

An Ecofeminist Reading of Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*

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Abstract—In order to explore Lawrence's concern about men's domination over women and nature as well as his ecofeminist awareness as revealed in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, the thesis applies ecofeminism theory to analyze the protagonist Connie's relationship with men, nature and society. Through the analyses, this thesis suggests that Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* has significant ecological, social, and cultural connotations. And the novel inspires us to build a new world where women and nature, women and society as well as men and women can exist in harmony.

Keywords— *Lady Chatterley's Lover*; *Eco-feminism*; *Women*; *Nature*; *Men*; *Society*

I. INTRODUCTION

D. H. Lawrence, one of the greatest and the most controversial British writers of the early 20th century, concerns himself with important issues relating to emotional health and human sexuality. His fiction reveals the deepest instincts of human nature, and presents a bitter criticism of the relationship between women and nature in the modern industrial world. His sense of the women-nature connection, or his eco-feminist consciousness, is clearly presented in *Sons and Lovers*, his third novel published in 1913. His last novel, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is the most controversial of his works. Critical attention has generally been drawn to Lawrence's overt portrayal of human sexuality, but few people have discussed his concern with the women-nature relationship, as it is revealed in his last novel. So it is a problem that is worth probing into.

A. Literature Review

"*Lady Chatterley's Lover*, published in 1928, describes the emotional life of Constance Chatterley, who is married to Sir Clifford, a writer, intellectual, and the landowner of Wragby Hall in the Midlands. Back from the First World War, he is confined to a wheelchair through injuries. She has a passionate love relationship with the gamekeeper Oliver Mellors, the son of a miner and ex-officer of the Indian army. She becomes pregnant by him, and goes to Venice with her sister Hilda partly to obscure the baby's parentage, but returns and tells her husband the truth, spurred on by the knowledge that Mellors' estranged wife Bertha has been stirring scandal in an effort to reclaim her husband. The novel ends with the temporary separation of the two lovers as they hopefully await divorce and a new life together" [2].

This thesis discusses the last version of this novel. Since it was first published, critics have discussed it from different perspectives. Some other critics have commented favorably on the novel. In his essay "An Analysis of *Spiritual Wasteland* in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* Based on Sex Orientation", Gong Huihui examines the characters' outlet from or entry into their spiritual wasteland with or without sex orientation, and he points out that during the course of selecting the natural man Mellors as her companion, Connie realizes her natural return of body and soul through sex orientation [5]. In Xia Daiying's "On D.H. Lawrence's concepts on Women in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*", she applies feminist theory to the discussion of Lawrence's portrayal of Connie as the image of a new woman of flesh and blood. It argues that Lawrence's conceptions of the awakening of subjective female consciousness, especially of sex consciousness from a woman's perspective are primarily progressive, and of great significance to the liberation of women themselves [17]. Some critics analyze Connie and Mellors' affair in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* from the perspective of morality. However, few people have noticed Lawrence's implication of his concern about women—nature relationship in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.

B. Researches and Significance

As far as I am concerned, Lawrence's major concern expressed in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is not just with sex. He is a writer with strong ecological consciousness. The theme of feminism has been presented in more than one of his works. But few people have mentioned his eco-feminist awareness as it is revealed in the novel. This thesis is an attempt to study *Lady Chatterley's Lover* from the perspective of ecofeminism.

Lawrence's novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover* has been hotly debated since its publication. Some critics have noticed Lawrence's concern about women's position in a patriarchal society, but they seem to have failed to recognize his concern with the women—nature relationship and the significance of his ecofeminist consciousness. It is of great significance to reinterpret classical writers and their works from new perspectives. Hopefully, this study will provide readers with a new interpretation of the novel and will further reveal its significance.

II. THEORY OF ECOFEMINISM

In order to discuss Lawrence's ecofeminist awareness in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, this study will mainly apply Karen Warren's theory to the analysis of the novel. Ecofeminism, as a pretty new theory, is still in the process of being constructed. Critics' ideas about ecofeminism are different, but "all ecofeminists agree that there are important connections between the unjustified dominations of women and nature" [13].

Ecofeminist criticism is taken as a theoretical foundation of this thesis, which is intended to discuss Lawrence's ecofeminist consciousness as it is revealed in his novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Karen J. Warren is one of the most important Western ecofeminist. Because the domination and oppression of women and nature are inextricably intertwined, nature has long been regarded as female in Western culture. Thus, according to Warren, to be a feminist, one must also be an ecologist. To be an ecologist, one must also be a feminist. Therefore, we apply Karen J. Warren's theory to an ecofeminist reading of this novel. Since 1987, Warren has been writing as an ecofeminist and arguing for "transformative feminism" [15], which she characterizes in six points: (1) Unmask the interconnections between all systems of oppression; (2) Acknowledge the diversity of women's experiences and the experiences of other oppressed groups; (3) Reject the logic of domination and the patriarchal conceptual framework in order to prevent concerns for ecology from degenerating into white middle-class anxiety; (4) Rethink what it is to be human, that is, to see ourselves as "both co-members of ecological community and yet different from other members of it"; (5) Recast traditional ethics to underscore the importance of values such as care, reciprocity, and diversity; (6) Challenge the patriarchal bias in technology research and analysis and the use of science for the destruction of the earth. [15].

Women participate in patriarchy's logic of domination, but is it the case that patriarchy is as inherently oppressive of nature as it is of women? Warren answers that it is. She argues that "the unconscious connection between women and nature needs to be made conscious and the struggles for equality of women and ecological sustainability are interlinked" [14]. In "The Power and the Promise of Ecological Feminism," Karen J. Warren, focuses on "the conceptual connections between the domination of women and that of nature. She argues that the women-nature connections should be located in the patriarchal conceptual framework characterized by a logic of domination" [12].

By using eco-feminist theories, mainly Karen Warren's theory, this thesis will discuss Lawrence's controversial novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and his eco-feminist concerns about women-nature connections. In the thesis, the theories will help the author of this thesis to explore the eco-feminist awareness that Lawrence reveals through the presentation of the central character Connie and her relationship with men, and nature in the novel, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Karen J. Warren's theory of transformative feminism, ecofeminist philosophy and the connections between feminism and ecology will be applied to the analysis of Lawrence's ideas about women-nature

connections. Through this analysis, it will reveal Lawrence's ecofeminist consciousness. According to the theory of ecofeminism, in the patriarchal society, women and nature suffer oppression from men, they have to bear great pressure, share the same fate and are both considered "the Other".

III. CONNIE AND MEN

A. *Connie's Relationship with Clifford*

In the conceptual framework of patriarchy, men are in control of everything, and women, who have no status in the society.

In the book "Nature, Self, and Gender: Feminism, Environmental Philosophy, and the Critique of Rationalism," Val Plumwood claims "The failure to observe such connections is the result of an inadequate historical analysis and understanding of the way in which the inferiorization of both women and nature is propounded in rationalism, and the connections of both to the inferiorizing of the body, hierarchical concepts of labor, and disembodied and individualist accounts of the self." [9].

Connie, who comes from a middle class family, was brought up by an artist father and a cultured socialist mother. After she marries Clifford, he has to go back to the war. Six months later, he is wounded and brought back to Britain, and the lower half of his body is paralyzed. After they return home, their dreary marriage life starts. Connie does not understand her husband and she has no physical consummation with him. Instead of being a wife, she becomes a servant and a nurse to him. Constrained by Clifford, her body withered quickly. Mentally, she is going insane. In a word, she suffers patriarchal oppression in the hands of Clifford.

1) *Clifford's Physical Control over Connie*

When the war ends, Sir Clifford returns to his manor-house, paralyzed in the low part of his body and impotent sexually. He holds his control over his wife, Connie, and treats her as his servant and nurse because he considers himself Self and everything else the other. He is a typical male-chauvinist who boasts his superiority over women and nature. The image of Clifford represents Western patriarchal society's assumption that males are superior to females and therefore are better thinkers, more rational, more serious, and more reflective than women. In his opinion, "sufficient civilization ought to eliminate a lot of the physical disabilities" [7]. In Connie's eyes, Clifford has become her master, but he has to rely on her to take care of him and assure him of his existence.

Clifford "depended on her with terror, like a child, almost like an idiot. She must be there, there at Wragby, as Lady Chatterley, his wife. Otherwise he would be lost like an idiot on a moor" [7]. He demands that Connie always be there with him because he depends on her for help physically, and in mentally, and he depends on her to assure him of his existence. "Yet he was absolutely dependent on her, he needed her every moment. But alone he was like a lost thing. He needed Connie to be there, to assure him he existed at all" [7].

Connie, who was once a convivial and active girl, is now reduced to something like a nurse because she has got into the clutches of her husband. She becomes not only a nurse, but also a senior servant.

Despite his paralysis, Clifford still holds physical control over Connie and would not allow her to divorce him because he wants to preserve the decency and order of life. He says to Connie, "For my part, since you are my wife, I should prefer that you should stay under my roof in dignity and quiet" [7].

However, though Connie devotes her time and energy to serving Clifford, he is unable to return her anything but control. "He wanted a good deal of her life and she gave it to him. But she wanted a good deal from the life of a man, and this Clifford did not give her; could not" [7]. Day by day, "A sense of rebellion smouldered in Connie. What was the good of it all! What was the good of her sacrifice, her devoting her life to Clifford? "What was she serving for? A cold spirit of vanity, that had no warm human contacts" [7].

Connie is a woman, but she does not have what a woman should normally have, and she lives a meaningless life because she is controlled by Clifford, who represents the modern industrial and financial world. Connie's sufferings remind us of what Aristotle says: "Women are merely tools" [11]. By describing Connie's physical and mental sufferings, Lawrence seems to imply that in a patriarchal society, women are treated not as humans, but as property at men's proposal. In order to have a child to inherit his manor, he even suggests her that she should have a love affair with a man of their own class. To Clifford, his wife is only the tool of bearing his child. He not only tries to make her body under his control, but also tries to make her mind under his control. As a result, Connie withers physically and mentally though she is young.

2) *Clifford's Mental Control over Connie*

Owing to Clifford's paralysis, he can not have any sexual contact with his wife. They are a married couple in name but not in reality. But he still sticks to "the habit of being together" without love, which is actually a kind of domestic violence to Connie, a young woman. Clifford wants to take his wife under his control and to retain his physical control over her, he has to control her mentally. So he tries to cheat her into the belief that two people living together are a sort of unison.

Clifford tries to impose his idea about sex on Connie. In his eyes, "[...] sex was merely an accident, or an adjunct, one of the curious obsolete, organic processes which persisted in its own clumsiness, but was not really necessary" [7]. Clifford's hypocrisy and attempt to impose his idea on Connie make her want to scream, and sometimes she weeps bitterly. Clifford's denial of the significance of sex in marriage is an excuse for his own inability to have sex and serves his purpose of making Connie believe that marriage is spiritual rather than physical. It is a kind of hypocrisy with a dualistic thinking of mind over body in patriarchal society.

Clifford is unable to fulfill his wife's emotional or physical needs, but he wishes have a child to inherit his manor and his mining business. So on the one hand, he fool Connie by saying that "sex was not really necessary" [7]. On the other hand,

prompted by a desire to produce an heir, he treats Connie as his breeding machine, and even suggests to her that she should have sex with another man in order to bear a child, regardless of her feeling.

Clifford tries to impose on Connie his idea that sex is not really necessary. He says that "the intimacy was deeper, more personal than that. And sex was merely an accident, or an adjunct: one of the curious obsolete organic processes which persisted in its own clumsiness but was not really necessary" [7]. In order to control Connie mentally, he pretends to be a devoted husband who lives for his wife's sake. He tells Connie, "You are the great I am, as far as life goes...But for you I am absolutely nothing. I live for your sake and your future. I am nothing to myself" [7].

In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Lawrence presents Clifford as a symbol of hypocrisy and selfishness, which characterize the patriarchal industrial society. He is a rich man who still worships money, and who thinks that money is everything. Clifford is indifferent to his wife's needs and tries to control her physically and mentally, but he says that he lives for her sake. He treats Connie as his nurse and his servant, but he says that he is nothing for her.

The root cause of Clifford's domination of Connie is patriarchal dualism, which justifies men's superiority over women. In the patriarchal society, men exert direct control over women and dominate their life. Through the portrayal of Connie's relationship with Clifford, Lawrence explores the reason why women are oppressed by men in the patriarchal society.

B. *Connie's Relationship with Mellors*

Clifford spares no effects to control Connie mentally and physically because he believes that he is the Absolute and she is the other. This abnormal relationship between husband and wife makes Connie feel depressed and hopeless, therefore, she goes to the wood for shelter, and there she meets a man of nature—Mellors, and their meeting strengthens her relationship with nature, that brings new life to her.

1) *Mellors as a Man of Nature*

Disappointed with the industrial society, Mellors lives alone in the wood and works as gamekeeper in order to avoid having contact with men of the industrial world. He is also afraid of contact with women because he was hurt emotionally before. He regards the wood as his last refuge and wants to hide himself there. He is a "slender, quiet and quick" man. In Connie's eyes, he is "solitary, and intent, like an animal that works alone, but also brooding, like a soul that recoils away, away from all human contact" [7]. By breaking away from the industrial society, Mellors gives up any habits or customs considered cultured and civilized. He looks like an animal walking in the forest. But he loves nature and lives in harmony with it. He puts the fresh pebbles in the icy little spring and makes the little hut for the birds. He wants to "be private and withdrawn" [7]. Although "the world allows no hermits" [7], he lives a life that is almost completely out of contact with the industrial society. He prefers to live a primitive life and refuses to get into contact with the society; He refuses to speak good

English and talks in a naïve dialect. His way of life seems to be completely naturalized. He can be seen as man of nature.

