clifford complains about the demise of the "flower of their intimacy," but Connie considers it rather "like an orchid, a bulb stuck parasitic on her tree of life" (LCL, p. 77). As with George, the image of the tree represents Connie's physical existence. She has her roots deep in the natural realm (and now so realizes), and will blossom if provided with the necessary contact: the physical touch of the elements (earth, sun, water, etc.) and intimacy with another human being. Clifford cannot give her that touch. Residing wholly in the mental sphere, he's rendered incapable. She must then move away from Clifford because "the roots and threads of *consciousness* [my italics] in him and her had grown together into a tangled mass, . . . and the plant was dying" (LCL, p. 78).

Following her arboreal affiliation, Connie escapes into the wood. The forest shields her from the mental life at Wragby. On one typical day, "It had rained . . . and the paths were too sodden for Clifford's chair, but Connie would go out" (LCL, p. 61). To Clifford, the rain is merely an obstruction, but for Connie it is part of her sanctuary. The narrative continues, "She went out alone every day now, mostly in the wood, where she was really alone" (LCL, p. 61). She communes with nature, and thereby gains a sense of solitude. She achieves independence in the wood. Connie gravitates to the wood for its embodiment of the physical realm's attributes: she likes the "*inwardness* of the remnant forest, the unspeaking reticence of the old trees" (LCL, p. 61). She desires harmony with her inner nature ("inwardness"), action rather than words ("reticence"), the knowledge of the past ("remnant," "old"),

and rapport with nature ("trees"). By turning from the rational world of the mind, she also displays a yearning for the *mystery* of life, the mystery of a *new* life. To Connie, the wood is full of "the mystery of eggs and half-opened buds" (LCL, p. 114) -- thus, it promises fulfillment of these desires. The wood also awakens a previously dormant passion within her: She was "strangely excited in the wood, and the colour flew in her cheeks, and burned blue in her eyes" (LCL, p. 79).

Although the wood promises fulfillment, it does not readily offer it. Connie may feel free and content and passionate in the wood, but as of yet, "She never really touched the spirit of the wood itself . . . if it had any such nonsensical thing" (LCL, p. 19). Her passage to the sensual realm from the cerebral requires a knowledgeable guide. . . .

* * * *

Oliver Mellors, Clifford's gamekeeper, proves a good candidate for the job. Connie's first encounter with him seems almost mystical. She discreetly watches as he washes, significantly in the back *yard* of his house, located in the *wood*. At first she's overwhelmed by his utter solitude, but she then focuses on "the warm, white flame of a single life, revealing itself in contours that one might touch: a body!" He is to her pure physicality, and this is for Connie a revelation. The narrative continues: "Connie had received the shock of vision in her womb" (LCL, p. 62); she feels the shock symbolically in her womb, the place where life begins. Thus, by

offering Connie "new life," Mellors becomes her "savior."

For example, it is Mellors' solitude, his independence that first attracts Connie, and in turn this highlights Clifford's utter dependence on her. Clifford declares, "'You are the great I-am! as far as life goes. You know that, don't you? I mean, as far as I am concerned. I mean, but for you I am absolutely nothing'" (LCL, p. 104). And Connie's inward reaction is one of baffled questioning: "What man in his senses would say such things to a woman!" (LCL, p. 104). The idea of such an infant-like dependence embodied within a man, particularly her husband, drives her deeper into the wood. As she has taken a fancy to the solitary and natural setting of the gamekeeper's work-shed in the forest, her escape from Wragby usually leads her thus. The shed remains locked, however, and it is just after Clifford's declaration of idolatry that Mellors appears and announces, "'I got you a key made, my Lady!'" (LCL, p. 104). He symbolically holds the key to the prison surrounding her -- the prison of life in the mind.

The key represents that which Connie lacks, that which empowers Mellors to free Connie: knowledge of the physical realm. An obvious indicator of Mellors' sensual nature is his constant companion, Flossie, the dog. Her continual presence suggests an animal-like quality within him -- an instinct for *living* life, for doing instead of thinking and talking. She is also described as standing on guard "almost between her master's legs" (LCL, p. 178) thus symbolizing Mellors' function as defender of sexuality as it exists in the animal world: innocent and natural. Connie senses this animal element within him and is both attracted yet wary: "She was a little afraid of

him, as if he were not quite human" (LCL, p. 213). Her anxiety stems, it seems, from simple fear of the unknown. She has lived in the mental sphere for too long.

