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The Unpublished "Lady Chatterley's Lover"

By T. M. PEARCE

LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER is D. H. Lawrence's most discussed book. Opinion may differ as to whether it is his best. Those who know his work and who knew Lawrence believe that most of his fundamental ideas about society and the world in which it exists are contained in this product of his pen. It is not generally known that Lawrence wrote three versions of *Lady Chatterley*, two of which remain in manuscript. They were completed, but rejected as a more satisfactory shaping of the elements of the story came to his mind. These manuscript variants were brought to Taos in the spring of 1938, from Italy where they had been since D. H. Lawrence's death at Vence, in the south of France, March 1, 1930. Many novelists, I suppose all, rework what they create as other relationships and new significance occur in the lives of their characters. Unusual are three full-length novels, treating the same themes and settings, the third and final version emerging not necessarily as the climax of the other two, but with a balance of emphasis and point of view which Lawrence preferred. The other versions are written with comparable brilliance. Either would have been an astounding achievement, and important in the tradition of the English novel, yet the changes in them illustrate what Lawrence felt was most important in what he had to say about the relations between men and women.

A brief history of the printings of *Lady Chatterley* will explain the reprinting of material here. Some misstatement is possible, for not even Lawrence himself was sure what happened to his famous book after editions, unprotected by law or other authority, made their way into the world in 1928.¹

1. D. H. Lawrence, *Apropos of Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1930, 1931), 5-11. William Heinemann, Ltd., London.

The authentic first edition was published in Florence by a little Italian press calling itself Tipografia Giuntina, managed by Signior L. Franceschini. The edition was privately printed and Lawrence paid for it. He describes it as "bound in hard covers, dullish mulberry-red paper with my phoenix (symbol of immortality, the bird rising new from the nest of flames) printed in black on the cover, and a white paper label on the back,"² Frieda Lawrence recalls the visit to this print shop in a little, dark, medieval street where she and Lawrence found a very old-fashioned press which had only half enough type to set up the book. The book had to be run in two sections, melting down the first forms to get lead to set up the second. A second-hand book-seller in Florence, Pino Orioli, guided the Lawrences to printer Franceschini, who understood no word of English. Nor did any member of his family. Lawrence knew that the material in his book would occasion protest and he told the printer so. The Italian asked if it was political, or revolutionary. When he heard that it described love, he said "But we do it every day," and thought no more about it.³

Of this edition a thousand copies were printed on the first paper, and two hundred of a second edition were run on ordinary paper. This second edition Lawrence released late in 1928 after a pirated edition, photographed from the Florentine first, had appeared within a month's time in New York and then in London. A second pirated text reproducing by photography even Lawrence's signature appeared in this same year. To meet these literary scavengers, the author brought out in 1929 a cheap popular edition in France, printed by Edward Titus, using the English text of the original *Lady Chatterley*.

A French translation followed in 1930, published by Gallimard. There never had been any copyright, and other pirated editions in Paris, Chicago, and elsewhere, followed that first from New York. After Lawrence's death, Mrs.

2. *Ibid.*, 96.

3. *Ibid.*, 98, 99.

Lawrence gave permission to Martin Secker of London, to publish an expurgated text in 1932. William Heineman, Ltd., of London, took over the Secker rights and reprinted the text nine times between February of 1932 and November of 1936. Alfred Knopf brought out the same text in America in 1932.

An interesting item in this list of editions, is an un-catalogued edition of two copies at the time of the first printing. These two books were made from the first plates, but printed on blue paper of similar quality as the hand-rolled mulberry-red. One of them became the property of Pino Orioli, the friend and adviser of the first publishing venture; (Orioli distributed the first edition, sent out the brochure announcing it and directed Lawrence in the purchase of the paper); the second copy went to Mrs. Lawrence. In her copy, Lawrence has crossed out the words "One thousand copies" so that the page reads in print "This edition is limited to," and in ink "only two copies and this is the dame's." It is signed D. H. Lawrence in the same hand as the other script. Mrs. Lawrence recalls that in Orioli's copy this verse is inscribed:

One for the master, one for the dame,
None, for the little boy that cries down the lane.

That is the meaning of his gift to her. Lawrence was "the little boy," who didn't get a copy on blue paper.

Of the manuscripts in Mrs. Lawrence's possession there are: the version from which the first edition was printed—two notebooks, about six inches by eight, bound in black imitation leather, written in ink in Lawrence's hand, with his name, and Villa Mirinda, Scandicci, Firenze, Decem, 1927, inscribed on the fly leaf. The title "Lady Chatterley's Lover," is on this leaf, but page one of the ruled paper has the title "My Lady's Keeper;" two notebooks, seven by nine inches, with stiff pasteboard backs have ornamental designs, and are held by leather backings, one purple and one green with gilt impressions reading, "Mss" and "D. L. H."

