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Arya Aryan, Daniel Norman and Douglass Virdee

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## ***Voli Me Tangere: Touch and Tenderness in the *Lady Chatterley* Novels***

**Annabel Banks**

Falmouth University

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In common with many modernist authors, Lawrence sought to go beyond the limitations of the nineteenth-century realist novel. With Conrad, Joyce and Woolf, he maintained that character meant more than the analysable personalities peopling the work of his predecessors, and although his innovations reflected contemporary advances in psychoanalysis he would not be drawn into the analytical cerebro-cognitive explorations of many of his fellow writers. Nevertheless, the period was an era of radical experimentation in the arts. Although Woolf famously stated that she and her fellow writers (including Lawrence as one of her ‘Georgians’<sup>1</sup>) must ‘reconcile [themselves] to a season of failures and fragments’ as they negotiated the altered subjectivity of a changed world,<sup>2</sup> Lawrence’s experimentalism was driven by deeper, philanthropic motives.<sup>3</sup> Rather than simply assimilate societal change (or create praxis of scientific theory), Lawrence fought to express, and ultimately heal, the modern fragmented individual, and broke with prevailing modernist habits to restore attention to both psychological and physical experience.<sup>4</sup>

By 1914 Lawrence had set out his aim to find a new way of delineating character: ‘You mustn’t look in my novel for the old stable *ego* of the character. There is another *ego*, according

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<sup>1</sup> Virginia Woolf, ‘Character in Fiction’ [later ‘Mr Bennet and Mrs Brown’]. *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, Ed. Andrew McNeillie. Volume 3. London: Harcourt, 1988. p. 503.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 416.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Whitworth, ‘Virginia Woolf and Modernism’. *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf*, Ed. Sue Roe and Susan Sellars. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. p. 160.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Levenson, ‘Form’s Body: Lewis’s *Tarr*’. *Modernism and the Fate of Individuality: Character and Form from Conrad to Woolf*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991. p. 124.

to whose action the individual is unrecognisable'.<sup>5</sup> He believed he had identified a truth the nineteenth-century view of character had overlooked, which required 'a deeper sense than any we've been used to exercise'.<sup>6</sup> This theory of 'blood consciousness', which he later formulated into his concept of bodily cognition or 'biological psyche' in *Fantasia and the Unconscious* (1922)<sup>7</sup> informs his belief that modern man must transcend the split between the body and the mind, and live from both, wholly and 'dynamically':

The supreme lesson of human consciousness is to learn how *not to know*. That is, how not to *interfere*. That is, how to live dynamically . . . and not statically, like machines driven by ideas and principles from the head.<sup>8</sup>

George M. Johnson considers *Women in Love* (1920) to be the novel in which Lawrence 'most fully engaged this dynamic psychology . . . the instinctive awareness below mental conception'.<sup>9</sup> If, as Johnson suggests, 'those who live from their dynamic consciousness have extended capacity for connection, and attain more individuality than those who operate from mental consciousness',<sup>10</sup> this work argues that in traversing the three versions of Lawrence's last novel, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (composed between 1926 and 1928) a truer model of Lawrence's doctrine of dynamic consciousness can be uncovered.<sup>11</sup>

The paralysis of reciprocal touch was one horrifying manifestation of the First World War, and it is only in the three *Lady Chatterley* novels that Lawrence explores this. Michael Squires suggests that Lawrence had a horror of the post-war mind 'making a puppet of the body, a vision of human intimacy rooted in the wilful ego rather than in the physical senses'.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *Letters II*. p. 183.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious and Fantasia of the Unconscious*, ed. Bruce Steele. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

<sup>8</sup> *Fantasia*, p. 111.

<sup>9</sup> George M. Johnson, 'From Edwardian to Georgian Psychical Realism'. *Dynamic Psychology in Modernist British Fiction*. Hampshire: Palgrave, 2006. p. 150.

<sup>10</sup> Johnson. p. 153.

<sup>11</sup> Hereafter: The first *Lady Chatterley's Lover* = LC1; *John Thomas and Lady Jane* = LC2; final *Lady Chatterley's Lover* = LC3.

<sup>12</sup> Michael Squires, *The Creation of Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983. p. 3.

The *Lady Chatterley* novels were designed to challenge that vision, as Lawrence's letters reveal; for as 'the way to gentle re-union is phallic, and through tenderness',<sup>13</sup> the three versions of the *Lady Chatterley* novels manifest (with increasing sophistication) the 'attempt to be in touch, to give the throb of explicit life'.<sup>14</sup> I argue that a detailed analysis of the three versions, read against Lawrence's specific concept of touch, shows that each succeeding version better articulates Lawrence's doctrine of touch to become artistically more coherent.

Lawrence strove to demonstrate that the body is wiser than the intellect. He was sure 'we can go wrong in our minds. But what our blood believes and feels and says, is always true'.<sup>15</sup> If the individual would embrace the instinctive knowledge of the body as a complement to the rational knowledge of the mind, then true relationships, expressed through valid touch, could be possible. His concern centred on the damage intellectually-based relationships were having upon both the individual and society, arguing that the cultural move towards egoism had resulted in modern man having almost 'no real human relationships at all'.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, the state of being 'cut off from vital contacts' has become socially desirable,<sup>17</sup> leading the damaged man to exult in the 'triumph of his own emptiness' –an accurate description of the final incarnation of Clifford Chatterley.<sup>18</sup> Lawrence envisioned the imbalance of mind and body as internal turmoil:

Blood-consciousness overwhelms, obliterates, and annuls mind-consciousness. Mind-consciousness extinguishes blood consciousness, and consumes the blood. We are all of us conscious both ways. And the two ways are antagonistic in us. They will always remain so. That is our cross.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> *Letters VI*. p. 324.

<sup>14</sup> *Letters VI*. p. 378.

<sup>15</sup> *Letters I*. p. 503.