Mellors' physical nature includes a curious mix of components. Connie notes several in a glance: He appears "solitary, and intent, like an animal that works alone, but brooding" (LCL, p. 83). As mentioned above, he stands for the importance of solitude and independence, and possesses a certain animal-like attribute, yet he is "brooding." Despite his intensely carnal nature, he is conscious -- in his own way:

Connie felt he noted everything A strange, weary yearning, a dissatisfaction had started in her. Clifford did not notice: those were not things he was aware of. But the stranger knew The keeper . . . watched everything narrowly, missing nothing. (LCL, p. 45)

Clifford is aware concerning intellectual matters, but Mellors is attuned to feelings (as is George). Actually, Mellors encompasses both forms of awareness. Like George, who took pleasure in learning from Cyril, Connie notes the many books in Mellors' room:

There were books about bolshevist Russia, books of travel, a volume about the atom and the electron, another about the composition of the earth's core, and the causes of earthquakes: then a few novels: then three books on India. So! He was a reader after all. (LCL, p. 199)

He may not prattle over issues, as does Clifford and his circle of intellectuals (although he can use the speech of educated people if he so chooses) but he enjoys the acquisition of knowledge. He is aware of the pleasure and benefits that can be derived from learning. This insight combined with his sensual awareness creates a balance in Mellors, a harmony between mind and body. Connie senses Mellor's peace and wisdom: "He was nearly ten years older than she. And he was a thousand

years older in experience, starting from the bottom" (LCL, p. 133). It is this experience, the understanding of *both* realms, sensual and cerebral, that allows for his "all-seeing eyes" (LCL, p. 63). He sees the whole of life, but significantly, he starts "from the bottom." He begins with fundamentals: he lives the natural, sensual life and builds upon that, adding to this base a knowledge of the intellectual realm, resulting in an acute awareness.

In line with his physical nature, he understands the utter importance of unity between humans, also. In fact, he places love above all else. He explains to Connie, "For me it's the core of my life: if I have a right relation with a woman" (LCL, p. 191). (To Mellors, love is not *above* independence; rather, they are equally necessary and dependent upon each other. This interdependence will be discussed in the conclusion of this essay.) Mellors finds serenity in physical union: "It was the moment of pure peace for him, the entry into the body of the woman" (LCL, p. 108).

The sensuality and awareness embodied within Mellors combine to create the perfect guide for Connie's journey towards balance. With his prompting, she can "touch the spirit of the wood"; she will "feel it in her own body, the huge heave of the sap in the massive trees, upwards, up, up to the bud tips, there to push into little flamey oak-leaves, bronze as blood" (LCL, pp. 113-114). *Life*, new life, will flow in her veins, reaching hopefully upwards, resulting in a higher, passionate, organic, vital existence.

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As her unspoken mentor, Mellors begins his subtle instruction of Connie. Being "a thousand years older in experience," he has much to share. And Connie proves a most eager and apt pupil. She has a yearning will-to-know, which opens her senses to his teaching, and to the natural world around her.

She must first overcome the culturally-instilled precepts within her. She does not initially understand how much she must change if she wishes to enter Mellors' world. The scenario concerning Connie's key to the work-shed illustrates this point. She issues her original request for a key more in the form of a demand. She senses his hesitation to relinquish this symbol of his solitude and requests nevertheless, "'Couldn't we get another key?' . . . in her soft voice, that underneath had the ring of a woman determined to get her way" (LCL, p. 83). They then exchange a few curt words on the subject. Her display of self-will only repels him. Perceiving this, "her heart [sinks], she saw how utterly he disliked her when she went against him. . . . She had wakened . . . anger in him, anger against the self-willed female. . . . And she was angry against the self-willed male" (LCL, p. 84). They depart sullenly, in addition to the fact that her demand remains unfulfilled.

The lesson continues when later she becomes engrossed with the hens. For a reason which she does not yet understand, they were the only things in the world that warmed her heart" (LCL, p. 105). They warm her heart on the one hand, yet simultaneously rouse within her a feeling of deficiency, too. She watches the way in

which the hens sit "fluffed out so proud and deep in all the heat of the pondering female blood" and the narrator notes, "This almost broke Connie's heart. She herself was so forlorn and unused, not a female at all" (LCL, p. 105). They have something she does not. But what? She then longs to give them something, "the brooding mothers who neither fed themselves nor drank" (LCL, p. 105). She feels sorry for them at the same time that she envies them. Her emotions are confused. She vocalizes her pity to Mellors: "'There's no self in a sitting hen; she's all in the eggs or the chicks. The poor mother hens'" (LCL, p. 160). But Mellors does not view the situation in the same way. Instead, "A helpless silence fell between the man and the woman" (LCL, p. 160). His silence implies an opinion that selflessness is not a quality to be pitied, rather one to be applauded. He shows her the product of such selflessness: "slowly, softly, with sure gentle fingers, he felt among the old bird's feathers and drew out a faintly peeping chick" (LCL, p. 107). He holds in his hand *new life*, thereby demonstrating that selflessness plays an integral part in this new, balanced existence for which she longs.

Mellors has planted the seeds of knowledge within her, and her will-to-know nourishes these seeds into growth. At the sight of the chick she "crouched to watch in a sort of ecstasy. Life, life! Pure, sparky, fearless new life" (LCL, p. 106). She senses meaning in the confidence of this frail being. And again, upon a neighborly visit she encounters a baby. She again notes the courage of young life. On this she ponders: "so fearless! So fearless because so defenceless. All other people so narrow with fear!" (LCL, p. 122). These new beings have not yet been taught to

fear, and thus carry on with utter confidence. Through these examples she recognizes the need for the courage to accept one's own vulnerability. Human beings are in a sense just as defenceless, and thus the choice lies between maintaining a futile defense, or just accepting our condition and living courageously.

