

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-47116-9 - The First and Second Lady Chatterley Novels

D. H. Lawrence Edited by Dieter Mehl and Christa Jansohn

Excerpt

[More information](#)

*THE FIRST AND SECOND
LADY CHATTERLEY NOVELS*

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NOTE ON THE TEXTS

The base-texts for this edition of the two early versions of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* are the manuscripts (1LC MS and 2LC MS respectively) in the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin (UT).

The Textual apparatus records all variants between the base-texts and the first printed editions, except for the following silent emendations.

- 1 Clearly inadvertent spelling errors and omitted full stops or quotation marks have been corrected.
- 2 Manifest errors in accidentals, such as omitted or misplaced apostrophes (e.g. o'clock, cant), spelling errors and uncompleted quotation marks have been silently corrected.
- 3 The first English editions (*Er*) use single quotation marks throughout where DHL used double quotes. This is only recorded when it is part of another variant.
- 4 At the end of a speech, before the speaker is denoted, Lawrence usually placed a comma *inside* the quotation marks, but sometimes the order is reversed or the comma is placed directly under the quotation marks. This has been silently regularised in accordance with Lawrence's most usual practice and that of all the published texts. He did not usually indicate the continuation of monologues and letters by reminder quotation marks before each paragraph; these were supplied in the printed texts and are repeated here.
- 5 Lawrence often used two or three different degrees of indentation, especially in dialogue. This was invariably regularised in all published texts. It has been regularised here.
- 6 Most of the printed texts add a hyphen to 'to-day', 'to-morrow', 'to-night', 'good-night' and 'good-bye'; in addition, they usually print 'agonize', 'apologize', 'realize', 'recognize', 'sympathize', etc., where Lawrence spelt these and their derivative forms with an 's'. In all these cases, his manuscript practice has been adopted.
- 7 Lawrence usually wrote titles without a stop (e.g. Mrs). The printed versions often added a stop. His manuscript practice has been adopted.

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- 8 The printed texts often use capital letters or small caps. for the first word or line of a new chapter. This has been emended to lower case, but recorded accurately, when the words occur as part of a textual apparatus entry.
- 9 Lawrence did not usually italicise punctuation, and variants in printed texts have only been recorded when they are part of an entry.
- 10 The printed editions consistently change DHL's 'game-keeper' to 'gamekeeper'. This has not been recorded.

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LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER
VERSION 1

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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.

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She married Clifford Chatterley in 1917, when he was home on leave. They had a month of honeymoon, and he went back to France. In 1918 he was very badly wounded, brought home a wreck. She was twenty-three years old.

After two years, he was restored to comparative health. But the lower part of his body was paralysed for ever. He could wheel himself about in a wheeled chair, and he had a little motor attached to a bath chair, so that he could even make excursions in the grounds at home.

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Clifford had suffered so much, that the capacity for suffering had to some extent left him. He remained strange and bright and cheerful, with his ruddy, quite handsome face, and his bright, haunted blue eyes. He had so nearly lost life, that what remained to him seemed to him precious. And he had been so much hurt, that something inside him had hardened, and could feel no more.

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Constance, his wife, was a ruddy, country-looking girl, with soft brown hair and sturdy body and a great deal of rather clumsy vitality. She had big, wondering blue eyes and a slow, soft voice, and seemed a real quiet maiden.

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As a matter of fact, she was one of those very modern, brooding women who ponder all the time, persistently and laboriously. She had been educated partly in Germany, in Dresden;^{*} indeed she had been hurried home when the war broke out. And though it filled her now with bitter, heavy irony to think of it, now that Germany, the German guns at least, had ruined her life, yet she had been most happy in Dresden. Or perhaps not happy, but thrilled. She had been profoundly thrilled, by the life, by the music, and by the Germanic, abstract talk, the sort of philosophising. The endless talk about things had thrilled her soul. The philosophy students, the political economy students, the young professors, literary or ethnological, classic or scientific, how they had talked! and how she had answered them back! and how they had listened! and how *she* had listened to them, because they listened to her!

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Came the war, and she had to feel bitter about it all. But Clifford, who was an old friend and a Cambridge intellect, was by no means a narrow patriot. He fought for his country, but he sympathised

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entirely with the young intelligent Germans who were, like himself, caught up in the huge machine that they hated. Clifford would still read Hauptmann, or Rainer Maria Rilke* aloud to Constance, when he was home on leave. Which pleased her very much. She felt she wanted to be “above” the war, and at least, above the war patriotism which exasperated her so much.

But by the time the *Untergang des Abendlands** appeared, Clifford was a smashed man, and her life was smashed. She was young, and remorselessly, almost crudely healthy. Under the blow, she just went silent. And she remained silent, pondering, pondering with an endless unresolved vagueness.

They removed to Wragby in 1920. It was Clifford’s home. His father had died, and he was now a baronet Wragby Hall* was a low, long old house, rather dismal, in a very fine park, in the midst of newly-developed colliery districts. You could hear the chuff of winding-engines, and the rattle of the sifting screens, and you could smell the sulphur of burning pit-hills, when the wind blew in a certain direction over the park.

