

Constance and the Machine: Conflicts of Modernity and Gender in D. H. Lawrence's "Cocksure Women and Hensure Men" and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*¹

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Constanza y la máquina: Género y conflictos de la Modernidad en "Cocksure Women and Hensure Men" y *Lady Chatterley's Lover* de D.H. Lawrence

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Abstract / Resumen / Résumé / Riassunto

Lawrence's "Cocksure Women and Hensure Men" and *Lady Chatterley's Lover* both base their argument around gender essentialism. *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and the debate surrounding the trial that led to its uncensored publication are rooted in a combination of sexual, gender, and class politics. Moreover, while *Lady Chatterley's Lover* may look like a critique of individuality and industrialization, it is actually a critique of a hegemonic masculinity based on rationality. This paper will argue that one of the central conflicts of the novel is that surrounding early-twentieth-century hegemonic masculinity, by means of R.W. Connell's theory. Through unravelling the complex gender politics in Lawrence's work and placing them in their historical context, this paper argues that his work is more reactionary than subversive.

"Cocksure Women and Hensure Men" y *Lady Chatterley's Lover* de D. H. Lawrence basan su argumento en el esencialismo de género. *Lady Chatterley's Lover* y el debate en torno al juicio que condujo a su publicación sin censura están enraizados en una combinación de política sexual, de género y de clase. Además, si bien el *Lady Chatterley's Lover* puede parecer una crítica de la individualidad y la industrialización, en realidad es una crítica de una masculinidad hegemónica basada en la racionalidad. Este artículo propone que uno de los conflictos centrales de la novela es la masculinidad hegemónica de principios del siglo XX, por medio de la teoría de R.W. Connell. Al desvelar las complejas políticas de género en la obra de Lawrence y ubicarlas en su contexto histórico, este artículo argumenta que su trabajo es más reaccionario que subversivo.

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L'essai «Cocksure Women and Hensure Men» et *Lady Chatterley's Lover* de D.H. Lawrence fondent tous deux leur argumentation sur l'essentialisme de genre. *Lady Chatterley's Lover* et le débat entourant le procès qui a mené à sa publication non censurée sont enracinés dans une combinaison de politique sexuelle, de genre et de classe. De plus, alors que *Lady Chatterley's Lover* peut ressembler à une critique de l'individualité et de l'industrialisation, c'est en fait une critique d'une masculinité hégémonique basée sur la rationalité. Cet article soutient que l'un des conflits centraux du roman est celui entourant la masculinité hégémonique du début du vingtième siècle, au moyen de la théorie de R.W. Connell. En démêlant la politique de genre complexe dans l'œuvre de Lawrence et en les replaçant dans leur contexte historique, cet article propose que son œuvre est plus réactionnaire que subversif.

"Cocksure Women and Hensure Men" e *Lady Chatterley's Lover* di D.H. Lawrence sono entrambi basati sull'essentialismo di genere. Il romanzo e il dibattito sul processo che portò alla sua pubblicazione integrale si fondano su una combinazione di politiche sessuali, di genere e di classe. Inoltre, per quanto *Lady Chatterley's Lover* possa apparire come una critica dell'individualità e dell'industrializzazione, si tratta in realtà della critica di una masculinità egemonica fondata sulla razionalità. Questo articolo suggerisce come uno dei conflitti centrali del romanzo sia quello che riguarda la masculinità egemonica dell'inizio del novecento, alla luce della teoria di R.W. Connell. Svelando le complesse politiche di genere nei testi di Lawrence e ponendole in relazione con il loro contesto storico, il presente studio sostiene che la sua opera sia più reazionaria che sovversiva.