Mellors reinforces this idea through example. Having suffered greatly because of previous relationships, he fears the idea of again loving a woman and thus bringing upon himself "a new cycle of pain and doom" (LCL, p. 111). Yet this fear does not stop him. He boldly takes the initiative and "led her slowly to the hut, not letting go of her till she was inside" (LCL, p. 108). He holds fast to that which he wants, regardless of the potential consequences. Connie inquires later whether he is sorry for his actions and he explains, "'It's life . . . There's no keeping clear. And if you do keep clear you might almost as well die'" (LCL, p. 110). (George's mistake serves as a poignant example.) Mellors stresses the importance of *allowing* oneself to be vulnerable, because acceptance of one's condition allows the individual to move forward and live. To be guarded and fearful is next to death.

Now that Connie has demonstrated a willingness and capacity for understanding, Mellors can bring her into the physical realm. First, Mellors brings out the animal nature that has been buried in Connie. She hesitates, fearing the unknown. He, however, knows her vital need of life in the body and therefore takes charge. In the wood, he directs her: "'Come -- come here!' . . . and she had to lie down there under the boughs of the tree, like an animal" (LCL, p. 124). Although she is initially uncomfortable with this unfamiliar aspect of herself, Connie soon internalizes and

cherishes it. For example, one afternoon at the shed she spontaneously runs, naked, out into the rain. She frolics and dances, dauntless, even ecstatic, bare as a beast in the forest. He joins her, "then suddenly he tipped her up and fell with her on the path, in the roaring silence of the rain, and short and sharp, he took her, short and sharp and finished, like an animal" (LCL, p. 207). They now both possess the animal attribute. An individual outside the physical realm can even sense the animal quality within the pair: Looking out the window at dawn, Mrs. Bolton, the housekeeper, sees Mellors watching the house, and she thinks of him as "a love-sick male dog outside the house where the bitch is" (LCL, p. 135).

Immersed in the sensual sphere, Connie can now look back to her former existence and compare. She notes the way Mellors "[holds] her close, but he [says] nothing. He would never say anything" (LCL, p. 164). What a change from her relationship with Clifford that became nothing but words, "just so many words"! She is still trying to fully comprehend this new way of living, though, living through sensations. She asks Mellors, "'You love me, don't you?' . . . 'Ay, tha knows!' he said. 'But tell me!' she pleaded. 'Ay! Ay! 'asn't ter felt it?'" (LCL, p. 164). She had. Touch and an intangible form of sensory communication replace the hollowness of words. Thus, during their separation at the end of the novel, Mellors writes: "'so many words, because I can't touch you. If I could sleep with my arms around you, the ink would stay in the bottle'" (LCL, pp. 282-283).

As Connie and Clifford became simply minds to each other, so Connie and Mellors, in the sensual realm, become almost pure body to one another. In a

conversation about what it was that drew them together, Connie reveals, "I liked your body," and Mellors replies, "Did you? . . . Well then, we're quits, because I liked yours'" (LCL, p. 158). It is the body that unites them, and even far into their experience, the same holds true. In a conversation on Mellors with her sister, Connie discovers, "I've never called him by any name: nor he me: which is curious when you come to think of it. Unless we say Lady Jane and John Thomas'" (LCL, p. 225).

It must be made clear that this new life into which Connie has entered entails much more than mere sex. It is life in the body in all respects: communion with the natural environment, "doing" instead of thinking and speaking, and meaningful touch, which includes sex. Mellors explains, "Sex is really only touch, the closest of all touch. And it's touch we're afraid of. We're only half-conscious, and half alive'" (LCL, p. 259). Through sex, the most "illustrative" means, he's introduced Connie to a fuller existence. He has awakened that which lay dormant in Connie, thereby balancing her lopsided mental existence with the necessary component of *touch*.

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Connie does not, however, transplant smoothly into the physical realm. She must continually battle her biggest obstacle: self-will. During an intimate moment with Mellors for example, she begins to feel "a new nakedness emerging. And she was half afraid. Half she wished he would not caress her so. He was encompassing her

somehow" (LCL, p. 117). As in her young-womanhood, when she "nearly succumbed to the strange male power," she again resists and "recovers herself." Thus, "when he came into her, with an intensification of relief and consummation that was pure peace to him, still she was waiting. . . . She willed herself into this separateness" (LCL, p. 117). Her earlier attitude still lingers ("A woman could take a man without really giving herself away. Certainly she could take him without giving herself into his power" [LCL, p. 7]). To her, sex remains a kind of power struggle, while to him it is "pure peace." And she's beginning to sense the difference. Despite her ever-assertive will, "the passion for him moved in her bowels" (LCL, p. 126). The passion, with its mystery and primitiveness, proves a much more powerful force than her self-will. And she begins to understand her desire to resist: she fears that capitulation to passion will result in "the loss of herself to herself" (LCL, p. 126). She does not want to be subject to him. She fears, "lest if she adored him too much, then she would lose herself, become effaced . . . a slave, like a savage woman" (LCL, pp. 126-127). What she does not see is that *he* has opened himself already, thereby making himself vulnerable, and if she were to do the same they would become *equals*. Nevertheless,