<sup>16</sup> D. H. Lawrence, 'We Need One Another'. *D. H. Lawrence: Late Essays and Articles*, ed. James T. Boulton. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. p.297.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> D. H. Lawrence, 'Nobody Loves Me'. *D. H. Lawrence: Late Essays and Articles*. p. 320.

<sup>19</sup> D. H. Lawrence, 'Nathaniel Hawthorne and *The Scarlet Letter*'. *Studies in Classic American literature*, ed. Ezra Greenspan, Lindeth Vasey and John Worthen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. p. 83.

Despite the apparent finality of this statement from 1923, in fact Lawrence continued to maintain that it was possible to reconnect body and mind, and used such diverse literary positions as fiction, art, science and mysticism to call for man to achieve blood consciousness, which he upheld as his ‘great religion’.<sup>20</sup>

Lawrence held the greatest change could be achieved through his novels. Accusing the disciplines of religion, philosophy and science of trying to force a ‘stable equilibrium’,<sup>21</sup> Lawrence saw the novel as a means of exploring lives too complex to negotiate from a ‘*Thou shalt, Thou shan’t*’ position.<sup>22</sup> For him, novels were ‘the highest example of subtle interrelatedness man has discovered’.<sup>23</sup> This subtlety was embraced as the vital didactic tool capable of informing (and ultimately transforming) a struggling society:

. . . to be whole man alive: that is the point. And at its best, the novel, and the novel supremely, can help you . . . in the novel you can see, plainly, when the man goes dead, the woman goes inert. You can develop an instinct for life, if you will, instead of a theory of right and wrong, good and bad.<sup>24</sup>

To promote that ‘instinct for life’ he emphasises moments of physical intensity, conveying those processes that the body passes through in moments of heightened awareness. As Fiona Beckett has noted, one of Lawrence’s chief aims is ‘to cast the *non-verbal* into language’,<sup>25</sup> and this is certainly evident throughout the works of his maturity, particularly in the novels (culminating in *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*) but also in the shorter fiction, where it can be shown that haptic communication is a recurrent phenomenon.

As early as ‘Daughters of the Vicar’ (1914),<sup>26</sup> for example, the main character Louisa achieves a sense of connection as she washes Alfred’s back: ‘her feeling of separateness passed

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<sup>20</sup> *Letters I*. p. 503.

<sup>21</sup> D. H. Lawrence, ‘Morality and the Novel’. *Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays*. Ed. Bruce Steele. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985. p. 150.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> D. H. Lawrence, ‘Why the Novel Matters’. *Study of Thomas Hardy*. p. 172.

<sup>25</sup> Fiona Beckett, ‘Lawrence and Psychoanalysis’. *The Cambridge Companion to DH Lawrence*, ed. Anne Fernihough. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. p. 223.

<sup>26</sup> In *The Prussian Officer and Other Stories*, ed. John Worthen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

away: she ceased to draw back from contact with him'.<sup>27</sup> True to Lawrence's understanding of the sense, touch is also explicitly invested with emotion: in 'Odour of Chrysanthemums' (1914),<sup>28</sup> Elizabeth washes her dead husband, and her touch is 'humble on his body'.<sup>29</sup> In the later 'You Touched Me'<sup>30</sup> (1920) the sense is fore-grounded in the title, literally connecting the second-person pronoun 'you' to the first person 'me'. In the story, a woman touches a sleeping man. Although the touch is rationally understood to have been a mistake, the effect upon the recipient is dramatic and he presses her to marry him. Eventually she agrees, suggesting that the touch had been a promise unconsciously made by her biological psyche.

Non-sexual touching (although arguably erotic and violent)<sup>31</sup> in 'The Blind Man' (1920),<sup>32</sup> produces a level of intimacy that frightens Bertie and leaves him raw, as if he were 'a mollusc whose shell were broken'.<sup>33</sup> This fear stems from incompatibly coded communication (Bertie's intelligence and Maurice's physicality) which had interrupted the flow of bodily communication. By concluding that the attempt at intimacy results in a 'dark and inconclusive struggle' between the two men,<sup>34</sup> however, the critic Paul Delaney neglects to note the effect upon Maurice, who Lawrence deliberately tells us had been filled with 'hot, poignant love'.<sup>35</sup> Here, what is a frightening touch for one has given 'the delicate fulfilment of mortal friendship' to the other,<sup>36</sup> illustrating how Lawrence regarded mental intervention between the toucher and the touched as a negative influence inviting perversion, a phenomenon he returns to in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in the character of Clifford.

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<sup>27</sup> D. H. Lawrence, 'Daughters of the Vicar'. p. 73.

<sup>28</sup> For example in *The Prussian Officer and Other Stories*.

<sup>29</sup> 'Odour of Chrysanthemums'. p. 199.

<sup>30</sup> 'Hadrian [You Touched Me]'. *England, My England and Other Stories*, ed. Bruce Steele. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

<sup>31</sup> Santanu Das, *Touch and Intimacy in First World War Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. p. 235.

<sup>32</sup> In *England, My England and Other Stories*.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>34</sup> Paul Delaney, "'We Shall Know Each Other Now': Message and Code in D. H. Lawrence's 'The Blind Man'". *Contemporary Literature*, 26 (1985): p. 39.