Keywords / Palabras clave / Mots-clé / Parole chiave

D.H. Lawrence, gender, masculinité

D.H. Lawrence, gender, masculinidad

D.H. Lawrence, étude de genre, masculinité

D.H. Lawrence, genere, masculinità

D.H. Lawrence may well be the embodiment of conflict in the literary world. Indeed, to some extent, criticism of Lawrence's work reproduces the very conflicts displayed in the work itself. Even today, Lawrence remains a controversial figure. Lawrence's notoriety mainly stems from the posthumous trial for one of his novels, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, which was published in England only in an expurgated version in 1932 and was first published uncensored by Penguin after an obscenity trial in 1960 (Black, 2017). In the Penguin special containing an account of the trial, C.H. Rolph, writing in the 1960s, wonders "[j]ust how much was it [Lady Chatterley], and not D.H. Lawrence or Penguin Books who was on trial" (1961: 8). Lady Constance Chatterley's affair was certainly radical in terms of class and the frank language in which it was described caused particular uproar. Rolph continues by saying that "[i]t was a fifteenth-century trial for adultery, Constance Chatterley was there in Court, The Scarlet Letter must somewhere be ready. She was distinguished culpably from Cleopatra and Madame Bovary by her lover's four-letter words" (Rolph, 1961: 8). Rolph's commentary touches on the most common moral arguments against the novel in the late 1950s, namely the extramarital affair Connie Chatterley has with her husband's gamekeeper Mellors, and the explicit language and detail with which Lawrence describes the affair. Effectively, Lawrence's contemporaries and critics in the 1950s mainly focused on the supposedly obscene language and content and rejected these on moral grounds. The objection to four-letter words also hints at classism. Partly due to his background as a miner's son, Lawrence always remained an outsider in his literary circles, since writing was considered to be a middle-class occupation (Worthen, 2005: xxv). What this amounted to, according to biographer John Worthen, was a struggle "between his capacity to be detached, intellectual and incipiently middle class, and his nostalgia" (2005: 61). He was also "profoundly ill at ease with, not to say derisive about, the literary world" (Worthen, 2005: 65). These anxieties surrounding class, intellectualism, and nostalgia are also present in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, and heavily influenced Lawrence's views on gender and

sexuality. Moreover, from when he was little, Lawrence himself had stood out for being "soft" and would spend time with girls, and later women, rather than with male peers (Worthen, 2015: 15-16) as would have been expected. In many ways, Lawrence then stood out in the literary world, because he did not conform to either the dominant class or gender expectations of either the literary world or those of his working-class family. All of these factors may have contributed to the amalgam of structures related to class and gender that are reflected in Lawrence's work.

Firstly, Richard Hoggart, who wrote the introduction to the first uncensored edition of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, addresses this criticism on the supposedly obscene language Lawrence uses. Hoggart states that the focus should not be on the language because he thinks it is society that has made language obscene. Hoggart writes that "our language for sex shows us to be knotted and ashamed, too dirty and too shy" and thinks people should be able to talk about sex honestly and without shame. Moreover, he condemns writing in which a woman is used as "an object, as a body on which [a man] can find his own thrill", and defends *Lady Chatterley's Lover* on the basis that it does not treat women in this way, without "regard for her [...] as a human being". He illustrates this by quoting a rape scene, and a scene in which a woman has sex without any feelings for her partner – while the man does – from two different popular novels (Hoggart vii). Hoggart calls the passage describing the consensual sex scene "nasty writing, since it is both sentimentally coy and furtively suggestive" (Lawrence, 1961: iv). Furthermore, Hoggart states that he finds the passage from the rape scene "taken out of context [...] obscene, dreadfully obscene. So I am sure would Lawrence. He would have said it did throw dirt on life" (1961: vii). Hoggart follows this criticism of the rape scene with a quote in which Lawrence denounces pornography. This implies that Hoggart does not make a clear distinction between depictions of consensual yet casual sex, and depictions of rape. What makes Connie and Mellors' love affair different for Hoggart is that

Lawrence would have said – for another; a sense of pity for another's grief and weakness; a recognition that our lives exist in time – have a past and a future – rather than a shuttered focusing on the thrill of the moment. We are responsible towards one another, it implies; we may use neither ourselves nor others as things. No wonder Lawrence originally called this novel *Tenderness*. (1961: viii)

Essentially, this implies that only a genuinely tender (hetero)sexual relationship is exempt from being obscene. While this intention is honourable, the contents of the novel itself, and subsequently Lawrence's views, are still highly controversial.

In other words, since its publication, the dialogue surrounding *Lady Chatterley's Lover* has been framed in terms of sexual, gender, and class politics. Calvin Bedient, who writes on *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in 1966, opens his article by saying that “[i]n general, Lawrence's critics emasculate him” (1966: 407). Furthermore, Bedient argues that critics like Julian Moynahan interpret Lawrence as less radical and less urgent than he actually is, and that the effect is “so very reasonable, moderate, and innocuous, like an armchair exercise for introspective professors. But it is not Lawrence” (1966: 407). Bedient's values as he outlines them here, especially considering what masculinity was supposed to be, do echo Lawrence's, as can be seen in close readings of his work. Moreover, in “a beautiful though predictable irony [...] the book was dragged to trial precisely through the sort of mechanization of means, the anarchic autonomy of process, against which it so movingly and damningly protests. Yet, assuming that *Lady Chatterley's Lover* should have been brought to jury and judgment at all, surely it faced the wrong charge. Though it is not pornographic, it is subversive” (Bedient, 1966: 407-408). In other words, some of the critics of Lawrence's work reproduce exactly the kind of conflict Lawrence is protesting against through the subversive anti-intellectualism and the class criticism of his work.