She had a devil of a self-will in her breast that could have fought the full soft heaving adoration of her womb and crushed it . . . to be passionate like a Baccante, like a Bacchanal fleeing through the woods, to call on Iacchos, the bright phallos that had no independent personality behind it, but was pure god-servant to the woman! The man, the individual, let him not dare intrude. He was but a temple-servant, the bearer and keeper of the bright phallos, her own. (LCL, p. 127)

She desires power and dominion over him, and this self-will therefore creates a lack

of balance between them, a lack of unity. Such an attitude also deprives him of respect. Upon imminent physical intimacy with Mellors, Connie becomes afraid of "his thin, smooth, naked body, that seemed so powerful" (LCL, p. 160). When faced with the potency of male sensuality, she hides in her own self-will, willing herself into separateness, into herself:

. . . something in her spirit stiffened in resistance. . . . Her spirit seemed to look on from the top of her head, and the butting of his haunches seemed ridiculous to her, and the sort of anxiety of his penis to come to its little evacuating crisis seemed farcical. . . . This was divine love! (LCL, pp. 160-161)

She continues to ridicule him inwardly, and he, being "aware," senses something amiss and draws away. His recession, however, stirs a sudden and acute panic within her. She exclaims, "'Don't! Don't go! Don't leave me!' . . . It was from herself she wanted to be saved, from her own inward anger and resistance" (LCL, p. 162). She knows that resistance to unity and the ensuing scorn directed at the male leads not to power and freedom but rather to sullenness and discontent. As he is always willing to put himself aside, he immediately responds, in line with his physical nature, with an embrace:

He took her in his arms again and drew her to him, and suddenly . . . It was gone, the resistance was gone, and she began to melt in a marvellous peace . . . she became infinitely desirable to him, all his blood vessels seemed to scald with intense yet tender desire, for her for the penetrating beauty of her in his arms, passing into his blood. (LCL, p. 162)

He, through the power of both his selflessness and his touch, brings her back into the sensual realm, into serenity, and unity.

She has now secured her existence in the physical realm. She has experienced its

riches, lapsed back into resistance of unity, and once again broken free with a greater understanding and appreciation of life in the body. She can now give her lover the respect he deserves. Whereas before she inwardly jeered at the "poor insignificant, moist little penis" (LCL, p. 161) she now exclaims, "'So proud! . . . And so lordly! . . . A bit terrifying! But lovely really!'" (LCL, p. 196). Just as her irreverence brought vexation upon her, respect brings joy -- because she wants, fundamentally, to respect the male with whom she unites.

Lawrence illustrates this emotional transformation within Connie more vividly via the use of physical example. She has learned that by putting herself aside (spiritually and physically) she can achieve tenfold what she could by imposing her own will:

as he began to move, . . . there awoke in her new strange trills rippling inside her . . . exquisite; . . . she could no longer force her own conclusion with her own activity. This was different, different . . . And they lay and knew nothing, not even of each other. (LCL, pp. 124-125)

She lets go of herself, of her self-will, and experiences ecstasy.

By opening herself to him, allowing herself to be vulnerable (spiritually and physically) Connie undergoes a rebirth, a transformation into her complete self:

she was all open to him and helpless! . . . She dared to let go everything, all herself, and be gone in the flood . . . till suddenly, in a soft, shuddering convulsion, the quick of all her plasm was touched . . . She was gone, she was not, and she was born: a woman. (LCL, pp. 162-163)

She experiences the closest of all touch, the most profound physical intimacy, thereby rounding out her own womanhood. Whereas in her youth she found meaning in "the achievement of an absolute, a perfect, a pure and noble freedom" and in the shaking off of "old and sordid connections and subjections" (LCL, p. 7), she now

understands a new and almost opposite meaning of freedom. Mellors has given her "a sense of freedom and life" (LCL, p. 248) by showing her the utter importance of those things she once abhorred: connections and subjections. Through demonstrations and lessons of selflessness and intimacy, Mellors brings Connie and himself to unity. Connie claims of Mellors' phallus, "'He's mine too. He's not only yours' . . . He laughed. 'Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in kindred love'" (LCL, p. 197).

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One crucial element of the return to life in the body must be emphasized separately. All components of life in the physical realm must carry an ever-present undertone of *tenderness*. Mellors hints at this integral facet of the physical realm early in the novel. The scene at the chicken coop provides an illustrative example of Mellors' innate tenderness: "*slowly, softly*, with sure *gentle* (my italics) fingers, he felt among the old bird's feathers and drew out a faintly peeping chick" (LCL, p. 107). And immediately after, when he perceives a tear fall on Connie's wrist, "compassion flamed in his bowels for her" (LCL, p. 107). Mellors also makes love to Connie in a beautifully tender fashion: "The hand stroked her face softly, softly, with infinite soothing and assurance, and at last there was the soft touch of a kiss on her cheek" (LCL, p. 108). Through example only, Mellors demonstrates the essentiality of tenderness.