In the natural environment, Mellors devotes much of his time to the care of birds and hens. “Outside, by the clearing, he had built a low little roof of boughs and straw, a shelter for the birds, and under it stood the five coops” [7]. The wood, which contrasts sharply with the industrial world, is a paradise for Mellors. He does not have the desire for wealth, status, and all that an ordinary man will seek in the industrial world. Instead, he has a tender and sensible heart for nature, and he craves only for peace, harmony and natural beauty.

2) *Ideal Relationship between Connie and Mellors*

Lawrence thinks of the ideal relationship between men and women as double-fold: spiritual and physical; that is, love between men and women should involve both mutual understanding and physical union. Lawrence regards the ideal conjunction of the two sexes as balanced and mystic. In this ideal mode of relationship, a man and a woman are supposed to arrive at self-perfection through balancing and uniting with each other while staying independent. In his *A Propos of Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, Lawrence says, “Sex is the balance of male and female in the universe, the attraction, the repulsion, the transit of neutrality, the new attraction, the new repulsion, always different, always new” [6].

Mellors is not only Lawrence’s image of an ideal man, he is also an ideal man for Connie. Before she meets Mellors, she lives in the shadow of her invalid husband Clifford, who is selfish and hypocritical, and she feels her life dull and boring. When Connie accidentally sees Mellors bathing in the wood, his naked body arouses her hidden desire. She realizes that her body is getting ugly because she lives a marriage life without love and sex. But she still possesses her youthful vitality, which drives her to have physical contact with Mellors, a man who represents all the freshness and warmth of a new life.

What is attractive to Connie at first is Mellors’ body. She thinks that his “neck was white as milk,” with “fine slender muscular flesh” [7], “The back was white and fine, the small buttocks beautiful with an exquisite, delicate manliness, the back of the neck ruddy and delicate and yet strong” [7]. She says to him, “But you are beautiful!” [7]. “So pure and fine!” [7]. Gradually, Connie discovers her identity as a woman through her contact with Mellors. With his help, she seeks to escape the influence of her past. Through her vital sexual relationship with Mellors, Connie comes to the bed-rock of her nature.

She believes that their affairs is essentially shameless because she wants him, and thinks of him as her ideal man, with whom she can be united both in body and in spirit, as Lawrence writes, “How she had really wanted it! She knew now. At the bottom of her soul, fundamentally, she had needed this phallic hunting out, she had secretly wanted it, and she had believed she would never get it” [7].

We can see that in *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, Lawrence creates the image of an ideal man—Mellors, who is healthy in body and mind, and who is endowed with both male vitality and resolution. He does not belong to the industrial society, but

to nature. It is in nature that Connie finds her ideal man with whom she develops an ideal relationship. The author’s bold description of the sexual relationship of the two lovers is meant to be an indictment of the hypocrisies of the patriarchal society, which, in his opinion, has degraded the relationship between men and women. The novel reveals Lawrence’s different attitudes toward the industrial world and nature. It presents the paralyzed Sir Clifford Chatterley as a symbol of the moribund power of the industrial society which oppresses women, and defile the landscape, whereas it describes the healthy and strong Mellors as the image of an ideal man who possesses the qualities that a woman admires—robust independence, creative intelligence, and the ability for growth and change.

By contrasting Connie’s ideal relationship with Mellors with her abnormal relationship with Clifford, the novel seems to suggest that in the industrial society, men exert direct control over woman, and as a result, the relationship between them is abnormal whereas in nature men and women can live in harmony, and as a result, they can develop an ideal relationship. So this novel bears the evidence of Lawrence’s ecofeminist consciousness.

IV. CONNIE AND NATURE

D. H. Lawrence’s awareness of men’s domination over nature coincides with his awareness of men’s domination over women. This is reflected through his description of Connie’s relationship with men, and nature. As Karen J. Warren says, “Nature is often raped, mastered, conquered, controlled and minded” [12]. Warren claims that “the unconscious connection between women and nature needs to be made conscious and the struggles for equality of women and ecological sustainability are interlinked” [14].

In Connie’s inner struggle to terminate her relationship with Clifford, nature acts as a mysterious force that gives her comfort and that urges her to make the decision, which once again shows Connie’s inseparability with nature.

Living in an age of industrialization, Lawrence sees with his own eyes men’s destruction of nature in their pursuit of money. So he presents Connie who as a witness to men’s domination over nature. According to eco-feminism, men’s destruction of nature is related to the dualistic thought of patriarchal society, which oppresses both women and nature.

Ecofeminism is more than a complement to either feminism or environmental thought; “ecofeminism locates itself as a theory and movement which bridges the gap between feminism and ecology, but which transforms both to create a unified praxis to end all forms of domination” [10]. Ecofeminists recognize that the association between women and nature has historically been used to exploit them, but they choose to embrace this connection as a source of empowerment and as the basis for their critique of the patriarchal oppression of women and nature. As Robyn Eckersley points out, “This is an explicitly ecofeminist project because it celebrates what has traditionally been regarded as other—both woman and nonhuman nature” [3]. In *Lady Chatterley’s lover*, the feminine world and the natural world are dominated and oppressed by men. Lawrence’s description of Connie’s coming to the wood

proves enlightening and thought-provoking. Her bitter experiences with men and her alienation from society makes her escape into the wood, where she realizes that men dominate both women and nature because women are considered inferior to men, and nature inferior to society.

The protagonist Connie witnesses men's arbitrary exploitation and destruction of nature. What she sees is an ugly scene, what she hears is terrible noise and what she smells is unpleasant smell. She hears "the rattle-rattle of the screens at the pit, the puff of the winding-engine, the clink-clink of shunting trucks, and the hoarse little whistle of the colliery locomotives" [7]. On windless days "the air always smelt of something under-earth: sulphur, iron, coal, or acid" [7]. She sees on the "chimney of Tevershall pit, with its clouds of steam and smoke" [7], and "rows of wretched, small, begrimed, brick houses" [7]. She can even see on the Christmas roses "the smuts settled persistently, incredible, like black manna from the skies of doom" [7]. When she sees "the utter, soulless ugliness of the coal-and-iron Midlands" [7], she can't believe her own eyes. She realizes that the natural beauty of England is gradually disappearing.

"[...]one could see in the near distance the chimney of Tevershall pit, with its clouds of steam and smoke, and on the damp, hazy distance of the hill the raw straggle of Tevershall village, a village which began almost at the park gates, and trailed in utter hopeless ugliness for a long and gruesome mile: houses, rows of wretched, small, begrimed brick houses, with black slate roofs for lids, sharp angles and wilful blank dreariness." [7].

When Clifford compares the violets with Juno's eyelids, and windflowers with unravished brides, Connie gets angry, and says, "Ravished is such a horrid word" [7].! and "it's only people who ravish things" [7]. This remark implies that Connie realizes that not only nature, but also women are dominated and victimized by men. For example, Mrs Bolton, who used to be an assured, bossy women, now becomes nervous and shy, almost frightened, and silent before Clifford, who has made her feel small and behave like a servant. In such a patriarchal household, Clifford is the master who is in control of everything. This is why Connie feels depressed and hopeless:

"Her body was going meaningless, going dull and opaque, so much insignificant substance. It made her feel immensely depressed and hopeless. What hope was there? She was old, old at twenty-seven, with no gleam and sparkle in the flesh. Old through neglect and denial, yes, denial." [7].

Though Connie is still in her prime, she feels that she is old through neglect and denial because she has no sincere, warm-hearted emotional communication with her husband, who even goes as far to suggest that she should have sex with another man in order to produce an heir to Wragby. Since Connie suffers a lot under the control of Clifford, she often weeps bitterly. Fortunately she achieves her spiritual rebirth through her union with a man of nature later in the wood. But there she witnesses men's destruction of nature. "They too were waiting: obstinately, stoically waiting for the end: to be cut down, cleared away—the end of the forest; for them, the end of all

things" [7]. She feels that she is just like the wood, being exploited and waiting for an end. Her fate is closely connected to the wood, where she becomes aware of men's twin dominance over women and nature.

A. *Connie's Identification with Nature*

The aesthetic perception of nature paves the way for the aesthetic perception of sexual experience. A universal sense of harmony between nature and woman has worked to embody the ecofeminist idea:

"I (woman) love her daily grace, her (nature) silent daring, and how loved I am, how we admire this strength in each other, all that we have lost, all that we have suffered, all that we know: we are stunned by this beauty, and I do not forget, what she is to me, and what I am to her." [1].