However, Lawrence's work is not particularly subversive when it comes to gender. Indeed, in the 1970s and 1980s respectively, feminist scholars Kate Millett, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar have thoroughly crit-

icized Lawrence's depiction of women. Gilbert and Gubar state that the Romantic aesthetic Lawrence uses in his work is often associated with the irrational and satanic, but also with “re-visions of the Miltonic culture myth” and “repudiations of the conservative, hierarchical, ‘politics of paradise’” (1979, 202-204). As such, Millett points out the distinctly phallic focus of a novel that has a female protagonist, and states of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* that throughout the novel,

Lawrence uses the words ‘sexual’ and ‘phallic’ interchangeably, so that the celebration of sexual passion for which the book is so renowned is largely a celebration of the penis of Oliver Mellors, gamekeeper and social prophet. (1970: 335)

Lawrence's portrayal of gender is thus more reactionary than progressive, as he values an older configuration of gender roles over the current hegemonic masculinity with its corresponding version of femininity. What looks like a new, subversive approach to gender is then actually a reactionary response that reinforces patriarchal norms, because the agency in its seemingly subversive sexual passion belongs almost exclusively to the protagonist's male lover. As such, the novel creates Connie simply as a passive subject: things happen *to* her, not *because* of her. In essence, Lawrence's search for “real togetherness”, as a cure against the alienation which comes with modernity is characterized by restrictive gender norms (Lawrence, *Chatterley*, 1960, 284). This essay argues that this inequality is facilitated by Lawrence's treatment of male and female bodies. In trying to eliminate the effects modernity has had on people's relationships with their bodies, and thus their relationship to each other in a heteronormative society based on a gender binary, Lawrence aims to reinstate older, arguably more restrictive gender roles. At one point Mellors even admits raping one of his former sex partners, saying he “forced her to the sex itself” and he “forced her to it and she could simply numb me with hate for it” (Lawrence, *Chatterley*, 1960: 209). As such, this undermines Hoggart's argument saying the novel portrays healthy relationships to sex. Although one could argue that Mellors betters himself and forms

a consensual relationship with Connie, Lawrence's description of these events is not particularly critical. On the contrary: Mellors' hate in this scene is directed at the woman he is with, and he does not indicate any kind of remorse for his actions. Subsequently, some further exploration of how Lawrence treats gender in general would be necessary in order to establish Lawrence's position within this gender conflict.

At the outset, this essay focuses on conflicts of modernity and individuality as they relate to conflicts of gender, applying R.W. Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity. While feminist scholars like Millett and Gilbert and Gubar have criticized Lawrence's views of gender, they did not look at the different masculinities that are prevalent in his work. Although Lawrence's attitude to individuality and industrialization can be read as a conflict of modernity, his critique of modernity can also be read as a conflict of gender. By using conflict as a method, it is possible to look at elements of all of these issues and to deconstruct them by means of gender theory. Connell's theory specifically makes it possible to examine men as gendered beings within their respective cultural and historical context. Connell states that hegemonic masculinity is "the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men, and the subordination of women" (*Masculinities* 2005: 77). However, Connell also posits that the masculinity that occupies the hegemonic position in any given pattern of gender relations" is "a position" that is "always contestable" (*Masculinities* 2005, 76). Arguably, Lawrence's work contests that position, as do many other modernist writers.

Modernist literature specifically is an interesting site to explore in terms of gender. This is due to the distinctly contradictory nature of modernism. In *Modernism and Masculinity* Natalya Lusty characterises "modernist cultural expression as simultaneously radical and reactionary, as both old and new, as 'rich and strange'" (2014: 8). This is due to the large number of cultural changes that were happening during this period. The resulting conflicts meant that hegemonic masculinity

was constantly being destabilized. Moreover, Lusty argues that

the increasing fluidity of social and sexual roles made possible by industrialisation, commodification, the extension of the franchise, suffragism, sexology, psychology, urbanisation, and new forms of transport and communication meant that masculinity at the beginning of the twentieth century entered into a protracted period of cultural reflexivity and malleability. (2014: 7)

In other words, masculinity was extremely controversial because of the myriad of social forces that were contesting and shaping modern masculinities. Furthermore, the sheer number of influences on different masculinities could cause contradictory and conflicting patterns of masculinity. In order to start making sense of this ideological landscape, it is necessary to first establish history as gendered and examine how it is shaped by hegemony.

Western culture as a whole treats women and men as bearers of polarized character types (Connell, 2005: 68). Lawrence made a similar statement, arguing that society had "abstracted men and women into different personalities who are incapable of togetherness" (quoted in Bedient, 1966: 411). The specific character type that is most valued at any specific point in history is then hegemonic masculinity, because it has a set of characteristics which makes it possible to occupy the most powerful position in society. In the early twentieth century, this was tied to production, industrialization and capitalism (Connell, 2005: 191). However, as hegemony is never completely stable, this masculinity was also challenged. Connell identifies the following as the main components of conflict surrounding hegemonic masculinity: "challenges to the gender order by women, the logic of the gendered accumulation process in industrial capitalism, and the power relations of empire" (Connell, 2005: 191). D.H. Lawrence's critiques on gender can be viewed as a response to the first two processes, that is, challenges by women and by industrialization. Over the last two centuries, European and American masculinities have been contested by the

splitting of gentry masculinity, “the emergence of new hegemonic forms, and new subordinated and marginalized forms” (Connell, 2005: 191).

Moreover, the Great War destabilized gender hegemony by contesting the idea that men were invulnerable. Many men returned from the war with shell-shock, which was “[o]ften diagnosed as a lack of discipline or loyalty”, due to the fact that “military psychologists were reluctant to acknowledge the emotional and psychological vulnerability of men, which reflected a pervasive Victorian masculine ideal of courage, self-control and above all a manly ethos of not complaining” (Lusty & Murphet, 2014: 5). As such, a large number of men came back from the war changed in both a physical and psychological sense as represented in characters like Clifford Chatterley. Connell describes what happens when the idea of male invulnerability has to be re-evaluated as men are confronted with physical disabilities:

One is to redouble efforts to meet the hegemonic standard, overcoming the physical difficulty – for instance, finding proof of continued sexual potency by trying to exhaust one’s partner. Another is to reformulate the definition of masculinity, bringing it closer to what is now possible, though still pursuing masculine themes such as independence and control. The third is to reject hegemonic masculinity as a package, criticizing the physical stereotypes, and moving towards a counter-sexist politics. (Connell, 2005: 55)

However, Connell argues: “the one thing none of these men can do is ignore it” (2005, 55). Clifford Chatterley moves towards the second option as will be described later. Essentially, responses to this kind of destabilizing of the gender order can be seen as either progressive or reactionary. One of the reactionary responses to this challenge of hegemonic masculinity is that “[b]etween 1870 and 1914 the imperatives of empire celebrated a militaristic and robust Hypermasculinity” (Francis, 2002: 640). Fascism was one of the responses to this threat to male hegemony because it stabilized male hegemony by glorifying violence and irrationality (Connell: 2005, 193). Fascism can be viewed

as “a naked reassertion of male supremacy in societies that had been moving towards equality for women”, and its dynamics eventually led to an even more devastating war (Connell, 2005: 193). Fascist dynamics of hypermasculinity are also demonstrated by groups such as the futurists. Marinetti’s futurist manifesto explicitly urges readers to “exalt aggressive action, a feverish insomnia, the racer’s stride, the mortal leap, the punch and the slap” (2017: 3). However, although both Lawrence’s and Marinetti’s views on gender can be seen as reactionary, the futurists glorify technology whilst Lawrence rejects it. In short, hegemonic masculinity had to be re-evaluated due to the after-effects of the Great War, industrialization, and women’s suffrage. Some responses to these events were reactionary, such as the Futurist’s anti-feminist hyper-masculinity based on irrationality and technology. Lawrence can also be placed in the reactionary tradition due to his focus on pre-industrial masculinity based on irrationality, but unlike the futurists, Lawrence explicitly rejects technology.