Possessing an acute sense of awareness (a result of her move into the sensual sphere) Connie perceives the utter importance of tenderness. She reveals her discovery to Mellors, "'Shall I tell you what you have that other men don't have and that will make the future? . . . It's the courage of your own tenderness' . . . 'Ay!' he said. 'You're right'" (LCL, p. 259). This quality is so significantly an essential part of his philosophy that Mellors pronounces himself its representative: "'I stand for the touch of bodily awareness between human beings,' he said to himself, 'and the touch of tenderness'" (LCL, p. 261). He brings his philosophy down to a more practical, graspable level when he states, "'I believe if men could fuck with warm hearts, and the women take it warm-heartedly, everything would come all right. It's all this cold-hearted fucking that is death and idiocy'" (LCL, p. 193). Thus, tenderness becomes the fundamental component of life in the physical realm; it fulfills the spirit:

he went into her softly, feeling the stream of tenderness flowing in release from his bowels to hers, the bowels of compassion kindled between them . . . And as his seed sprang in her, his soul sprang towards her too, in the creative act that is far more than procreative. (LCL, p. 261)

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Connie succeeds. She has heeded and internalized the teachings of Mellors, her mentor, and is thereby "saved" from the emptiness of life in the mind. An understanding and internalization of life in the body has "lifted a great cloud from her and given her peace" (LCL, p. 109). She has therefore returned to that essence of

primitive humanity, that vital element which modern society has gradually lost: "She was old; millions of years old, she felt" (LCL, p. 109). Through the example of Connie, Lawrence demonstrates the possibility of a modern individual attaining true peace and balance. Thus, the novel ends "with a hopeful heart" (LCL, p. 283).

Conclusion

As Harry T. Moore points out, Mellors' occupation serves as an immensely significant symbol, not only for the book in which he appears, but for the whole of Lawrence's works: "the gamekeeper, within the bounds but on the edges of civilization, is the protector of wildlife. In a sense this is what Lawrence was in his writings."⁹ In one way, Lawrence seems to be even more like the gamekeeper in *The White Peacock*. Against poachers,

Annable defended his game heroically. One man was at home with a leg supposed to be wounded by a fall on the slippery roads -- but really, by a man-trap in the woods. Then Annable caught two men, and they were sentenced to two months' imprisonment. (WP, p. 183)

Annable protects wildlife *offensively*. He actively pursues those that would do harm to that which is natural, beautiful, and vulnerable -- as does Lawrence. Who are the "poachers" from whom Lawrence wishes to protect the "wildlife," the natural beauty of sexuality?

Emerging as a writer just after England's Victorian era, Lawrence became disgusted with the result of stifled sexuality. In his essay on "Pornography and Obscenity," Lawrence complains that society has been "swamped by secret or semi-secret pornography."¹⁰ This unfortunate fact demonstrates the truth of the notion that you can ignore and repress sexuality, but you can't make it go away. It is a natural

⁹ Harry T. Moore, afterword, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, by D. H. Lawrence (New York: New American Library, Inc., 1962) 295.

¹⁰ D. H. Lawrence, "Pornography and Obscenity," *Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D. H. Lawrence*, ed. Edward D. McDonald (Great Britain: Bookprint Limited, 1967) 177

force innate within every human being, and to deny it is only to warp it. Such denial pits the mind *against* the body. Lawrence cites as an extreme example of disharmony between the mind and body such cases as the "venerable" schoolmaster or clergyman assaulting little girls. Lawrence explains that to prevent perversions of sexuality, "It is the mind we have to liberate, to civilize on these points. The mind's terror of the body has probably driven more men mad than ever could be counted" (*Apropos*, p. 19). Lawrence perceives the necessity of a reacquaintance between the mind and body in order to break down the barrier placed between the two by over-zealous puritan ideals. Through his writings, Lawrence attempts to confute the Victorian idea that sex is dirty before society acquiesces to a perversion through mere habit.

Lawrence asserts, "life is only bearable when the mind and the body are in harmony, and there is a natural balance between them, and each has a natural respect for the other" (*Apropos*, p. 22).

Lawrence compares the repressive attitude of the elder, Victorian generation with that of the "roaring twenties" youth. In one sense, he's relieved by the new, radical position: "The intelligent young, thank heaven . . . are rescuing their young nudity from the stuffy, pornographical hole-and-corner underworld of their elders, and they refuse to sneak about the sexual relation" (PO, p. 175). With their open and care-free attitude on sex, the younger generation takes the dirt out of sex, reclaiming its natural and rightful place in healthy human life. Yet, although Lawrence considers this "a very great change for the better," he perceives a new and different mistake. He notes, "the bohemian is 'sex free'; . . . everything that can be revealed is revealed

. . . And then what? They have apparently killed the dirty little secret, but somehow, they have killed everything else, too" (PO, p. 182). Lawrence feels that the purity and wonder of sexuality must not only be protected from the repressive attitude of the elder generation, which results in perversion, but also from the nonchalant attitude of the youth, which produces an irreverence for the sanctity of sexuality. He suggests that perhaps "a little natural awe and proper fear in the face of sex, is more wholesome than the mentality of the young cocktail person who has no respect for anything" (*Apropos*, p. 21).