Constance was now Lady Chatterley, with a crippled husband, a dreary old house in a defaced countryside, and a rather inadequate income. She determined to make the best of it. She could work and read and ponder, and she was the lonely, absolute mistress of the establishment. It pleased her to manage carefully, to live within their income. It pleased her to entertain anyone, anyone who would interest Clifford. But he preferred to be alone. She went on from day to day, from day to day, in a strange plodding way. And she had a peculiar comely beauty of her own, healthy and quiet and shy-seeming, but really withheld. And strangely isolated in herself, being unquestioned mistress in her own surroundings!

Clifford did not weigh upon her. He occupied himself, reading, writing, painting, pulling himself round the fine old gardens in his chair, or slowly, softly trundling across the park and into the wood, in his motor-chair. He gave orders to the gardeners and the wood-cutters and the game-keeper. He watched over his small estate. Sometimes, in the autumn, he would go in his chair, very slowly, into the wood, and wait for a shot at a pheasant. And sometimes, when he had great courage, he would take his paints and work at a small picture. He had once had a passion for painting, though he did little now. But he seemed almost happy, more happy than before his catastrophe.

Version 1

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Only occasionally he was anxious about Constance. She was very good to him; she loved him in her peculiar, neutral way. And he, of course, felt he could not live without her. They were true companions, as in the old days, before they married.

But, of course, there was the tragedy that had fallen upon them! He could never be a husband to her. She lived with him like a married nun, a sister of Christ. It was more than that, too. For of course they had had a month of real marriage. And Clifford knew that in her nature was a heavy, craving physical desire. He knew.

He himself could not brood. The instinct of self-preservation was so strong in him, he could only contemplate the thrill and the pleasure of life, or else fall into apathy. He would have days of apathy, which swallowed up what would else have been bitterness and anguish. Then the thrill of life returned. That he could go in his motor-chair into the woods, and, if he remained silent, see the squirrels gathering nuts, or a hedgehog nosing among dead leaves! Each time, it seemed like something he had captured in the teeth of fate. He felt a peculiar triumph over doom and death, even over life itself.—Only, he practically never went outside the park gates: He could not bear the miners to stare at him with commiseration. He did not mind his own gardeners and wood-men and gamekeeper so much. He paid them.

Sometimes Constance would walk beside his chair, into the park or the wood. Then she would sit under a tree, and the strange triumphant thrill he felt, in being alive and in the midst of life, would be a nervous gratification to her. He was reading Plato again, and would talk to her about the dialogues, often holding her hand as he sat.

“It’s awfully funny—strikes me as funny, *now*,” he said, “the excitement they got out of argument, and reason, and thought. They’re awfully like little boys who have just discovered that they can think, and are beside themselves about it. They’re so thrilled, that nothing else matters, only thinking and knowledge.—I suppose, far, far back, man must in the same way have discovered sex in himself, and been thrilled by *that* beyond all bounds.—Knowledge, nothing but mental knowledge! But Columbus discovering America was nothing to those early Greeks discovering that they’d got logical, reasoning *minds*.—It impresses me, even now!—Because, of course, my hand holding your hand seems to me as real as thought: doesn’t it to you? It is as important as a piece of knowledge, don’t you think?

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My hand holding your hand!—After all, that's life too! And it's what one couldn't do, after death. If one were dead, one's spirit still might think. I still might *think*, and I do believe, with Socrates, that I should *know* even more fully. But I couldn't hold your hand, could I?

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At least not actually physically. Though perhaps, of course, there would still be some sort of connection, some sort of clasp, perhaps more vital really. Perhaps I could still keep hold of your hand, even if I were dead. What do you think?"

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His big, bright, hard blue eyes were very strange, as they gazed into her face. His strong hand gripped her hand weirdly. She saw in him the triumphant thrill of conquest. He had made a weird conquest of something!

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But in his thrill of triumph, she felt chilled, as if the frost of his egoism nipped her. Was he so triumphant? What about herself, and her life: *her* bodily life? What about her own hand, that he gripped as if it were some trophy he would carry off to the other side the grave? She felt chilled and depressed, and a misery surged up in her. After all, she didn't have much to feel triumphant about—except his remarkable recovery. But if he was mutilated, what about herself?

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Her body had never been broken. She had not dragged herself out of the grave. On the contrary, she felt as if she were just being buried up to the waist, to keep him company.—She was heavily silent and unresponsive.

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A twist, a shadow, like an angry resentment went over his face.

"I know dear," he said, "that in a sense you're the worst loser. I know how I depend on you: live on you, in a sense."

"You know I want you to," she murmured.

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"I know! Yet there's no getting away from it, you're denied a very serious part of life: And the fact that you *are* denied it might work inside you, against your knowing it, and do you a lot of harm.—I want to speak of it now, so you'll know.—I don't want you to feel that you've brought me a sacrifice. I don't want you to feel like that, because I don't believe you're the right sort of woman to sacrifice that part of yourself. In fact, I married you because you were—a full-sexed woman. You *did* want me, before this happened, didn't you?"—She murmured an assent. "Oh, I know, and it's bitter. And I know you will go on wanting, even though I'm put out of your life forever, in that respect. It's rather horrible, but we've got to make the best of it. I want to say this to you: if ever there is another man

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whom you really want, whom you really want to make love to you: