

Lawrence: "A propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover" (1929)

"There are many ways of knowing, there are many sorts of knowledge. But 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. ... But relationship is threefold. First there is the relationship to the living universe. Then comes the relationship of man to woman. Then comes the relationship of man to man. And each is a blood-relationship, not mere spirit or mind. We have abstracted the universe into Matter and Force, we have abstracted men and women into separate personalities-personalities being isolated units, incapable of togetherness-so that all great relationships are bodiless, dead."

"It is no use asking for a Word to fulfil such a need [i.e. to establish a "vivid and nourishing relation to the cosmos and the universe"]. No Word, no Logos, no Utterance will ever do it. The Word is uttered, most of it: we need only pay true attention. But who will call us to the Deed, the great Deed of the Seasons and the year, the Deed of the soul's cycle, the Deed of a woman's life at one with a man's.... It is the Deed of life we have now to learn: we are supposed to have learnt the Word, but, alas, look at us. Word-perfect we may be, but Deed-demented. Let us prepare now for the death of our present "little" life, and the re-emergence in a bigger life, in touch with the moving cosmos."

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Lady Chatterley's Lover (1928)

"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, to have new little hopes. It is rather hard work: there is now no smooth road into the future."

"On the crown of the knoll where the oaks had stood, now was bareness; and from there you could look over the trees to the colliery railway, and the new works at Stacks Gate. Connie had stood and had looked, it was a breach in the pure seclusion of the wood. It let in the world."

"This is history. One England blots out another. The mines had made the halls wealthy. Now they were blotting them out, as they had already blotted out the cottages. The industrial England blots out the agricultural England. One meaning blots out another. And the continuity is not organic, but mechanical."

"The fault lay there, out there, in those evil electric lights and diabolical rattlings of engines. There in the world of the mechanical greedy, greedy mechanism and mechanized greed, sparkling with lights and gushing hot metal and roaring with traffic, there lay the vast evil thing, ready to destroy whatever did not conform. Soon it would destroy the wood, and the bluebells would spring no more. All vulnerable things must perish under the rolling and running of iron."

"A man with a gun strode swiftly, softly out after the dog, facing their way as if about to attack them; then stopped instead, saluted, and was turning down hill. It was only the new game-keeper, but he had *frightened* Connie, he seemed to emerge with such a swift menace."

"the ground of all value is physical experience. The only reality and the only marvel is to be alive in the flesh. At the same time an individual can only experience his aliveness through direct relationship with another living thing. He can fuse himself in contemplation with the life of trees, flowers, or animals, but the crucial experience of relatedness is, appropriately enough, a sexual experience with a woman: appropriate because it conforms to the order of nature, because for Lawrence touch is a more powerful mode of connectedness than sight, because sex is, in sensory and emotional terms, a stronger experience of connection than any other. All this can be put into a single doctrinal statement: to know and possess oneself is to have experienced a unity with live things and persons outside oneself."

"And it seemed she was like the sea, nothing but dark waves rising and heaving, heaving with a great swell, so that slowly her whole darkness was in motion, and she was ocean rolling its dark, dumb mass. Oh, and far down inside her the deeps parted and rolled asunder, in long, far-travelling billows, and ever, at the quick of her, the depths parted and rolled asunder from the center of soft plunging, as the plunger went deeper and deeper, touching lower, and she was deeper and deeper and deeper disclosed, and heavier the billows of her rolled away to some shore, uncovering her, and closer and closer plunged the palpable unknown, and further and further rolled the waves of herself away from herself, leaving her, till suddenly, in a soft, shuddering convulsion, the quick of all her plasm was touched, she knew herself touched, the consummation was upon her, and she was gone. She was gone, she was not, and she was born: a woman."

"This is John Thomas marryin' Lady Jane'.... 'An' we mun let Constance an' Oliver go their ways"

"John Thomas says goodnight to Lady Jane, a little droopingly, but with a hopeful heart."

"And dimly she realised one of the great laws of the human soul: that when the emotional soul receives a wounding shock, which does not kill the body, the soul seems to recover as the body recovers. But this is only appearance. It is, really, only the mechanism of reassumed habit. Slowly, slowly the wound to the soul begins to make itself felt, like a bruise which only slowly deepens its terrible ache, till it fills all the psyche. And when we think we have recovered and forgotten, it is then that the terrible after-effects have to be encountered at their worst."