Nevertheless, the repression of sexuality persists as the largest obstacle barring Lawrence's crusade for the healthy individual psyche, and thus it is predominantly against this which he strives in his writings. He concludes, "There is only one way: Away with the secret! . . . The only way to stop the terrible mental itch about sex is to come out quite simply and naturally in the open with it" (PO, p. 181). Hence, we have *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. In order to publish the rather "open" novel, Lawrence finally turned to an Italian publisher, who, upon receiving a warning by Lawrence concerning the book's contents, replied, "'O! *ma!* but we do it every day!' -- And it seemed, to him, to settle the matter entirely" (*Apropos*, p. 98). Yet, Lawrence had to contend with the fact that in England and America, "Mild little words that rhyme with spit or farce are the height of obscenity" (PO, pp. 170-171). In his *Apropos*, Lawrence calls attention to the stupidity of such a belief. He attributes the irrationality of such thinking to (what he terms) "mob habit." He explains:

It is that the words merely shocked the eye, they never shocked the mind at all. People without minds may go on being shocked, but they don't matter.

People with minds realize that they aren't shocked, and never really were . . . and they experience a sense of relief. (*Apropos*, p. 12)

Connie, too, comes around to this realization. Whereas before sex was somewhat ugly to her (evidenced by her perception of sex as a "ridiculous bouncing of the buttocks") she later wonders, "How was it possible, this beauty here, where she had previously only been repelled? The unspeakable beauty to the touch, of the warm, living buttocks!" (LCL, p. 164). Lawrence attempts to demonstrate that, rather than a mere change of attitude, an open-mindedness toward sexuality is more an opening of the eyes, a heightened awareness. He simply could not edit the "obscenity" from the book for his English-speaking readers. As he so descriptively states, "I might as well try to clip my own nose into shape with scissors. The book bleeds" (*Apropos*, p. 11). Why must it be so? He explains, "this is the real point of the book. I want men and women to be able to think sex, fully, completely, honestly and cleanly" (*Apropos*, p. 14). He is attempting to jolt people out of their "mob-thinking" for their own good. The belief of the majority has gone awry, and thus people are deprived of what should rightfully be theirs: a healthy belief in the *beauty* of sex. He asserts, "There is nothing wrong with sexual feelings in themselves, so long as they are straight-forward and not sneaking or sly. The right sort of sex stimulus is invaluable to human daily life. Without it the world grows grey" (PO, p. 174).

Lawrence disdains the modern attitude toward sexuality, and offers an alternative in its place. He's careful to specify just what the "right sort of sex stimulus" entails. He first distinguishes between two modes of thought: "the two ways of knowing, for man, are knowing in terms of apartness, which is mental, rational, scientific, and

knowing in terms of togetherness, which is religious and poetic" (*Apropos*, p. 88). If a society becomes too entrenched in the former mode, as is ours, then the individuals within that society remain apart emotionally, spiritually, and even physically, to an extent. But sex, when viewed as something poetic, "In its big, slower vibration . . . is the warmth of heart which makes people happy together, in togetherness" (*Apropos*, p. 90). Sex, "the closest of all touch," becomes a manifestation of social unity. Thus Lawrence holds up the bond between a man and a woman as a prime example of togetherness, bonding in its most perfect form.

He delves into a discussion of this supreme connection: "The love between man and woman is the greatest and most complete passion the world will ever see, because it's dual. The perfect heartbeat of *life*: systole, diastole."¹¹ Lawrence exalts the male-female bond chiefly for its sense of *balance*, its vital balance of togetherness and apartness, which he illustrates through the use of the terms "sacred love" and "profane love," respectively. He expounds,

Sacred love is selfless. The lover serves his beloved and seeks perfect communion of oneness with her. But whole love between man and woman is sacred and profane together. Profane love seeks its own. I seek my own in the beloved, I wrestle with her to wrest it from her. (L, p. 153)

Profane love gains importance as it represents each *individual* in the union. If man and woman unite and thereby lose their individual selves, "this is confusion and chaos" (L, p. 153). While sex is the great unifier, it simultaneously contradistinguishes the two beings performing the act. Lawrence explains, "In pure

¹¹ D. H. Lawrence, "Love," *Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D. H. Lawrence*, ed. Edward D. McDonald. (Great Britain: Bookprint Limited, 1967) 153.

communion I become whole in love. And in pure, fierce passion of sensuality I am burned into essentiality" (L, p. 154). Sex, then is also the great *balancer*.

Lawrence sees marriage as the stage on which this unification and balance ("the right sort of sex stimulus") should take place. It preserves the sanctity of sex and, more importantly, cements the balance created through the unification of man and woman. Lawrence hails the usefulness and perfection of the marriage institution: "The blood of man and the blood of woman . . . are the two rivers that encircle the whole of life, and in marriage the circle is complete" (*Apropos*, pp. 66-67).