<sup>35</sup> 'The Blind Man', p. 62.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

Indeed, in the three versions of the *Lady Chatterley* novels the opening six words remain the same: ‘ours is essentially a tragic age’. Later, in his essay *A Propos of Lady Chatterley’s Lover* (1929) Lawrence expanded this refrain: ‘Never was an age more sentimental, more devoid of real feeling, more exaggerated in false feeling than our own’.<sup>37</sup> He believed that touch was essential for expunging ‘false feeling’, if only people would recognise their alternative centres of consciousness and live from them. In *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* (1921) he had formalised his theories of a ‘primal consciousness’ to be found in four great nerve centres in the body,<sup>38</sup> and in its successor, *Fantasia of the Unconscious* (1922) he explains how the sense of touch functions, and how important hands are in their capacity as the main instruments of touch:

The breast-touch is the fine alertness of quivering curiosity, the belly-touch is a deep thrill of delight and avidity. Correspondingly, the hands and arms are instruments of superb delicate curiosity, and deliberate execution.<sup>39</sup>

Marrying anatomical terms to his poetic prose style provided his argument with powerful emotional impact. Like Joyce and Proust, Lawrence criticised science as one of the ‘possible orders of understanding rather than an ultimate form of truth statement’.<sup>40</sup> He proposed that emotions are physical, and therefore haptically transmittable; controversially, the brain is relegated to the mere ‘terminal instrument of the dynamic consciousness’.<sup>41</sup> In *A Propos* Lawrence abandons explicit anatomical references to emphasise a more general approach to the biological psyche:

The body’s life is the life of sensations and emotions. The body feels real hunger, real thirst, real joy in the sun or the snow, real pleasure in the smell of roses or the look of a lilac bunch; real anger, real sorrow, real love, real

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<sup>37</sup> *Lady Chatterley’s Lover and A Propos of Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, ed. Michael Squires. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993. p. 312.

<sup>38</sup> *Letters III*, p. 466.

<sup>39</sup> *Fantasia*, p. 98.

<sup>40</sup> Michael Bell, ‘The Metaphysics of Modernism’. *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism*, ed. Michael Bell. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. p. 12.

<sup>41</sup> *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious and Fantasia and the Unconscious*, p. 41.

tenderness, real warmth, real passion, real hate, real grief. All the emotions belong to the body, and are only recognised by the mind.<sup>42</sup>

Here, the mind is merely an echo of the body, rather than an equal oppositional entity. The polarity of opposition between the male and female in sex, however, is described as a primal energising force:

The blood of the man and the blood of the woman are two eternally different streams that can never be mingled . . . and in sex the two rivers touch and renew one another without ever commingling and confusing. We know it. The phallus is a column of blood, that fills the valley of blood of a woman. The great river of male blood touches to its depth the great river of female blood, yet neither breaks its bounds.<sup>43</sup>

Crucial to Lawrence's view here is that the two forces touch, but never commingle (or if they do, then only briefly, before 'separating again, and travelling on'),<sup>44</sup> because to touch necessarily entails boundaries or membranes. Although sex is described as the most fulfilling touch, this is not merely because the act is skin on skin: the mystery goes deeper, and Lawrence's sexual touch is the 'most healing, the most revealing, and the most vulnerable'.<sup>45</sup> It is a retention of self even while sharing, and a way for separate entities to communicate without becoming one, or 'as near as possible clash into a oneness'.<sup>46</sup> The communication of the body (sufficiently through touch, intensely through sex) energises and fulfils, without either partner losing their individuality. Freedom, for Lawrence, 'submits to the yoke and leash of love, but never forgets its own proud individual singleness, even while it loves and yields'.<sup>47</sup>

This dichotomy between assimilation and separateness is played out fully across the three *Lady Chatterley* novels, where Lawrence's 'attempt to be in touch, to give the throb of explicit life' functions as metaphor for the sexual content.<sup>48</sup> To communicate his beliefs

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<sup>42</sup> *A Propos*, p. 311.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 325.

<sup>44</sup> 'We Need One Another', p. 302.

<sup>45</sup> Kathryn A. Walterscheid, *The Resurrection of the Body: Touch. D. H. Lawrence*. New York: Peter Lang, 1993. p. 56.

<sup>46</sup> *Fantasia*, p. 134.

<sup>47</sup> D. H. Lawrence, *Women in Love*, ed. David Farmer, Lindeth Vasey and John Worthen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987. p. 254.

<sup>48</sup> *Letters VI*. p. 378.



Lawrence developed his distinctive style and method through addressing the need for haptic communication. This is clearly demonstrated in a comparison of the three versions, through the improved realisation of the main characters, Clifford, Connie and Parkin/Mellors.

Perhaps the most dramatic change with regard to ‘touch’ occurs in the character of Clifford. Michael Bell notes that the characters of *LCI* are conceived as simple personalities,<sup>49</sup> and although it is untrue that the characters are so roughly sketched that we cannot engage with them on a psychological level,<sup>50</sup> I agree that Lawrence strove for a more complex effect in each revision. Clifford certainly develops from the first version’s cheerful, if pathetic, wounded soldier to the ‘unusually non-tactile’ life-damaging intellectual who develops an infantilised and perverse form of touch with his nurse,<sup>51</sup> Ivy Bolton. In *LCI* Clifford’s relationship with his wife stifles Connie. Even before his injury he ‘had always hated sex: hated anything that was beyond his own egoistic control’,<sup>52</sup> and he had therefore ‘never felt Constance as another flowing life . . . never warmly felt her, not for a moment’.<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, he still uses touch to manifest his claim on Connie, holding her hand in the evening as they discuss Plato’s dialogues (when the ‘black horse’ of passion is roused in Connie once more).<sup>54</sup> In this version Clifford struggles to balance the mind and the body in terms that accommodate his impotence, keeping Connie at his side, her life aligned with his. As he remarks:

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! . . . Because, of course, my hand holding your hand seems as to me as real as thought: doesn’t it to you? It is as important a piece of knowledge, don’t you think? My hand holding your hand! – After all, that’s life too! . . . perhaps I could still keep hold of your hand, even if I were dead.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> *The First and Second Lady Chatterleys*, ed. Dieter Mehl and Christa Jansohn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

<sup>50</sup> ‘Love and ‘Chatter’. *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*’ *D. H. Lawrence: Language and Being*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. p. 211.

<sup>51</sup> Walterscheid, p. 77. n24.7.

<sup>52</sup> *LCI*, p. 216.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* p. 22.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* p. 27.

<sup>55</sup> *LCI*, p. 9.