In his 1929 essay, “Cocksure Women and Hensure Men”, Lawrence outlines his reactionary ideas regarding gender roles. He disapproves of women frantically pursuing the vote and being “cocksure” (or confident in a masculine way) without listening if there is any “denial” (Lawrence, 1954: 33). But according to Lawrence, the modern woman definitely should take opinions of others into account, meaning that she should never simply act without waiting for others to tell her she can do so. The text is full of thinly veiled anxiety surrounding ‘proper’ gender roles. Lawrence speaks explicitly of “the modern woman” and “modern man” and their respective roles. Lawrence asserts the idea that gender is something essential and related to sex rather than societal influence. According to Lawrence, women should not adopt so-called masculine behaviors, as that

is the tragedy of the modern woman. She becomes cocksure, she puts all her passion and energy and years of her life into some effort or assertion, without ever listening for the denial which she ought to take into account. She is cocksure, but she is a hen all the time. Frightened of her own henny self, she rushes to mad lengths about votes, or welfare, or sports, or

business: she is marvelous, out-manning the man. (Lawrence, 1954: 33-34)

Lawrence writes that “cocksure is boss” but the cock (or man) is “never so sure about anything as the hen is about laying an egg” (1954: 32). In other words, there is an awareness in the cock (man) that his cocksureness, or masculine authority, is always contestable. The hen’s (or woman’s) subordinate position, however, is always made clear in Lawrence’s vision on gender. If women then start acting like men, they challenge gender hegemony and pose a threat to hegemonic masculinity. Perceiving cocksure women as a threat, Lawrence argues that women should not act like men because they are not men. He calls these cocksure women “marvelous” and says that they are “out-manning the man”, but then quickly discounts that statement by saying that the efforts of “cocksure women”, though impressive, eventually amount to nothing, because

it is all fundamentally disconnected. It is all an attitude, and one day the attitude will become a weird cramp, a pain, and then it will collapse. And when it has collapsed, and she looks at the eggs she has laid, votes, or miles of typewriting, years of business efficiency – suddenly because she is a hen and not a cock, all she has done will turn into pure nothingness to her. (Lawrence, 1954: 34)

In other words, according to Lawrence’s ideas, gender is not an attitude that can be adopted but is rooted in an essence of the body. Cocksure women’s assertions are ‘threatening’ masculinity so they are dismissed as being “fundamentally disconnected”. More specifically, this depiction of gender reinforces Connell’s concept of gender as a perpetually negotiable process (Connell, 2015: 76). Subsequently, Lawrence calls women who draw attention to this fact “dangerous”. Effectively, “dangerous women” cause a gender conflict because they are disconnected from the patriarchal tradition based on a gender binary and occupy a position in which their threatening masculine behaviour cannot be safely related to a male body. Subsequently, if men’s power is not tied to their body, the hegemonic position

of men is also contestable, which makes men’s claims to power void. According to Lawrence, the “cocksureness” of women is dangerous because cocksure women do not listen to any “denial” and are effectively more powerful than men. That denial is then rendered void, for there is no way to contest women’s power if their power is not related to a “stabilized”, embodied masculinity. If women can outman men, this threatens male hegemony, and therefore patriarchy must legitimize itself through biological determinism. In short, gender essentialism is central to Lawrence’s “Cocksure Women and Hensure Men”. Lawrence’s explicit discussion of gender in this essay can then also shed light on his other works.

Essentially, D.H. Lawrence’s work is explicitly preoccupied with what masculinity entails, and with rejecting rational, intellectual masculinity while embracing irrational masculinity. Lawrence does this in *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* by dismissing the attributes of the hegemonic masculinity which facilitated industrial capitalism. His preoccupation with capitalism’s effects on the individual echoes Georg Simmel’s ideas. In “The Metropolis and Mental Life” (1903), Simmel describes the effects of industrialization and urbanization on the individual’s mental life in great detail. In this case, Simmel concentrates on the metropolis as the locus of urbanization and industrialization, and thus of modernity. According to Simmel, there is an inherent conflict between individuality and urbanization. He states that “the individual has become a mere cog in an enormous organization of things and powers which tear from his hands all progress, spirituality, and value in order to transform their subjective form into the form of a purely objective life” (Simmel, 1950: 422). In other words, Simmel argues that there is less focus on subjective value and meaning than on rationality in the metropolis, which creates a conflict of individuality. More value is placed on “[p]unctuality, calculability, exactness” which “are forced upon life by the complexity and extension of metropolitan existence and are not only most intimately connected with its money economy and intellectualistic character” (Simmel, 1950, 413). Essentially, the

personal (and individual) has been lost within the vast organization of industrial capitalism, and the resulting anxieties are central to Lawrence's work.

Lawrence's depiction of gentry masculinity as a hegemonic masculinity in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is also tied to anxieties surrounding the power of industrial capitalism. What merely looks like an explicit rejection of industrial capitalism is then also an implicit rejection of the hegemonic masculinity that is at the heart of industrial capitalism. As mentioned in the introduction, Clifford's efforts to reform and control the industry is one of the ways Connell argues men deal with a masculinity that cannot rely on bodily strength because of a physical disability. Essentially, his claim to hegemonic power is necessarily one he makes through rationality, as it is a way of pursuing masculine ideals that are not limited to the body. Lawrence first describes Clifford as being "absolutely dependent" on Connie: "[A]lone he was like a lost thing. He needed Connie to be there, to assure him he existed at all" (Lawrence, *Chatterley*, 1961: 17). However, throughout the novel, Clifford becomes increasingly involved in technological innovations in the mines on his estate. He then embodies an older type of hegemonic masculinity, specifically the landowning gentry, but he has also adapted to the demands of an industrial society by taking an active part in the technological advancements in order to make money. Subsequently, Clifford represents both the gentry and the force of industrialization. Lawrence challenges these two claims to power by associating them with femininity. Kimmel and Anderson state that "the association of effeminacy and the upper class was used to criticize the aristocracy as a whole", which establishes gender practice as a class issue; paradoxically, it was simultaneously a claim to class and refinement (2003: 248). Lawrence's description of aristocratic masculinity then clarifies a shift in gender practice, because its hegemonic position is contested by other masculinities by associating gentry masculinity with effeminacy. The following exchange between Connie and Mellors, where Connie asks Mellors to give his opinion on Clifford, is one example. Mellors calls Clifford "[t]he sort of youngish gentleman, a bit like a lady,

and no balls", and when Connie asks "What balls?", Mellors clarifies that he means "Balls! A man's balls!" (Lawrence, 1961: 204). Thus, Mellors links Clifford's status as a "youngish gentlemen" to a lack of "true" masculinity, creating a direct relationship between masculinity and men's bodies. Connie then wonders

if it is a question of that? [...] You say a man's got no brain, when he's a fool: and no heart, when he's mean; and no stomach when he's a funkier. And when he's got none of that spunky wild bit of a man in him, you say he's got no balls. When he's sort of tame. (Lawrence, 1961: 204-205)

Here, Connie points out the language that is used to describe men's bodily attributes, which are then linked to their personalities to justify essentialist views of masculinity. In short, Connie and Mellors' conversation on gender is essentialist because it conflates gender and sex. The double meaning of 'spunk' then refers to both a man's semen and his spirit, or 'wildness', as a man without 'balls' would also literally be without 'spunk'. However, this simultaneously links the dialogue back to the question of irrational masculinity versus rational masculinity. In Connie's speech, Lawrence relates masculinity to irrationality and wildness, rather than the rational, hegemonic intellectual masculinity. Lawrence further consolidates the idea of gentry as both effeminate and rational or lacking a wild irrationality by calling Clifford "tame [...] and nasty with it: like most such fellows, when you come up against 'em" (Lawrence, 1961: 205).

If Lawrence exalts irrational or 'true' masculinity by linking it to men's bodies, his focus on Clifford's affinity to the 'life of the mind' is problematic. This also relates back to Lusty's argument regarding the Victorian idea of male invulnerability. If a man's invulnerability is contested, then so is his masculinity (2014, 5). Lawrence's depiction of Clifford as a crippled war veteran is then somewhat problematic, because Clifford is impotent and therefore literally cannot access his 'spunk' or the irrational masculinity Lawrence values. At the start of the novel, Clifford is also hesitant to speak about sex and his shame and inability to talk about these issues frankly are also associated with femininity through

the way in which Lawrence frames them. When Clifford has invited some intellectuals and the conversation turns to sex, Clifford is unwilling to participate. He “rarely talked much at these times, he never held forth; his ideas were not really vital enough for it, he *was too confused and emotional*. Now he *blushed and looked uncomfortable*” (Lawrence, 1961: 36; emphasis added). Clifford’s emotional response to the situation reflects a kind of shame regarding his physicality and his inability to access it. Clifford only resolves this by moving away from the physical aspects of hegemonic masculinity. In the end, Clifford claims hegemony on the basis of his intellect and status as an aristocrat.