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Although Lawrence focuses on sexuality, the example of bodily touch serves as a portal into the bigger picture. Lawrence perceives a social need much greater than that of healthy sexual sentiments. He passionately believes that humanity *must* get back to nature, in all senses of the word -- or perish. Annable speaks candidly on this point. He jabs at the cultured Leslie: "'One's more a man here in th' wood, though, than in my lady's parlour, it strikes me'" (WP, p. 190). And as a doll for his daughter Annable creates a "hideous craven caricature of a woman," complete with red chalk for rouge. Lettie comments on "Lady Mima," "'She's not pretty, is she?'" And the little girl replies, "'um -- sh' is. My Dad says sh' is -- like a lady'" (WP, p. 194). Annable, like Lawrence, observes an artificiality within modern society that results in ugliness. And he, like Lawrence, views such distancing from

nature as a step closer to death. Cyril expounds on Annable's sentiment: "He was a man of one idea: -- that all civilisation was the painted fungus of rottenness . . . I was watching some maggots at work in a dead rabbit. That led us to a discussion of life" (WP, p. 207). Modern society thrives on things gone dead. In his *Apropos*, Lawrence points directly to at least part of the carcass on which modern humanity feeds. He laments that "Now you have a poor, blind, disconnected people with nothing but politics and bank holidays to satisfy the eternal human need of living in ritual adjustment to the cosmos in its revolution, in eternal submission to the greater laws" (*Apropos*, p. 79). Humanity has isolated itself from all other living things, and replaced the unifying connection with a shabby substitute. Lawrence specifically names the larger tragedy against which he's been striving in his writings:

Oh what a catastrophe for man when he cut himself off from the rhythm of the year, from his unison with the sun and the earth. . . . We are bleeding at the roots, because we are cut off from the earth and sun and stars. (*Apropos*, p. 63)

Here, the full significance of the "wood" image emerges. Separation from nature led to George's demise, whereas identification with nature initiated Connie's rebirth. The tree imagery illustrates this point: George, because he's left the land and taken to politics, money-making, and life in the mind becomes "like a tree that is falling, going soft and pale and rotten, clammy with small fungi" (WP, p. 409). But Connie, who has forsaken her social title (by choosing a servant over her aristocratic husband) and abandoned life in the mind for the natural existence offered by Mellors and the wood, can feel in her own body "the huge heave of the sap in the massive trees, upwards, up, up to the bud tips" (LCL, p. 113). Unfortunately, it is George who

mirrors society. Lawrence professes, "we are perishing for lack of fulfillment of our greater needs . . . Vitally the human race is dying. It is like a great uprooted tree . . . We must plant ourselves again in the universe" (*Apropos*, p. 83). We have nothing truly meaningful, nothing substantial with which to nourish ourselves, and thus we slowly wither.

And Lawrence suggests that we begin the reconnection to the cosmos with our own bodies, which are still tied to the earth, the air, the animal world, and other human bodies through physical needs and instinctual desires, despite our self-inflicted "civilization." The search for meaning should begin with the body, "for the blood is the substance of the soul, and of the deepest consciousness. It is by blood that we are: and it is by the heart and the liver that we live and move and have our being" (*Apropos*, p. 66). Our bodies are our fundamental connection to the world around us. Through the example of sexuality, Lawrence demonstrates a way in which humans can at least begin to replant themselves, to "get back" that primitive and necessary communion with the cosmos. In the following example, Connie, through sex, (in this case a particularly symbolic position, found distasteful by "civilised" society and resembling copulation of the animal world) reunites with an ancient sensation of peace through bodily connection:

It might come with the thrust of a sword in her softly opened body, and that would be death. But it came with a thrust of peace, and a ponderous primordial tenderness, such as made the world in the beginning. (LCL, p. 162)

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Increasingly, Victorian England faced a different way of life from that of preceding generations. The Industrial age removed individuals not only from the natural realm, but from the close-knit community as well. Children were compelled to new readjustments too as the institution of formal education supplanted the intimacy of farm and family and the apprenticeship to life afforded therein. Whereas an awe of the mysterious power of nature and the surety of traditional spiritual beliefs had bolstered faith in God in former generations, the failure of the pastoral mode of life and the consequent alienation from work and community in the over-crowded city, along with the often dehumanizing aspects of scientific "progress," tended to produce a crisis of faith and meaning for deracinated Victorians.