Not surprisingly, Connie is unnerved by this; his ‘strong hand gripped her weirdly’, causing her to feel ‘chilled and depressed’ as she is forced to wonder ‘what about *her* life, *her* bodily life?’<sup>56</sup> Without sexualising the impulse, she instinctively rejects his appeal to join him in a life of mere mental knowledge.

Clifford uses his touch on Connie to reaffirm his dominance, and, given his sexual paralysis, bodily communication is achieved through the laying on of hands. In *LCI* Lawrence allows the wounded man to engage physically, in a form of communication exemplifying his earlier dictum: ‘my hand is alive, it flickers with a life of its own . . . just as much me as my brain, my mind, or my soul’.<sup>57</sup> This physically communicated dominion restricts Connie, but is more unfortunate than malicious. Nevertheless, instead of a Cartesian dualism where there is some physical improvement, Clifford’s ‘touch’ is a manifestation of the mind, rather than a separate entity.

Although the possibility of Connie’s having an extra-marital affair had been suggested by Clifford, he had imagined ‘an abstract man, an abstract love affair; it was easily dismissed, in his head’.<sup>58</sup> When Connie announces that she may have a child he plants a kiss upon her wedding ring, the social symbol of the tie between the couple even when there is no physical link.<sup>59</sup> Later Connie rejects the gesture and as her body begins to waken to its physical life,<sup>60</sup> she considers Clifford ‘semi-insane’ and ‘could not bear him to kiss her hand’.<sup>61</sup> It is a first move away from the previously-agreed role of conventional wife, one that she eventually finds she cannot play whilst bearing the child of another man. Her gradual withdrawal from Clifford, signalled by her reluctance to be touched, is significant: as Delaney notes, ‘for Lawrence, to

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> D. H. Lawrence, ‘Why the Novel Matters’. *Study of Thomas Hardy*. p. 167.

<sup>58</sup> *LCI*, p. 11.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.* p. 214.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.* p. 215.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

touch another person is a gesture of recognition – and one that creates a mutual responsibility if accepted'.<sup>62</sup> Here, however, acceptance becomes gradual rejection.

By *LC2*,<sup>63</sup> however, no touch occurs between the couple in the first chapter. Significantly, the first touch comes in the woodland scene when Clifford worries about Connie going on a family holiday without him. But Connie's awareness is focused elsewhere, sensing 'another presence' in the wood that the proximity of Clifford blocks: 'he wouldn't let her feel it'.<sup>64</sup> Clifford is reduced to asking for her touch, 'determined to make her aware of him', unconsciously attempting to force Connie into his 'pattern', 'perverted from any natural fullness of a human being'.<sup>65</sup> Here, Clifford derides sex as 'only an incident, as dinner is an incident', exemplifying Lawrence's vigorous rejection of the view in his letters that 'sex is a mental reaction nowadays, and a hopelessly cerebral affair'.<sup>66</sup> For Lawrence, sex should be removed from the head ('an evil and destructive thing')<sup>67</sup> to become the perfect use of touch for bodily communion, very different from the promiscuous sex of the 'advanced young' who take sex 'like a cocktail'.<sup>68</sup> To accept sex as mere 'incident', (less in meaning than the food and drink it is compared to, for such are essential for survival) would be a triumph of the cerebral over the physical, and Connie's healthy (if sexually un-awakened) physicality would be damaged. Protecting herself, she wants to have no contact with people; yet there is still the life of the body struggling inside her, a wild creature, a 'tiger-cat',<sup>69</sup> natural and physical, wanting to mate and reacting violently to being constrained.

When Clifford tries to coerce her to accept his way of thinking about the bodily life, Connie feels 'life die out of her, ebb away' as her 'blood seemed to recoil in slow, heavy

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<sup>62</sup> Paul Delaney, *D. H. Lawrence's Nightmare: The Writer and his Circle in the Years of the Great War*. New York: Basic Books, 1978. p. 376.

<sup>63</sup> In *The First and Second Lady Chatterleys*.

<sup>64</sup> *LC2*, p. 214.

<sup>65</sup> D. H. Lawrence, 'Give Her a Pattern'. *D. H. Lawrence: Late Essays and Articles*. p. 163.

<sup>66</sup> *Letters VI*, p. 331.

<sup>67</sup> *Letters V*, p. 204.

<sup>68</sup> *Lady Chatterley's Lover and A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover*. p. 310.

<sup>69</sup> *LC2*, p. 250.

waves'.<sup>70</sup> She only feels a 'sense of doom' about leaving for the holiday. Clifford is haptically communicating his will to her, and she expresses her resentment in a stifling simile, saying 'you've got your will wrapped around me like a hundred arms'.<sup>71</sup> Connie defines her need for release in terms of touch, trying to escape Clifford's mental bullying which is compared to an 'octopus tentacle'.<sup>72</sup>

Despite his determination to master his wife, the Clifford of *LC2* is a more sympathetic character than his later version. By *LC3*,<sup>73</sup> Clifford has been transformed into a cerebral, cold, and perverse figure. Trudi Tate argues that this is so that the character can function as a symbol, as a 'mind without body; reason without passion',<sup>74</sup> which supports Lawrence's thoughts on Clifford in *A Propos*: 'purely a personality . . . warmth is gone, the hearth is cold'.<sup>75</sup> It is certainly significant that there is even less physical contact in *LC3* than in previous versions. For example, the hand-holding scenes have been wholly excised:

There was nothing between them. She never even touched him nowadays, and he never touched her. He never even took her hand and held it quietly. No! And because they were so utterly out of touch, he tortured her with declarations of idolatry. It was the cruelty of utter impotence. And she felt her reason would give way, and she would die.<sup>76</sup>

Replacing touch with 'declarations of idolatry' symbolises both the personal and the societal move from 'real' touch into rhetoric and empty gesture. In fact, Lawrence scorned the notion of 'sticking a woman on a pedestal', seeing it as one of 'many popular dodges for avoiding contact and killing contact'.<sup>77</sup> Clifford's perception of Connie as an untouchable idol is therefore contrasted with Mellors's joy in her physicality.