(volume one of these has "second version" penciled on the fly leaf and a list of the characters as a sort of dramatis personæ on the first ruled page; the title *Lady Chatterley's Lover* appears at top of page one); the fifth notebook is evidently the initial stage of the novel and is of pasteboard binding, plain brown, with a printed title on a small square of paper on the back; it is entitled, "Lady Chatterley's Lover," at the top of page one.

The change in title is of interest. Apparently the first title which came to mind was the final one, but "My Lady's Keeper" occurred to Lawrence as an alternative. Mrs. Lawrence says that a third title was in his mind: "Tenderness."

There will not be space to review the history of this book with the public. Shortly after it reached the mails, it was censored and banned in England and America, and escaping official reviews in both nations, because it had no official publisher to send it to dignified literary reviewers, it, nevertheless began, in press reports and news items, to pick up the most unreasoning reports and denunciation. References to "the sewers of French pornography," "a landmark of evil," "turgid vigor of a poisoned genius," appear in one English weekly, which calls for not only the banning of the book but the imprisonment of the author.⁴ New Mexicans will recall that it was an incident in connection with *Lady Chatterley* that led Senator Bronson Cutting to wage the fight in Congress against an amendment to the tariff act which would have made government customs officials the censors for the American reading public.

During the debate in the Senate on October 10, 1929, Cutting remarked: "When Savonarola came into power in Florence, he burned in the public square the works of three authors, the most notorious, as he said, for licentiousness and indecency. One of the three was Dante. The plays of Shakespeare were banned from the stage within a quarter of a century of his death as the most striking example of

4. *John Bull*, October 20, 1928.

immorality which could be put before the people of England."⁵

When he introduced the debate again on October 11, Senator Cutting pointed out that no book can be judged fairly from individual words or phrases objectionable in themselves to some people. The intent of the whole, the achievement of the whole alone make debatable ground. I submit that the most dangerous book in the English language is the dictionary," he commented, "Because it contains not only one or two indecent words, but it contains them all."⁶

In summary, New Mexico's senator declared, "In my opinion, the only policy we can accept in this matter is the belief that the American people in the long run can be trusted to take care of their own moral and spiritual welfare . . ." words that read like a charter for liberty and tolerance for sincere artistic utterance.

No one should speak of the aim and achievement of D. H. Lawrence in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* who has not first read his book in defense of it: *Apropos of Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Let those critics who think Lawrence's ideas of sex are debased or that his notion of marriage is low, read what he has to say in the *Apropos*. Let me quote: "Marriage is the clue to human life, but there is no marriage apart from the wheeling sun and the nodding earth, from the straying of the planets and the magnificence of the fixed stars. Is not a man different, utterly different, at dawn from what he is at sunset? And a woman too? And does not the changing harmony and discord of their variations make the secret music of life? . . . This is marriage, the mystery of marriage, marriage which fulfills itself here in this life. . . . Marriage is no marriage that is not a correspondence of blood. For the blood is the substance of the soul, and of the deepest consciousness. . . . The great river of male blood touches to its depth the great river of female blood—yet neither breaks

5. *Congressional Record*, Vol. 71, Part 4, p. 4445.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 4436.

its bounds. It is the deepest of all communions. . . . Man dies, and woman dies, and perhaps separate the souls go back to the creator. Who knows? But we know that the oneness of the blood stream of man and woman in marriage completes the universe, as far as humanity is concerned, completes the streaming of the sun and the flowing of the stars."⁷

It is to win through to this ideal knowledge of love that Connie Chatterley leaves Sir Clifford and mates with the keeper Mellors. The paralysis of her husband, Sir Clifford, is symbolic, for to him Constance had never meant the true creative release in love. He refused to divorce her not because he held any love for her, but because she represented a pretentious asset to his household, something at Wragby hall really more important than two limousines, the doorman, and the other household perquisites. Love, between Lady Chatterley and the Keeper crosses hereditary caste, social position, wealth, the unwelcome framework of individual lives and leaves two souls at peace, prepared for creative living. *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is D. H. Lawrence's affirmation of faith in life, not his despair for it; his high-souled Puritanism, not bestiality. The expurgated edition brings out the shameful cloak of fear we have nursed toward the most natural acts of life and love which with Lawrence were not two separate spheres, or one a secret compartment, a little shameful, in the other, but one and the same and all of it wholesome.