"So it seemed to her everywhere. The colliers at Tevershall were talking again of a strike. And it seemed to Connie there again, it was not a manifestation of energy, it was the bruise of the war, that had been in abeyance, slowly rising to the surface and creating the great ache of unrest, the stupor of discontent. The bruise was deep, deep, deep – the bruise of the false and inhuman war. It would take many years for the living blood of the generations to dissolve the vast black clot of bruised blood, deep inside their souls and bodies. And it would need a new hope."

„After this, Clifford became like a child with Mrs. Bolton. He would hold her hand, and rest his head on her breast, and when she once lightly kissed him, he said " Yes! Do kiss me! Do kiss me! " And when she sponged his great blond body, he would say the same: "Do kiss me!" and she would lightly kiss his body, anywhere, half in mockery. And he lay with a queer, blank face like a child, with a bit of the wonderment of a child. And he would gaze on her with wide, childish eyes, in a relaxation of madonna-worship.... Mrs. Bolton was both thrilled and ashamed, she both loved and hated it. Yet she never rebuffed or rebuked him. And they drew into a closer physical intimacy, an intimacy of perversity, when he was a child stricken with an apparent candour and an apparent wonderment, that looked almost like a religious exaltation: the perverse and literal rendering of " except ye become again as a little child."-While she was the Magna Mater, full of power and potency, having the great blond child-man under her will and stroke entirely. The curious thing was that when this child-man, which Clifford was now and which he had been becoming for years, emerged into the world, it was much sharper and keener than the real man used to be. . . . It was as if his very passivity and prostitution to the Magna Mater gave him insight into material business affairs, and lent him a certain remarkable inhuman force. The wallowing in private emotion, the utter abasement of his manly self, seemed to lend him a second nature, cold, almost visionary, business-clever. In business he was quite inhuman."

„The man crouched solicitously by the wheel, and peered at the little engine.  
 "I'm afraid I know nothing at all about these mechanical things, Sir Clifford," he said calmly.  
 "If she has enough petrol and oil—"  
 "Just look carefully and see if you can see anything broken," snapped Clifford.  
 The man laid his gun against a tree, took off his coat and threw it beside it. The brown dog sat guard. Then he sat down on his heels and peered under the chair, poking with his finger at the greasy little engine, and resenting the grease-marks on his clean Sunday shirt.... "Have you looked at the rods underneath? asked Clifford. "See if they are all right!" The man lay flat on his stomach on the floor, his neck pressed back, wriggling under the engine and poking with his finger. Connie thought what a pathetic sort of thing a man was, feeble and smalllooking, when he was lying on his belly on the big earth."

„She sort of got harder and harder to bring off, and she'd sort of tear at me down there, as if it was a beak tearing at me. By God, you think a woman's soft down there, like a fig. But I tell you the old rampers have beaks between their legs, and they tear at you with it till you're sick. Self! self! self! all self! tearing and shouting! They talk about men's selfishness, but I doubt if it can ever touch a woman's blind beakishness, once she's gone that way. Like an old trull! And she couldn't help it. I told her about it, I told her how I hated it. And she'd even try. She'd try to lie still and let me work the business. She'd try. But it was no good. She got no feeling off it, from my working. She had to work the thing herself, grind her own coffee. And it came back on her like a raving necessity, she had to let herself go, and tear, tear, tear, as if she had no sensation in her except in the top of her beak, the very outside top tip, that rubbed and tore. That's how old whores used to be, so men used to say. It was a low kind of self-will in her, a raving sort of self-will: like in a woman who drinks. Well in the end I couldn't stand it. We slept apart"

„But when I had her, she'd never come-off when I did. Never! She'd just wait. If I kept back for half an hour, she'd keep back longer. And when I'd come and really finished, then she'd start on her own account, and I had to stop inside her till she brought herself off, wriggling and shouting. And when I'd gone little as anything, she'd clutch clutch clutch with herself down there, an' then she'd come-off, fair in ecstasy. An' then she'd say: That was lovely!"

„He roused in the woman a wild sort of compassion and yearning, and a wild, craving physical desire. The physical desire he did not satisfy in her: he was always come, and finished, so quickly: then shrinking down on her breast, and recovering somewhat his effrontery, while she lay dazed, disappointed, lost. But then she learnt soon to hold him, to keep him there inside her when his crisis was over. And there he was generous and curiously potent: he stayed firm inside her, given to her, while she was active, wildly, passionately active, coming to her own crisis. And as he felt the frenzy of her achieving her own orgiastic satisfaction from his hard, erect passivity, he had a curious sense of pride and satisfaction. "Ah, how good!" she whispered tremulously: and she became quite still, clinging to him. And he lay there in his own isolation, but somehow, proud."