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<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 241.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 243.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 243.

<sup>73</sup> *Lady Chatterley's Lover and A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover*.

<sup>74</sup> Trudi Tate, *Modernism, History and the First World War*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998. p. 103.

<sup>75</sup> *A Propos*, p. 333.

<sup>76</sup> *LC3*, p. 112.

<sup>77</sup> 'We Need One Another'. *Late Essays and Articles*. p. 299.

In *LC3*, the biographies of Connie and Clifford are more detailed and shown to be more at odds with one another than in previous versions. This provides greater insight into their psychological and emotional alienation, as they are ‘so intimate, and so bodily out of touch’.<sup>78</sup> By tracing Connie’s previous love affairs, Lawrence adumbrates her potential for physical and mental reconciliation. She is not a virgin, is not ‘untouched’, and although her love-making has not been successful, at least she is open to the possibilities of physical love: moreover, from her bohemian artist father she has inherited a strong self-determination which has protected her from Clifford’s attempts to neuter her. Here, too, the use of touch and non-touch in the descriptions of Connie and Clifford’s relationship have changed, making obvious the alterations to Clifford’s character. He is a cold intellectual who writes stories that include ‘no touch, no actual contact’, for he has ‘no connection with people’ and ‘Connie feels it’. Her sympathy and contact with him are described as a one-way circuit, in a frustrated feedback loop that uses touch in its wider metaphorical sense. ‘He was remotely interested, like a man looking down a microscope, or up a telescope’ but ‘not in actual touch with anything or anybody’.<sup>79</sup>

It is this inability to transcend his cold self-contained egoism that precipitates Clifford’s decline at the close of the novel. His perverted relationship with Ivy Bolton develops as a kind of mirror image to that of Connie’s and Parkin/Mellors, and it is noteworthy that both sets of relationships become more intimate and complex across the three versions. In *LC1*, for example, Ivy is a ‘fifth columnist within Wragby Hall’,<sup>80</sup> who ‘disliked’ Clifford, even as she sympathised with him, for ‘in her own silent way, she hated all the masters’,<sup>81</sup> blaming them for her miner husband’s death and the insulting scheme of compensation payment. However, her hatred does not include Connie, whom she pities because she had ‘never known what it

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<sup>78</sup> *LC3*, p. 18.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>80</sup> Derek Britton, *Lady Chatterley: The Making of the Novel*. London: Unwin, 1998. p. 136.

<sup>81</sup> *LC1*, p. 28.

was for a man to hold her . . . as she, Ivy, had known!’<sup>82</sup> Through this Ivy becomes an unexpected ally to the illicit relationship between the Lady and her Gamekeeper, becoming ‘quite ruthless in her attempts to release Constance from the grip of her husband’.<sup>83</sup>

In *LC1*, too, Ivy only touches Clifford as part of her nursing duties and their relationship develops no further. In *LC2*, however, Lawrence develops their relationship into a struggle for supremacy. Ivy tells Connie about her relationship with her dead husband: ‘It’s the touch of him that I could never really get over’ – and that the touch of the ‘right man’ can last for years’.<sup>84</sup> Ivy’s view of Clifford as ‘Sir Bossy!’ changes to being ‘fascinated’,<sup>85</sup> even as he ‘calmly frustrated the will of his nurse’.<sup>86</sup> Although her words and manner are ‘so soft, so submissive’, Ivy concentrates on ‘subduing him’ though her ‘deft . . . soft, caressive touch’.<sup>87</sup> Clifford’s initial resentment at his dependency soon becomes a deep desire to be touched: he ‘wanted it everyday . . . he enjoyed her handling of him. He really got a voluptuous pleasure from her soft, lingering touch’.<sup>88</sup> Though Clifford is careful to retain his mastery over a servant, their changing relationship is illustrated by the chess lessons in which Ivy is ‘flushed and tremulous as a young girl, touching her knight or her pawn with uncertain fingers’.<sup>89</sup> Clifford (who is a Baronet, and therefore an actual Knight) is unknowingly becoming her pawn, even as he smiles ‘with superiority’ as he teaches her his rules for touch, the incantation ‘*j’adoube*’ (‘I adjust’) symbolising the cerebrally-instigated verbal constrictions on non-reciprocal touch.<sup>90</sup>

In *LC3*, the politics of touch have been expanded even further. Clifford’s submission, the desire to be touched and the chess lessons all survive, but through them Ivy acts as an agent

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid. p. 42.

<sup>84</sup> *LC2*, p. 385.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid. p. 297.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid. p. 316.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid. p. 317.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid. p. 317.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid. p. 318.

of deliberate infantilisation. Her class antagonism (like Parkin's communism) has been muted in order to make way for the greater psychological complexity in the relationship, and her role as paid 'toucher' expands into a pseudo-sexual relationship when Clifford begins to return her touch. In an inverse-mirroring of Connie's and Mellors's relationship, Clifford must be a baby as Mellors is a man. Ivy tells Connie that '[a]ll men are babies, when you come to the bottom of them',<sup>91</sup> and of course, in Ivy's nursing duties, she must literally attend to Clifford's bottom and genitals. Here, the reason for the muted class awareness becomes clear; the mastery Clifford claims over Ivy becomes the mastery of a baby over its mother: 'Only when he was alone with Ivy did he really feel a lord and master . . . and he let her shave him or sponge all over his body as if he were a child, really as if he were a child'.<sup>92</sup> This situation reaches its climax when Connie's letter arrives explaining that she will not return to Wragby. Ivy manipulates Clifford into weeping in her arms: he 'had let himself go altogether, at last',<sup>93</sup> and 'after this, Clifford became like a child'.<sup>94</sup> When Ivy washes Clifford she kisses his body, and 'he would put his hand into her bosom, and feel her breasts, and kiss them in excitement, the exaltation of perversity, of being a child when he was a man'.<sup>95</sup> Clifford as exemplar of the misuse of touch is complete, for he perverts both an important stage of haptic development, the 'pure circuit' of a child touching its mother, and the sexual touching between a man and a woman.<sup>96</sup>