Clifford says that it is not noble blood but upbringing that shapes a person. Because Clifford is physically unable to produce an heir to Wragby by blood, he wishes to do so by raising another man’s child and making him into a Chatterley:

‘Give me the child of any normal, healthy, normally intelligent man, and I will make a perfectly competent Chatterley of him. It is not who begets us, that matters, but where fate places us. Place any child among the ruling classes, and he will grow up, to his own extent, a ruler. Put kings’ and dukes’ children among the masses, and they’ll be little plebeians, mass products. It is the overwhelming pressure of environment.’ (Lawrence, 1961: 190-191)

In other words, Clifford views class as something that is subject to environment. He wishes to make use of his privilege by exposing the heir of his estate to an environment that would provide him with the same hegemonic masculinity he himself enjoys, without needing to claim masculinity by sex alone. In other words, Clifford focuses more on gender than sex as a claim to hegemonic power. Effectively, Clifford grounds hegemonic masculinity in rationality and culture, in order to address any attacks on his masculinity he might receive because of his disability. Mellors criticizes this and argues masculinity has more to do with irrationality and the male body. Some parts of Clifford’s character could be part of a subversive portrayal of masculinity. How-

ever, Lawrence ultimately neutralizes these by casting Clifford as the antagonist.

Moreover, Lawrence’s focus on gender essentialism is not restricted to masculinity. Lawrence’s treatment of femininity is similarly focused on the body. His description of Connie is extremely feminine and “womanly” and uses her physical attributes to make claims about her personality, which he also depicts as more traditionally feminine than her contemporaries (Lawrence, 1961: 20). This could be seen as a form of emphasized femininity. In Connell’s theory of hegemonic masculinity, all femininities are structured in subordinate positions to men, so there is no such thing as a hegemonic femininity. Instead, Connell distinguishes a form of emphasized femininity “defined around compliance with this subordination” and is

oriented to accommodating the interests and desires of men. I will call this ‘emphasized femininity’. Others are defined centrally by strategies of resistance or forms of non-compliance. Others again are defined by complex strategic combinations of compliance, resistance and co-operation. (Connell, 1987: 183-184)

This idea of emphasized femininity applies to Connie, in the sense that she has many of the characteristics of traditional femininity. Lawrence states that “Connie was gifted from nature with this appearance of demure, submissive maidenliness, and perhaps it was part of her nature” (Lawrence, 1961: 133). What is telling is that Lawrence states that this is “appearance”, thus not essential, although Lawrence does seem to view masculinity as essential. However, submissiveness, even if only outwardly, does facilitate patriarchy. When Lawrence’s narration says that “perhaps it was part of her nature”, this ties it to the argument that Mellors and Connie alike make about men’s bodies and how they influence men’s behaviours. Connie’s outward appearance is also discussed as being old-fashioned:

Being a soft, ruddy, country-looking girl, inclined to freckles, with big blue eyes, and curling brown hair, and a soft voice, and rather strong, female loins she was considered a little old-fash-

ioned and ‘womanly’. She was not a ‘little pilchard sort of fish’, like a boy, with a boy’s flat breast and little buttocks. She was too feminine to be quite smart. (Lawrence, 1961: 20)

Here Lawrence juxtaposes Connie’s old-fashioned body with the more fashionable boyish flapper figure. According to descriptions of modern women or ‘flappers’ in contemporary novels, the more fashionable figure at the beginning of the twentieth century is the boyish one, with a slight figure and bobbed hair (Raub, 1994: 121). Lawrence here makes a connection between large hips and ‘womanliness’ and also establishes that type of body as old-fashioned. Effectively, Connie embodies a more traditional type of femininity than that of her time. Moreover, Lawrence describes Connie as “too feminine to be quite smart”. The different senses of the word smart have a range of gendered implications: If Lawrence is conflating Connie’s hyperfeminine body with her perceived intelligence, which is unlikely considering her fascination with the life of the mind, that would mean Lawrence perceives women as less intelligent by nature. However ‘smart’ could also mean elegant, ‘neat’ or ‘proper’ (“smart” adj, *OED*, 2017) bodies. This would mark Lawrence’s comments on ‘womanliness’ as a class commentary because it associates large hips and breasts with a lack of elegance, or ‘class’. In other words, Lawrence would be implying that Connie’s body is not of this time and that it is incompatible with her social class. Lawrence’s ideas on gender are contradictory because in Clifford’s character, rationality is tied to effeminacy to neutralize its hegemonic power. It seems as though the threat of Connie’s interest in “the life of the mind” is neutralized by Lawrence’s emphasis on her femininity (Lawrence, *Chatterley* 1961, 133). Her interest in the “life of the mind” and rationality could be seen as a resistance of traditional gender roles (Lawrence, 1961: 37). However, she also views the discussions Clifford has with his male friends as pointless, thinking that “[t]hey all alike talked at something, though what it was, for the life of her she couldn’t say” (Lawrence, 1961: 37). Lawrence’s rejection of rationality as a whole denies a claim to he-

gemony for both men and women. Bedient even goes so far as to say that “Lawrence extracts from Connie, as from his earlier heroines, obliteration of personality, in so far as she is to be the beloved [self]” (1966: 412). The reactionary attempt to destabilize hegemonic masculinity by linking rationality to effeminacy destabilizes Lawrence’s own argument when he claims Connie’s lack of elegance is due to her (emphasized) femininity. Furthermore, Lawrence makes the symbolic connection to an older pre-industrial revolution type of femininity clearer when he lets one of his characters give Connie a figurine “of an eighteenth-century lady, rather against her will” (Lawrence, *Chatterley* 1961: 133) and she is expected to act accordingly.

Lawrence’s negative attitude towards industrialization is then also related to the changes this has caused in gender roles, because according to him, industrialization is “[m]aking mincemeat out of the old Adam and the old Eve” (1961, 226). Moreover, in *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, this conflict is not just located in the metropolis, as Simmel argues, but has also permeated the countryside in which Lawrence sets his novel. This is illustrated in a scene where Clifford is driving his motorized wheelchair which “puffs slowly on” through the forget-me-nots and “squash[es] the little yellow cups of the creeping-jenny” (Lawrence, 1961: 191). Clifford’s chair then represents the industry that destroys the picturesque rural setting, which could represent the paradise Adam and Eve lived in without shame. According to Lawrence, industrialization has also changed the way people interact with their bodies:

The world is all alike: kill off the human reality, a quid for every foreskin, two for each pair of balls. What is cunt but machine-fucking! It’s all alike. Pay ‘em money to cut off the world’s cock. Pay money, money, money to them that will take spunk out of mankind, and leave ‘em all little twiddling machines”. (1961, 226)

Once more, Lawrence invokes the more conservative ‘politics of paradise’, which Gilbert and Gubar identify with reactionary attitudes towards gender. Lawrence describes how people’s interactions with

their bodies have changed, because there is more and more of an emphasis on objective value rather than on 'humanity'. The focus on rationality, which is tied to a hegemonic form of masculinity, has changed the way in which people relate to each other, taking the 'human reality' out of interaction. Lawrence argues that "[i]ntellectuals, artists, government, industrialists and workers" are "all frantically killing off the last human feeling, the last bit of their intuition, the last healthy instinct" (Lawrence, 1961: 227). Lawrence asserts that money has "cut off the world's cock", as it has taken the meaning and "spunk" out of mankind (*Chatterley*, 1961: 226). The industrial money economy has permeated society so deeply that even sex, one of the most intimate of human interactions, has become "machine fucking" (Lawrence, 1961: 227). However, Lawrence's focus on the "spunk of mankind" makes clear that he is not criticizing masculinity or traditional gender roles in general. Rather, Lawrence rejects the type of rational masculinity that has helped to "kill off the last human feeling". As has been established through examination of descriptions of Connie, who is more traditionally feminine than the boyish flappers, Lawrence values more traditional gender roles. This establishes Lawrence's response to a challenge of hegemony as reactionary.

Lawrence's depiction of masculinity and femininity in "Cocksure Women and Hensure Men" and *Lady Chatterley's Lover* establishes him as a gender essentialist as he depicts irrational masculinity that is embodied as the most favourable type of masculinity. In "Cocksure Women and Hensure Men", he establishes masculine women and feminine men as unnatural and urges women not to be 'cocksure' and rational. Moreover, rather than just criticizing industrialization, Lawrence rejects gender hegemony. This is because Lawrence rejects the hegemonic, intellectual, and rational masculinity that is associated with industrial capitalism. Subsequently, his response to gender hegemony can be viewed as reactionary. His critique of individualism can then also be seen as a critique on hegemonic masculinity, since Lawrence asserts that the tenderness he values so much can only

be established through physical relations. These physical relations then exclude masculinities and femininities that are not essentialised. Essentially, Lawrence's conflict is a conflict of modernity and individuality, which is necessarily also embedded in a conflict of gender. Lawrence's subsequent position on gender is reactionary, which can be seen in his positive portrayal of earlier forms of masculinity and femininity. Additionally, the ways in which Lawrence himself has caused conflict within the literary world is to some extent a reproduction of the conflict that is embedded in the novel itself. This includes criticism surrounding either the frank depictions of sex that Lawrence provides in his famous four letter words, but also that of Lawrence's denunciation of the intellectual, is inevitably rejected by intellectuals in the literary world. Ironically, the controversy and conflicting messages within Lawrence's work have ensured him a place within the tradition Lawrence felt conflicted about.

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