The symbolic links between nature and woman show that woman is viewed as an instinctive part of nature, and nature is regarded as an incarnation of woman. The more a woman feels, smells, hears and sees in nature, the closer she is to nature. In the novel, Lawrence naturalizes the female character Connie, which means that she identifies herself with nature: "She was like a forest, like the dark interlacing of the Oakwood, humming inaudibly with myriad unfolding buds. Meanwhile, the birds of desire were asleep in the vast interlaced intricacy of her body" [7].

"Ruddy", "blue" and "blown" are the color words used to naturalize Connie. Her eyes are the embodiment of the vast blue sky. Her hair has the blown color of fertile land. "Connie was gifted from nature with this appearance of demure, submissive maidenliness, and perhaps it was part of her nature" [7]. The symbolic link between woman and nature means that they have mutual understanding and woman can identify herself with nature. In this sense, all the living things are in dynamic interactive relation with one another.

Not only Connie's physical appearance, but her sexual affair with Mellors also bears the same symbolic connection to nature. "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" [7]. "She was fresh and young like a flower..." [7]. Lawrence's description of her beauty and sexuality is related to his description of dynamic nature through the symbols of "the sea" and "a flower". Lawrence necessarily presents Connie as a sexed being, which is in accordance with ecofeminism.

Ecofeminists start from the importance of human embodiment (as reflecting biological existence) and embeddedness (within the surrounding ecosystem) and direct their attention to the impact of both on women. The case ecofeminism is making is that women represent the dilemma of human embodiment in a sexed and gendered society. Human embodiment, in turn, represents the fact that human beings live not only in an historical and social context, but also an ecological and biological one. The needs of human embodiment have to be met within an encompassing ecosystem.

Connie enjoys her intimate relationship with nature, where she is free of earthly worries and men's control and domination. She runs out into the rain "with a wild little laugh, holding up her breasts to the rain and spreading her arms, and blurred in the rain with the eurhythmic dance-movements she had learned so long ago in Dresden" [7]. The clothes is a symbol of civilization and the rain is a symbol of nature, and she manages to escape from constrain of society and completely identifies herself with nature, which prepares for her further resurrection. Karen J. Warren says,

"Environmental and feminist issues have their basis in the logic of domination that underwrites patriarchy, so feminists an environmentalist can form an alliance in the face of a common enemy, as it were, but for the connection between feminism and ecology to be necessary, it would have to be shown that patriarchy is inherently naturist." [16].

In the novel, evidence can be found to suggest that Lawrence thinks that women and nature have the same fate because men of the patriarchal society have the same attitude toward them. The following is an example of Clifford's male chauvinist attitude toward Connie and the wood: "He felt they were his own through generations. He wanted to protect them. He wanted this place inviolate, shut off from the world" [7]. He thinks that the wood is his possession, and that he has the right to control it. He has the same attitude toward Connie. He says to her, "For my part, since you are my wife, I should prefer that you should stay under my roof in dignity and quiet" [7].

He takes Connie and the wood as his property, and he can shut them out from the outside world because he believes that both women and nature are inferior to men. Connie's identification with nature is a result of both her abhorrence of men's domination and her fondness of her freedom and her intimate relationship with nature. Ecofeminists believe men's twin domination of women and nature always strengthen the relationship between women and nature because they are in the same position and the two would form a union to revolt against oppression and exploitation.

1) The Wood as Connie's Shelter

Since Connie lives in a patriarchal household, which exerts tremendous psychological pressure on her, she feels that her life is miserable and meaningless, her health is deteriorating, and she is going insane. It is necessary for her to find a shelter from men's domination. That is why she often goes out for a walk. It is in the wood that she finds an ideal shelter. So her only desire is to go to the wood. "She had only one desire now, to go to the clearing in the wood. The rest was a kind of painful dream. But sometimes she was kept all day at Wragby, by her duties as hostess. And then she felt as if she too were going blank, just blank and insane" [7].

Connie is eager to go to the wood to find a shelter where her mind and body can rest in peace because when she stays in the house, a mad restlessness seizes her and makes her heart beat violently without reason. She feels that she has to get away with Clifford and the oppressive household, so she "would rush off across the park and abandon Clifford, and lie prone in the bracken. To get away from the house—she must

get away from the house and everybody. The wood was her one refuge, her sanctuary" [7].

When Connie gets to the wood, she feels that the air is soft and dead, as if the world is slowly dying. The wood has the soothing power to comfort a woman's bleeding mind and gives her vitality and strength. In the wood, with the wind "flattening against her, she is tempted to forget "the world and all the dreadful carrion-bodied people" [7]. Deep in her heat, she regards the wood as equal, just like a human being.