Connie's character also develops in complexity and psychological depth from the first to the third versions, demonstrated by her increasing ability to create and accept 'real' touch. She exhibits the Lawrencian female-centred logic of emotion when she and Parkin first make

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<sup>91</sup> *LC3*, p. 98.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.* p. 109.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.* p. 290.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.* p. 291.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> *Fantasia*, p. 108.

love in *LC1*,<sup>97</sup> sparked by her response to the soft touch of the pheasant chicks. As she cries Parkin touches her back, the area where Lawrence maintained the ‘sense of touch is not acute. There the voluntary centres act in resistance’.<sup>98</sup> Thus, the first touch between the lovers is not sexual, not focused on Lawrence’s prime areas of touch, the breast and the belly. Sex is not described in detail in this version, and it is not until after the second time they make love, and Parkin challenges Connie to admit that she feels ‘lowered’ by having sex with a servant, that she explains how she feels. Significantly, she touches his face, the ‘great window of the self’,<sup>99</sup> and says ‘[n]ot when I touch you . . . when I touch you, you are only lovely to me’.<sup>100</sup> The blood-consciousness communication supersedes her social and intellectual conditioning, and when Parkin asks in a ‘soft, doubtful voice’ whether she truly likes to touch him, she can only repeat ‘[y]ou’re lovely to touch!’<sup>101</sup>

In *LC2*, the triggering mechanism of touching the pheasant chicks is expanded, with Connie’s insistence that she ‘*must* touch them’ even if she is fearful of being pecked.<sup>102</sup> When Parkin gives her a chick Connie weeps, and his hand moves quickly from her back to her ‘loins’ in a ‘blind caress’, and then ‘his hand slid slowly round her body, touching the breasts that hung inside her dress’,<sup>103</sup> this time completing the back-touch through to the haptically important zones of breast and belly. After they make love in the hut, the face-touching is repeated, although significantly reversed, for it is Parkin who reaches for Connie: ‘he touched her face with his fingers, softly, as a man touches the woman of his desire. That made her proud’.<sup>104</sup> The question of remorse is also reassigned in this version: Connie asks ‘you aren’t sorry, are you?’ and Parkin’s response is to stroke her cheek and her throat, Lawrence’s ‘centre

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<sup>97</sup> ‘Give her a Pattern’, *passim*.

<sup>98</sup> *Fantasia*, p. 98.

<sup>99</sup> *Fantasia*, p. 99.

<sup>100</sup> *LC1*, p. 38.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> *LC2*, p. 327.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 328.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 329.



of dynamic cognition',<sup>105</sup> although Connie, still in her constrained physicality, really wanted the conventional embrace and kiss.<sup>106</sup> The effect of these reversals includes Parkin's sexual awakening, rather than focusing purely on that of Connie. Instead of Connie coming to Parkin, the drawing together is mutual: 'though they never touched, they seemed to be coming strangely, closely into touch, a powerful touch that held them both'.<sup>107</sup> At their later meeting, Parkin exclaims '[e]h! Tha'rt lovely to touch' and 'I could die for the touch of a woman like thee',<sup>108</sup> making it clear that even as Connie is reclaiming her bodily life, so is Parkin, whose relationship with Bertha Coutts, (the 'bad woman')<sup>109</sup> had left his heart 'exhausted and dead'.<sup>110</sup> In *LC3*, the final version of the text, the face-touching is done by Mellors as Connie lies in the hut: 'the hand stroked her face softly, softly, with infinite soothing and assurance'.<sup>111</sup> Here Lawrence revised his manuscript from 'he' to 'hand',<sup>112</sup> emphasising the active and reciprocal touch; this 'contact with a woman' is most important because he had 'feared it'.<sup>113</sup> Mellors is, in fact, in as much in need of Connie's healing touch as she is of his.

Lawrence heightens the importance of this healing by referring to the Bible and using Biblical imagery. In *LC1* Connie identifies herself with a figure from the New Testament:

And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment: For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.<sup>114</sup>

In this first version this is conveyed through Connie's thoughts:

'I must be very careful' she said to herself, 'not to lose my touch with *him*. It is he who connects me up with real life . . . After all, I'm like the woman who touched Jesus. You touch the living body and the flow starts in you, the dead

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid. p.143.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid. p. 330.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid. p. 326.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid. p. 335-6.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid. p. 504.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid. p. 498.

<sup>111</sup> *LC3*, p. 116.

<sup>112</sup> See *LC3*, p. 116 (n22).

<sup>113</sup> *LC3*, p. 88.

<sup>114</sup> Matthew 9: 20-21.

flux dried up. Oh, if I can only keep in touch all my life, all my life . . . I hope I never need lose touch again'.<sup>115</sup>

The italicised pronoun is akin to the capitalisation it conventionally receives when indicating Christ in the Bible. Instead of being a passive recipient in the healing process, here the woman takes an active part, seeking Jesus out to touch him without permission. Her illicit touch in search of healing can be paralleled with the adulterous touch between Connie and Parkin, which can also be read as a desperate act by those who require healing. In *LC2*, however, the thought is removed from Connie and embedded in the narrative: 'She had really touched him at last, like the woman who touched Jesus and who found the world changed'.<sup>116</sup> In the third version, however, no comparison is made at all, perhaps because Lawrence was concerned lest readers be misled by the comparisons with Christian divinity. In 'The Escaped Cock' (1929), however, whose compositional history is intertwined with that of the second and third *Lady Chatterley* novels, Lawrence shows the Christ-figure healed by the power of touch. Significantly, it was written in the short break between *LC2* and *LC3*, when Lawrence was reflecting on the theme of resurrection that was essential to his vision of the renewing life of the body.<sup>117</sup>

In opposition to the democracy of touch is the state of 'non-touching', a pulling back from direct contact that is once again explored through Biblical allusion, the traditional '*noli me tangere*' of Christianity:

Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.<sup>118</sup>

In all three versions of *Lady Chatterley* and in his other writings Lawrence uses this phrase in two ways. Firstly, it is a motif for refusing the touch that damages, either because the recipient is not ready to receive it, or because the giver of the touch is in some way tainted:

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<sup>115</sup> *LC1*, p. 68.

