Feeling Like A “Lady Chatterley” in High School Life
—On D.H. Lawrence’s Lady Chatterley’s Lover

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作者：
謝汶鈴。國立花蓮女子高級中學。高一 9 班
呂玉婷。國立花蓮女子高級中學。高一 9 班
I  Foreword:

Lady Chatterley’s Lover is one of the most controversial novels in English history. The story concerns a young married woman, Constance, whose husband, Clifford Chatterley, had been paralyzed from the hips down and rendered impotent. Unsatisfied and frustrated, Constance searched for integrity of both mind and body, leading her into an affair with the gamekeeper, Mellors. The book was held in the British obscenity trial for its unrestrained and explicit language used to describe the Mellors affair. It was also banned in India, Australia, and the US until later on. You may now wonder why a high student like us would choose such a book as our topic for discussion. On the surface, the 21st century is a time that emphasizes “Freedom of Speech and Thought” as its motto. We are taught to break out-of-date customs and taboos in order to be a “modern citizen”. However, there always seemed to be a forbidden topic that we shouldn’t mention: sex. Whenever we gather up our courage to talk or inquire upon it, our voices were immediately silenced, either by angry warnings or shy admonitions. The truth is that we are all under extreme pressure to deny and suppress our physical needs, which is very similar to Lady Chatterley’s situation. She lives in an age where she must deny that she has any physical needs at all, and we live in a time where old restrictions aren’t completely shattered and new concepts not yet built up. This is the reason why we choose Lady Chatterley’s lover as our topic.

II  Thesis

Lady Chatterley's Lover was considered as a banned book due to its explicit description of sex. For years, people have viewed it as such. But after we read the novel, we feel that Lady Chatterley’s Lover means more than that. We saw a piece of Lady Chatterley in ourselves. In the novel, Constance has to choose between Clifford, her husband and Mellors, the gamekeeper.

(I). Clifford

Clifford is a rich, aristocratic male, and Constance fell in love and married him. No doubt their “harmonious” matrimony is only natural in the eyes of others. But in a terrible accident in World War I, he was paralyzed from the waist down. Sir Clifford loves Connie, but he understands her physical needs, so he told her to find herself a love affair if “lack of sex bothers her”.

‘And should you expect me to tell you?’ she asked, glancing up at him almost furtively.
'Not at all, I'd better not know...But you do agree with me, don't you, that the casual sex thing is nothing, compared to the long life lived together?

Clifford doesn’t want Connie to love the man with whom she will have a love affair with. He was afraid to lose her heart since he can no longer offer Connie her physical needs. In fact, he became afraid of her, loving her with all his heart, and at the same time, dreaded her presence.

With Connie, he was a little stiff. He felt he owed her everything, and he showed her the utmost respect and consideration, so long as she gave him mere outward respect. But it was obvious he had a secret dread of her. The new Achilles in hint had a heel, and in this heel the woman, the woman like Connie, his wife, could lame him fatally. He went in a certain half-subservient dread of her, and was extremely nice to her. But his voice was a little tense when he spoke to her, and he began to be silent whenever she was present.

Clifford symbolizes the society at the start of the 20th century, a suppressed and uptight time. Affected by the culture they grew up in, Clifford can’t handle the sadness and the rumors if Constance decided to get a divorce. So he gave her anything she wanted, as long as she “gave him mere outward respect”.

(II) Mellors
Mellors symbolizes Lady Chatterley’s desires. The novel describes a lot of his young, potent body, but doesn’t describe his face except for his eyes, which shows his emotions. This was also to show that the readers that “what he look like doesn’t matter “, telling us what Connie sees in the gamekeeper was not love but lust only.