Lawrence, with his out-dated romanticism and spiritual inclination, acted as a check on the unstable society. Yet, as Worthen notes, Lawrence himself obviously doubted and questioned too: "he certainly had to go through the characteristically nineteenth-century dilemma of traditional religious belief faltering in the face of scientific rationalism, to be replaced by some vaguer and more mystical faith" (Worthen, p. 21). Hence, we have his many thought-provoking works. In his writings, Lawrence confronts the severed connections between humanity and nature and between individuals. He, in a sense, creates a new religion (or perhaps resurrects an ancient creed) in an attempt to "save souls." Both *The White Peacock* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover* can be considered "holy books" of this Lawrentian religion intended to wake the individual to his "lost" state and lead him toward "salvation." For example,

although the insightful Annable "scorned religion and all mysticism," Cyril finds him symbolically in the graveyard of the mouldering church. The presence of headstones echoes the "things gone dead" on which society, like maggots, feeds, while the mouldering church suggests the decay of spirituality. Annable's presence (the manifestation of Lawrence's philosophy) however, casts hope upon the scene. At one point in the novel, Annable appears "in the rim of light, darkly," with a "fine, powerful form . . . like some malicious Pan" (WP, p. 189). He emerges from the wood in the supernatural glow of a deity -- a pagan deity. And as with the Christian savior, the text implies that he is persecuted to death for his beliefs and actions: "They decided at the inquest that the death came by misadventure. But there were vague rumours in the village that this was revenge which had overtaken the keeper" (WP, p. 217).

Flowers also take on a sacrosanct meaning in *The White Peacock*. The snowdrops are described as "a holy communion of pure wild things," and Cyril speculates that "they belong to some old wild lost religion. They were the symbol of tears, perhaps, to some strange hearted Druid folk before us" (WP, pp. 187-188). All that remains of the pagan spirituality is the symbol for tears. The snowdrops represent lamentation over the fall of the pagan mystery and the rise of the new, "rational" ideology. The snowdrops are also likened to drops of manna scattered over the red earth" (WP, p. 187), implying that the old religion could in a sense nourish one (and thus that the "new religion" cannot). Leslie notes, "'There are not so many this year'" (WP, p. 188). Time pushes us further and further from the mystery of this old religion.

Lettie senses this and becomes afraid. She decides, "'They belong to some knowledge we have lost, that I have lost and that I need'" (WP, p. 188). As it turns out, her intuition is right.

In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Connie senses the same spiritual loss. And following the optimistic tone of the later novel, she determines to do something about it. "In the wind of March," a time of rebirth and new beginnings, "endless phrases swept through her consciousness" (LCL, p. 79). She repeats to herself expectantly, "Ye must be born again! I believe in the resurrection of the body!" (LCL, p. 79). Her hopeful phrases could be mistaken for those of a born-again Christian's. And, reminiscent of the biblical first mother, her birth into the physical realm causes her to feel "as if she was sinking deep, deep to the centre of all womanhood and the sleep of creation" (LCL, p. 126). Connie is also like "a sacrifice . . . a newborn thing" (LCL, p. 163). She must sacrifice her former self: her title, the comfort (and confinement) of her indoor world, the intellectualization, the palaver, and her self-will, to be reborn into the peace and wisdom of the "old religion."

Acting the part of "savior," Mellors plays a lead role in Connie's rebirth. Concerning the gamekeeper, "something about him reminded Connie of Tommy Dukes" (LCL, p. 44). Dukes seemingly understands the ailment of society; thus he functions primarily as "more or less her oracle" (LCL, p. 52). But whereas Dukes sagaciously understands the malady of modern humanity, Mellors goes one step further, he *lives the cure*. He (like Jesus) serves as a living example of "how to be." Wishing to show reverence to her redeemer, Connie performs a pagan-style dance

for him in the baptismal rain of the wood:

It was a strange pallid figure lifting and falling, bending so the rain beat and glistened on the full haunches, swaying up again and coming belly-forward through the rain, then stooping again so that only the full loins and buttocks were offered in a kind of homage towards him, repeating a wild obeisance. (LCL, p. 207)

With a similar allusiveness, Mellors likens the connection between himself and Connie to a "little flame" which he terms his "Pentecost." As in the Bible between God and the Jews, Mellors and Connie possess a secret understanding that protects them from the spiritual death facing modern humanity.

Lawrence was, "like most philosophers and *founders of religions* (my italics) trying to find a middle way between extremes" (Moore, p. 291). Thus, as Lawrence preaches that we must "make a balance between the consciousness of the body's sensations and experiences, and these sensations and experiences themselves . . . Get the two in harmony" (*Apropos*, p. 17) he is in a sense attempting to "save souls." Growing up in Eastwood, he witnessed the doom of the masses overcome by Industrialism, Rationalism, and Puritanism. Through his writings Lawrence pushes for a return to nature and life in the body in an attempt to bring a sense of peace and contentment to the people, to bring balance. Through the voice of Mellors he asserts, "'The mass of people oughtn't even to try to think, because they *can't*. They should be alive and frisky, and acknowledge the great god Pan. He's the only god for the masses, forever'" (LCL, p. 281). Perhaps when people weary of machines, indoor lighting, and cold-hearted politeness, they will consider the thoughts offered by Lawrence near the beginning of this century -- perhaps out of necessity. Imaginably,

through a recognition of need and changes in belief and practice, the pervading emptiness of modern humanity may eventually metamorphose into the fulfillment that Connie achieves, evidenced by her declaration: "'whatever God there is has at last wakened up in my guts, and is rippling happily there, like dawn'" (LCL, p. 22).

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