<sup>116</sup> *LC2*, p. 38

<sup>117</sup> James Cowan, 'Epiphanies in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*'. *D. H. Lawrence's Lady: A New Look at Lady Chatterley's Lover*, ed. Michael Squires and Dennis Jackson. Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1995. p. 105.

<sup>118</sup> John 20:17.

Noli me tangere, touch me not!  
 O you creatures of mind, don't touch me!  
 O you with mental fingers, O never put your hand on me!  
 O you with mental bodies, stay a little distance from me!<sup>119</sup>

The poem emphasises the pernicious, reductive nature of a certain kind of cerebral knowing. Equally, Lawrence hated the idea of promiscuity of touch, which he condemns in *A Propos* and elsewhere, seeing it as a manifestation of 'sex in the head', divorced from the genuinely tender contact of sex with 'the other'. The '*noli me tangere*' phrase warns of the dangers of such egotism and restates the need to regain a genuine reciprocity in touch:

Men must get back into touch. And to do so they must forfeit the vanity and the noli me tangere of their own absoluteness . . . and fall again into true relatedness.<sup>120</sup>

This idea has its counterpart in Lawrence's fiction. In *LC2*, for instance, Tommy Dukes complains '[w]e've had two thousand years of *noli me tangere*. Just imagine *voli me tangere*, for a change'.<sup>121</sup> Here he is a 'chief spokesman' for Lawrence, and explains at length how a 'democracy of touch' will come once the contemporary 'mechanistic experiment'<sup>122</sup> has been defeated. The concept of *noli me tangere* is illustrated in Connie's realisation in this version that the untouchable men had 'been killed, in some subtle way'<sup>123</sup> in the war, and were spirits awaiting resurrection. In *LC3* Lawrence integrates this into the characterisation of Mellors, whose revised background now includes direct war experience as an officer. This, in addition to his 'damaged health',<sup>124</sup> ensures that he is 'in no less need of rejuvenation than Connie. If he has the power to awaken her, she does no less for him'.<sup>125</sup> Similarly Katherine Walterscheid notes that Mellors in *LC3* is in the state of *noli me tangere* that comes from being hurt and

<sup>119</sup> 'Noli Me Tangere'. *D. H. Lawrence: Complete Poems*, ed. Vivian de sola Pinto and F. Warren Roberts. New York: Penguin, 1964. p. 468.

<sup>120</sup> 'Review of *The Social Basis of Consciousness* by Trigant Burrow'. *Introductions and Reviews*, ed. N. H. Reeve and John Worthen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. p. 336.

<sup>121</sup> *LC2*, p. 277.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.* p. 280.

<sup>124</sup> *LC3*, p. 141.

<sup>125</sup> Keith Cushman, 'The Virgin and the Gypsy and the Lady and the Gamekeeper'. *D. H. Lawrence's Lady: A New Look at Lady Chatterley's Lover*. p.166.

needing to protect himself'.<sup>126</sup> I would argue that this self-protective reflex comes from Mellor's intrinsic tenderness, which, despite increasing his sensitivity to emotional and physical pain, paradoxically provides the means to heal him. He may dread 'with a repulsion almost of death, any further close human contact' but the ability to accept Connie's touch completely reverses this.<sup>127</sup> This time, when the gamekeeper states 'I could die for the touch of a woman like thee' it is victory over death,<sup>128</sup> won through sex, the 'closest of all touch'.<sup>129</sup> Mellors's return to life is 'a triumph of the body and of the spirit as well'.<sup>130</sup>

Connie as a Mary Magdalene figure evokes the original damage to the body, the vessel that holds the self-actualising consciousness. This has developed from the parable of industrialisation in *LC1* and *LC2* to the more complex metaphor of Mellors's hybrid existence, evinced in his ability to switch between accents, as well as his shifting status between village-born worker and army officer. Mellors's war experiences ensure his *noli me tangere* fully symbolises Lawrence's view of damaged contemporary society. Mellors does not describe the horrors of war. Instead, he focuses upon the memory of touch as a conduit of tenderness between him and his men, which indicates 'a new level of intensity and intimacy in male/male relationships'.<sup>131</sup>

I had to be in touch with them, physically, and not go back on it. I had to be bodily aware of them – and a bit tender to them – even if I put them through hell.<sup>132</sup>

Mellors's courage, demonstrated by his ability to touch, is an integral part of his character, and Connie pleases him when she identifies this 'courage of tenderness' as something that marks

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<sup>126</sup> Walterscheid, p. 120.

<sup>127</sup> *LC3*, p. 89.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.* p. 127.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.* p. 277.

<sup>130</sup> Cushman, pp.116-7.

<sup>131</sup> Das, p. 115.

<sup>132</sup> *LC3*, p. 277.

him apart from other men and will ‘make the future’.<sup>133</sup> His relationship with Connie means he can now reject the state of unnatural *noli me tangere*:

This was the thing he had to do, to come into tender touch, without losing his pride or his dignity or his integrity as a man . . . ‘I stand for the touch of bodily awareness between human beings’, he said to himself, ‘and the touch of tenderness. And she is my mate. And it is a battle against the money, and the machine, and the insentient ideal monkeyishness of the world’.<sup>134</sup>

By calling Connie his ‘mate’ Mellors affirms the sexual bond between them, but the words also suggest the ‘matehood’ of the trenches, supported by the battle metaphor that follows.