Brief excerpts may show this positive and constructive Lawrence as he worked out this material at successive intervals. The opening lines of *Lady Chatterley*:

Version I:

Ours is essentially a tragic age, but we refuse emphatically to be tragic about it.

This was Constance Chatterley's position. The war landed her in a dreadful situation, and she was determined not to make a tragedy out of it.

7. *Apropos of Lady Chatterley's Lover*, selections within pages 62-69.

She married Clifford Chatterley in 1917, etc.

Version II:

Ours is essentially a tragic age, so we refuse to take it tragically. The cataclysm has fallen, we've got used to the ruins, and we start to build up new little habitats, new little hopes. If we can't make a road through the obstacles, we go round, or climb over the top. We've got to live, no matter how many skies have fallen. Having tragically wrung our hands, we now proceed to peel the potatoes or to put on the wireless.

This was Constance Chatterley's position. The war landed her in a very tight situation. But she made up her mind to live and learn. She married Clifford Chatterley in 1917, etc.

Version III:

Ours is essentially a tragic age, so we refuse to take it tragically. The cataclysm has happened, we are among the ruins, we start to build up new little habitats, and have new little hopes. It is rather hard work; there is now no smooth road into the future, but we go round or scramble over the obstacles. We've got to live, no matter how many skies have fallen. So we put on the wireless while we peel the potatoes.

This was more or less Constance Chatterley's position. The war had brought the roof down over her head. And she realized that one must live and learn.

She married Clifford Chatterley in 1917, etc.

The last version is the one which appears in the original Franceschini edition except for the omission of the last sentence in paragraph one: "So we put on the wireless while we peel the potatoes."

A notable change between the first writing, and the last occurs in Sir Clifford's reaction to the revelation that his wife is to have a child by the Keeper.

Version I:

"I hoped it would make you happy," she said swiftly, the blood dyeing her throat and face.

His eyes shone curiously, and he smiled with emotion.

"How beautiful you are!" he said. "You are a virgin, mother, a Madonna like a rose, instead of like a lily. By God, I hope the child will be worthy of you. I'll get my paints out and try to paint you: The Modern Madonna! and I the Joseph! I shall fall into Mariolatry—Mary worship! What a wonderful woman you are! Give me your hand a moment will you?"

She rose, and gave him her hand. He kissed it, and pressed it to his face. Then he kissed her wedding ring. And she, as she stood was trembling to herself: "What a scene! What a scene! How one loathes being called a wonderful woman. But I suppose it's part of the divine justice, that I must hear it from Clifford."

Version III:

He still leaned forward in his chair, gazing at her like a cornered beast.

"My God, you ought to be wiped off the face of the earth!"

"Why?" she ejaculated faintly.

But he seemed not to hear her.

"That scum! That bumptious lout! That miserable cad. And carrying on with him all the time, while you were here and he was one of my servants! My god, my god, is there any end to the beastly lowness of women!"

He was beside himself with rage, as she knew he would be.

Suddenly he had become almost wistfully moral, seeing himself the incarnation of good, and people like Mellors and Connie the incarnation of mud, of evil. He seemed to be growing vague, inside a nimbus.

When Lawrence wrote his first draft, he put much more of the social cause in it. Parkin hopes Connie will join him in fighting for the liberation of the lower classes, join him as a Communist. Sir Clifford does not learn that his Keeper is to be the father of Connie's child. The book ends with

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Lady Chatterley determined to renounce what she feels is a fraudulent position as a titled woman, mismated in a loveless marriage. When Lawrence wrote his final draft, the cause is a personal one, not social. Though he treats of the false distinctions and of the real manliness of Mellors and the need for true democracy in England, Lady Chatterley is seeking the avenue of creative love as the solution to her personal misery. She lives in a hollow world of form and property until a vital love comes to her. Then everything else falls away.

It is the rightness of this relation that leads Lawrence to employ a condemned English verb in four letters for which the expurgated edition substitutes "love." In the following passage, "love" is used wherever Lawrence used it; the blanks are placed where censorship removed the other word Lawrence chose.

"So I love chastity now, because it is the peace that comes of ——. I love being chaste now. I love it as snowdrops love the snow. I love this chastity, which is the pause of peace of our ——, between us now like a snowdrop of forked white fire. And when the real spring comes, when the drawing together comes, then we can —— the little flame brilliant and yellow, brilliant. But not now, not yet! Now is the time to be chaste, it is so good to be chaste, like a river of cool water in my soul. I love the chastity now that it flows between us. It is like fresh water and rain. How can men want wearisomely to philander? What a misery to be like Don Juan, and impotent ever to —— oneself into peace, and the little flame alight, impotent and unable to be chaste in the cool between-whiles as by a river."