2) The Wood as the Ideal Place for Connie's Spiritual Rebirth

The key to the understanding of Lawrence's ecofeminist awareness, as it is revealed in the novel, lies in his description of Connie's feeling of being trapped in the dull and lifeless Wragby, and of her eagerness to return to the wood. In Clifford's oppressive household, she is aware of her growing restlessness. "Vaguely she knew she was out of connection; she had lost touch with the substantial and vital world" [7].

Connie sees a doctor who gives her the advice that she spend her life and consume vitality without supplement. She often goes to the wood where she feels relaxed and free, and where she feels that she can have her spiritual rebirth. She says, "Ye must be born again!—I believe in the resurrection of the body" [7]. In the wood, everything seems different to her and she feels that she is out of hell, the color flies in her cheeks and burns blue in her eyes, she is strangely excited in the wood, and "she walked ploddingly, picking a few primroses and the first violets that smelled sweet and cold. And she drifted on without knowing where she was" [7]. It seems that in the natural world her heart is melting with joy. Connie's contact with nature awakens her female consciousness, and subsequently, her union with Mellors paves the way for her spiritual rebirth.

When she goes back home from the wood, "Another self was alive in her, burning molten and soft and sensitive in her womb and bowels" [7]. With the contact with the man of nature in the wood Connie gradually realizes that she is different from her old self. The union with Mellors gives her strength to realize her dream of rebirth in the wood. Lawrence writes, "She knew herself touched, the consummation was upon her, and she was gone. She was done, she was not, and she was born: a woman" [7], and "as a sacrifice, and a new-born thing" [7].

In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Lawrence depicts the natural world as a woman's shelter from men's domination and an ideal place for a woman to achieve her spiritual rebirth. His portrayal of the wood embodies his ecofeminist consciousness.

B. Patriarchal Dualism as the Conceptual Roots of Men's Domination over Women and Nature

Ecofeminists believe that in a patriarchal society, men are regarded as the gender that creates the society, and so men should be the master of the world, and everything in the world should yield to men. Nature and women are thought to be the other. Undoubtedly, they are depressed and victimized by men in the patriarchal society. In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Lawrence criticizes the patriarchal society, which sacrifices both women and nature to meet men's needs. Both women and nature are devalued, oppressed and exploited. The roots of this disaster can be traced to patriarchal dualism.

Value-hierarchical thinking, provides greater value to what is higher or up than to what is lower or down. "It may put men Up and women Down, whites Up and people of color Down, culture Up and nature Down, minds Up and bodies Down" [13]. Logic of domination is "a logical structure of argumentation that justifies domination and subordination" [13]. It gives "the moral premise for ethically justifying the subordination of Downs by Ups in Up-Down relationships of domination and subordination" [13]. In this conceptual framework, nature is to be conquered by man and harnessed for human needs. By the application of modern science and technology, humans can control and exploit nature to a greater extent. In the patriarchal society, women have no self-identity, and they are expected to be "the Angel in the house", who can only play the role of wives and mothers. In short, in the patriarchal conceptual framework, "Man is the measure of all things" [8], while nature and women are subject to men's domination.

V. CONNIE AND SOCIETY

Lawrence depicts the central character Connie as a woman who is helpless and miserable in a terrible and insane society. "She felt weak and utterly forlorn. She wished some help would come from outside. But in the whole world there was no help. Society was terrible because it was insane".

A. Patriarchal Industrial Society's Oppression On Connie

Lawrence expresses his idea about the civilized society through the mouth of Connie: "Civilized society is insane. Money and so-called love are its two great manias; money a long way first. The individual asserts himself in his disconnected insanity in these two modes: money and love" [7]. In such a society, there is no warmth for a woman. Lawrence depicts the house as a symbol of the lifeless society:

"Of physical life they lived very little. She had to superintend the house. But the housekeeper had served Sir Geoffrey for many years, and the dried, elderly, superlatively correct female—you could hardly call her a parlor-maid, or even a woman—who waited at table had been in the house for forty years. Even the very housemaids were no longer young. It was awful! What could you do with such a place, but leave it alone! All those endless rooms that nobody used, all the Midlands routine, the mechanical cleanliness and the mechanical order! Clifford had insisted on a new cook, an experienced woman who had served him in his rooms in London. For the rest, the place seemed like a methodical

anarchy. Everything went on in pretty good order, strict cleanliness, and strict punctuality: even pretty strict honesty. And yet, to Connie, it was a methodical anarchy. No warmth of feeling united it organically. The house seemed as dreary as a disused street." [7].