(III) Making Choices—Lady Chatterley’s Dilemma
Lady Chatterley has to decide what to do. Was it better to run away with Mellors? Or was it better to follow what social convention tells her to do and stay with Sir Chatterley? It would seem that both lack some thing that the other owns. Mellors can satisfy Lady Chatterley’s bodily wants but lack mental comforts she need; Clifford was impotent but was full of mental care and love for her. If these two were combined, won’t they become the perfect husband she needs? It is plain that Connie does not really love Mellors, so why did she have a love affair with him? We found the answer to that question, surprisingly, in one of our classmates. A few days earlier, we heard our classmate talking of her own troubles. She told us that a guy fell in love with her, and she is very confused. They met at a cram school. He was nice to her and she flirted with him, thinking that she might found her potential
boyfriend. He began to hint how he felt about her, and she felt so joyful she thought that she must be in love too. She enjoyed the feeling, and often thought how it would be if they’re together. But one day, the boy told her that he loved her. She suddenly felt disgusted and refused him. She asked herself why she did so and found that the answer was in her heart all along. She never actually liked him. She simply wanted to know how it would be if she had a boyfriend, and so denied her true feelings toward him. In other words, she just wanted to experience the feeling of being loved. She regretted giving him the wrong ideas of how she feels about him, and was sorry for hurting him. This was more or less how Lady Chatterley felt. She just needs someone to love her, and how she felt about him doesn’t matter to her during their relationship. So in the end she had to choose: choose to fulfill her desires and go with Mellors, or stay with Clifford, as society demands her to do.

(IV) Lady Chatterley and Us
Obviously the relationship between Constance and Mellors is unacceptable in their time: A married, aristocratic female and a poor, vulgar peasant. They were criticized by people because of the un-fully developed notions then. We think that the 21st century must be a lot more liberated time, but is it really true? When we finished Lady Chatterley’s Lover, we felt a strong sense of familiarity, and instead of blaming her for committing adultery, we truly felt sympathetic toward her. As high school students, we yearn for a taste of love, but our teachers and parents insists that we focus on our education. Even though we understand that they say it for our future welfare, don’t we also have to learn the most important lessons of our lives: How to interact correctly with others and to deal with our emotions? We see news about university students who killed their lovers because they broke up with them. People blame the students, saying that they are sick and accused them for committing such a crime. But isn’t this because they were not taught how to express themselves correctly, and lack experience on how to deal with situations such as these? Like birds in cages, they are eager to fly in the sky; however, their owners don’t give them the chance to try flying, so when one day they break out of their cages, they fall as soon as they take flight. This is why our classmate made the wrong decision of flirting with the person she didn’t like: She can’t figure out whether she likes him or was it just her needing the feeling of love, and because her parents forbid her from having a boyfriend, it made her want to try having a boyfriend more. Teachers focus on improving our grades, but accidently neglected something far more important than grades. Some families in Taiwan are still very conservative, and refused to teach their children how to “love correctly”. As a result, we have to rely on ourselves to learn how to interact properly. Just like Lady Chatterley, we were prohibited to certain things, and so we
try to break our cages, hoping someday we’ll learn to fly.

III Conclusion
From *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, we can see that society demands a woman to stay virtuous and true to their husbands even if the husband is unable to satisfy her natural desires, whereas a husband can divorce or have a love-affair with another woman if his wife is incapable of fulfilling his needs. Even to this day, women are still more restricted to social standards than men. We can see ads with a girl wearing a mini skirt, in order to attract people to shop for whatever the advertisement wants to sell. We see commercials selling soy sauce or other household tools suggesting that the female cooks while the male watches TV, or that mothers stay home to wash clothes and tidy up their houses while the fathers go to work. This shows that not only old, outdated thought aren’t completely shattered, but these commercials continue to affect us, giving the wrong concept of ourselves and the opposite sex, influencing our behaviors toward others incorrectly. As a modern citizen, we must understand the importance of equal rights and fight for them. *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* was not just a controversial book as most people viewed it as, but a truly important novel telling the world how a woman tries to gain her freedom, love and rights to search for them, despite the criticizing world surrounding her.

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