For Lawrence, the dehumanisation of the individual in mechanised industry was analogous to the role of a soldier in war. In *LC3* the healing process for Connie and Mellors is not set in any specific industrial area, and although it has been suggested that this leaves Mellors’s views on industrialisation untested by experience it must be remembered that Mellors’s war experience functions in this way.<sup>135</sup> The conclusions to the first two versions bear this out. In *LC1* Parkin moves to Sheffield and works as a labourer at Jephson’s steel works. When Connie visits she is shocked at the change: he is exhausted and his hands are ‘scarred and swollen, almost shapeless. They had been so quick and light’.<sup>136</sup> He reproaches Connie for being ‘shut up’ as he smooths the tablecloth with ‘dull, swollen hands’,<sup>137</sup> symbolising the lovers’ disunited states. His organs of touch have been damaged and the relationship is failing: Parkin’s touch on Connie is a ‘convulsive, nervous grasp’ which she strokes in pity, from which he ‘drew his hand away’.<sup>138</sup> In *LC2* Parkin’s hands are so damaged that his landlady must write his letters for him.<sup>139</sup> When Connie sees his hands he seems ‘diminished . . . seemingly more conscious in his hands than in his brain’ as they ‘trembled

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid. p. 279.

<sup>135</sup> Stephen Gill, ‘The Composite World: Two Versions of Lady Chatterley’s Lover’. *Essays in Criticism* XXI (1971). pp. 347-64.

<sup>136</sup> *LC1*, p. 160.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid. p. 171.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid. p. 191.

<sup>139</sup> *LC2*, p. 543.

with aching and with pain'.<sup>140</sup> This ending, however, is more optimistic, for touch is re-established when Parkin strokes her naked body in the woods,<sup>141</sup> and although the relationship is not affirmed at the novel's close, Parkin promises to come if Connie 'can't bear it'.<sup>142</sup> However, at the close of *LC3* the gamekeeper's hands are not ruined, for the symbolism has been subsumed into the character's war experiences. Instead, Lawrence places him on the farm the Parkin of *LC2* had hoped for,<sup>143</sup> a place of life and regeneration. The final version closes with an epistolary ending which confirms Lawrence's doctrine of touch over the cerebral written word:

Well, so many words, because I can't touch you. If I could sleep with my arm round you, the ink could stay in the bottle.<sup>144</sup>

Although Lawrence's manuscripts show edits made at the sentence level, it was his wider practice of rewriting which ensured each character and situation was created afresh. This avoidance of simple structural revisions reinforced Lawrence's altered and extended character development, as he clarified relationship dynamics to convey his doctrine. This is amplified in the title changes: *Lady Chatterley's Lover* initially places the emphasis upon Connie, whereas the favoured *John Thomas and Lady Jane*, (with its sexual innuendo), encapsulates the more confrontational mood of the second version. This is clear in the repeated call for the democracy of touch. Although Lawrence eventually chose to publish *LC3* as *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, he had considered the title 'Tenderness',<sup>145</sup> which would have accurately expressed the theme of reciprocal touch that had evolved through earlier versions, and that, I would argue, finds its ultimate expression in Lawrence's final 'very pure and tender novel'.<sup>146</sup> The concept of tenderness is inextricably linked to touch. According to the Oxford English Dictionary its

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid. p. 546.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid. p. 568.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid. p. 570.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> *LC3*, p. 301.

<sup>145</sup> *Letters VI*. 254 & 262.

<sup>146</sup> *Letters VI*. 239.

associations with physical softness or delicacy are expanded to the gentle treatment of others and the 'sensibility to pain, especially when touched'.<sup>147</sup>

Tenderness was essential for Lawrence's physically phallic consciousness, and in his letters he states:

It's a modern phallic novel, – the second half anyhow – but tender and delicate. [...] The way to gentle re-union is phallic, and through tenderness, don't you think? – between men and women, and men and men, all together.<sup>148</sup>

Lawrence's efforts to disseminate appropriate human behaviour based upon tenderness is, I believe, only fully realised in *LC3*, where the more profound concept of character and conscience<sup>149</sup> result in mutual healing between Lady Chatterley and her lover (expanded from the same-sex touching of Mellors and his men) towards a relationship that can endure. Here also, through Clifford's completed character development, is the fullest warning of what tenderness should *not* achieve:<sup>150</sup> how that sensibility to pain (cultural, mental or physical) should be prevented from inviting or excusing the nullifying state of *noli me tangere*, which at best renders man a walking corpse, and, at worst, leads him to perversion and destruction through infantilisation. Always a provocative artist, Lawrence's challenges to modernism's orthodoxies are based in consistent cultural theorising;<sup>151</sup> he believed that his work could heal society, rather than simply explore what Connie scornfully names literature's 'self-important mentalities'.<sup>152</sup> Through each incarnation of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* Lawrence's purpose is refined; each character and their connections can be read in terms of touch and tenderness, living through the novel in order to reify Lawrence's great lesson: that touch is an essential element of life, and 'to be alive, to be man alive, to be whole man alive: that is the point'.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*.

<sup>148</sup> *Letters VI*. 324.

<sup>149</sup> Julian Moynahan, 'Lawrence and the Modern Crisis of Character and Conscience'. *The Challenge of D. H. Lawrence*. p. 29.

<sup>150</sup> Elaine Feinstein, *Lawrence's Women: The Intimate Life of D. H. Lawrence*. London: HarperCollins, 1993. p. 226.

<sup>151</sup> Tony Pinkney, *D. H. Lawrence and Modernism*. Iowa City: Iowa University Press, 1990. p. 3.

<sup>152</sup> *LC3*, p. 194.

<sup>153</sup> 'Why the Novel Matters.' *Study of Thomas Hardy*. p. 172.

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