We can see that the parlor-maid is dried, elderly, and she acts mechanically in the routine, just like a machine, and she can not be addressed as a woman. She is the image of a victim of the patriarchal industrial society. Living in this house, Connie has "no touch", "no contact" with the outside world, only "endless spinning of webs of yarn, of the minutiae of consciousness, these stories" [7]. She realizes that the English society today produces a new race of men who pay too much attention to the money, and social and political side and neglect the spontaneous intuitive side of human nature. As a result, they are half-corpses, and the society is like an underworld.

B. Connie's Alienation from the Patriarchal Society

The society Connie lives in is awful to her. When Connie goes home with her husband Clifford, nobody welcomes them, and she sees "no festivities, no deputation, not even a single flower" (14). As she notices,

"There was no communication between Wragby Hall and Tevershall village—none. No caps were touched, no curtseys bobbed. The colliers merely stared: the tradesman lifted their caps to Connie as to an acquaintance, and nodded awkwardly to Clifford: that was all. Gulf impassable, and a quiet sort of resentment that came from the village" [7].

The villagers think that Connie and Clifford belong to another species and says "You stick to your side, I'll stick to mine!" (14) Faced with the strange and unfriendly villagers, Connie feels that she is alienated from the society because she is totally out of contact with the outside world, "Vaguely, she knew she was out of connection: she had lost touch with the substantial and vital world. Only Clifford and his books, which did not exist—which had nothing in them!" [7].

Connie's alienation from society is a result of the cold relationship between people in the industrial world, where there is a "lack of the simple, warm physical contact" [7].

C. Connie's Rebellion against the Patriarchy Society

Connie comes from in a knowledgeable family where she was brought up and educated in an unconventional way. She and her sister Hilda had been taken to Paris, and Horace and Rome to broaden their horizon. Connie's colorful life during her youth makes her sensitive to her dull life with Clifford, which paves the way for her rebellion against patriarchal society and for her search for true love. Since life in Wragby is dull, Connie tries to break away from it by putting herself on the top floor of the central part of the house. As Michaelis observes, "her room was the only gay, modern room in the house, the only spot in Wragby where her personality was at all revealed" [7].

Despite the constriction imposed on her by her weird marriage, Connie does not give up her hope for a new life. Instead, she still has a passion for life. She is ready to break the rules of the patriarchal society and rid of the weird life. When Clifford and Connie go out for a walk, Clifford's wheelchair is broken, and he asks Mellors to offer him a hand, Clifford's prejudice against Mellors annoys Connie, and she notices that the two men belong to two different classes ruled. Connie argues with Clifford when they are back home: "You, and rule!" she says, "You don't rule, don't flatter yourself... Rule! What do you give forth of rule?" [7]. What she says shows her determination to rebel against the patriarchal society, and her disgust with the ruling classes represented by this paralyzed man—Clifford.

Connie notices that men in the patriarchal society have turned into nothing but labor-insects, and all their manhood has been taken away. It occurs to her that she wishes to "wipe the machines off the face of the earth again, and end the industrial epoch absolutely" [7]. She hates the patriarchal industrial society and wants to struggle with it. Her affair with Mellors bears evidence of her will and determination to rebel against the patriarchal industrial society.

She loves Mellors despite his working-class background and her sister's disagreement, paying no attention to the scandal from the patriarchal society. Her sister Hilda asks her to leave Mellors, and says, "You'll be ashamed of having been connected with him. One can't mix up with the working people" [7]. But Connie is brave and firm in her pursuit of true love. Although Mellors's marriage to another woman affects her emotionally, she continues her struggle for an ideal relationship with a man of nature. By presenting Connie as a "new" woman who dares to challenge the rules and conventions of the patriarchal society and who is determined to seek an ideal relationship with a man of nature, the novel reveals Lawrence's ecofeminist consciousness.

VI. CONCLUSION

In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Lawrence describes the plight of woman and nature in the patriarchal society. This shows his great concern about nature and women, and their relationship in the modern world. The female protagonist Connie suffers men's domination and witnesses men's destruction of nature. As a result, she is determined to rebel against the oppression of the patriarchal society and to seek an ideal relationship with a man of nature.

In conclusion, after a careful study of Connie's relationships with men, nature and society from the perspective of ecofeminism, we can see that Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* bears the evidence of his ecofeminist consciousness, and therefore he is regarded and respected by many people as a writer who not only belong to the past, but also to the present and the future.

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