

ABSTRACT

NUCKOLS, MITZI DAVIS. D.H. Lawrence and the Challenge of Class Consciousness: Original Freedom and the Self. (Under the direction of Jon Thompson.)

The purpose of this analysis is to explore D.H. Lawrence's obsession with the oppression of class systems. He saw class as a depraved institution that robs the individual of originality. In both *The Ladybird* and "Daughters of the Vicar" Lawrence exposes the inherent self-consciousness and class-consciousness of the social order. His fiction presents the oppression that haunt members of class systems. The goal of my thesis is to evaluate his characters at varying levels of this consciousness, while exploring what it is that promulgates the consciousness. According to Lawrence, human beings deny their genuine nature in order to belong to a group, which inevitably forces them to live in a hyperconscious awareness of themselves and their place in the class system. Additionally, this thesis analyzes Lawrence's concept of the ideal individual who transcends consciousness and exists in an unselfconscious state. For Lawrence, this ideal individual possesses the capacity to lead most admirably.

**D.H. LAWRENCE AND THE CHALLENGE OF CLASS
CONSCIOUSNESS: ORIGINAL FREEDOM AND THE SELF**

by
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this document and all that it represents to my husband, Blair, for his unwavering love, support, and assistance, to my children, Kali, Blair, Canyon, and Emily for their patience when I had to “get work done on my thesis,” to my grandparents, Corbett and Betty Smith for always being on my side, and to God with whom all things are indeed possible.

BIOGRAPHY

Mitzi Nuckols grew up in Dunn, North Carolina. She received her Associate in Applied Science Degree from Johnston Community College in 1995 and her Bachelor of Arts in English from Fayetteville State University in 1998. Upon completion of her coursework at North Carolina State University, Mrs. Nuckols moved to Virginia Beach, Virginia where she resides with her husband and four children. Mrs. Nuckols currently teaches at Norview High School in Norfolk, Virginia.

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Introduction

As one of the most studied and analyzed writers of the modern period, D. H. Lawrence stands out as a critic of the human condition and various institutions of civilization such as class systems and class consciousness. D. H. Lawrence deliberately took his novels, novellas, and short stories onto highly controversial political, social, and psychological plateaus. His work probes the intricacies of the human psyche by exposing the possibilities of emotion and behavior. He explores the depth and variety of human emotions such as fear, anxiety, love, frustration, and anger as well as our capacity for depravity. Specifically, Lawrence scrutinizes the social hierarchy of England as he criticizes its class system, which sorts citizens into upper, middle, and lower classes according to birth; this sorting determines one's power, influence, and importance, hence one's individual worth. In his essay, "Class, Politics, and the Individual: A Study of the Major Works of D. H. Lawrence," Peter Schekner asserts the importance of Lawrence's examination of culture when he says that Lawrence's works ". . . reveal more about class, society, and the individual than critics acknowledge" (13) while another literary critic, Robert Kiely suggests that what is "problematic" in Lawrence's writings "is the depth, durability, and importance of class origin" (90). Because Lawrence cannot reconcile his true feelings about the various classes he is constantly attempting to resolve his thoughts in his writing; therefore, class is a constant in his work.

As both Schekner and Kiely suggest, Lawrence is consumed with the class system of his society and its effect on the individual. In many of Lawrence's works, the dominant theme centers on the prevalence of class in determining individual value and shaping one's consciousness of self and his or her place in the class system.

In his essay, "Levels of Consciousness," Martin Price explains that ". . . Lawrence is aware of the painfulness of consciousness" (255). Lawrence sees this consciousness as powerfully painful because it forces one to become aware of himself or herself as subject to the system of class. We are no longer individuals, but parts of a "thing" to be judged and devalued by others. Those who never challenge or question the system are ignorant of its detrimental nature while others either choose to succumb to the system, actively resist it, or are altogether unaffected by it. It is the growing awareness, ensuing struggle, and oppression of self that causes the greatest pain. Those who fight the class system are admired by Lawrence. He pities those who are blithely unaware, while also seeing them as weak and ineffective, but it is those who are cognizant of a choice and choose to succumb to class demands that command a forced sympathy.

Lawrence's fiction registers to reconcile the various stages of his characters with their class position. In all of his works, none of his characters ever transcend the state of consciousness they inhabit at the beginning of the story. While Lawrence talks of the ideal, which is the individual who is unaware of or in open rejection of class expectations, he is unwilling or unable to move, completely, his characters out of their current level of consciousness. Each character exists at a specific state of consciousness between blithe unawareness and conscious rejection of the class system and its mandates. While Lawrence shows readers characters at each state and explores each state, he never allows any character to effectively transcend their origins. They do not arrive at a better understanding of the system or how self and class consciousness are controlling their lives, rather, they are painfully aware of themselves as a part of the class (class consciousness) and of their duty to live within

specific boundaries, which is a consciousness of self (self-consciousness). For Lawrence's characters, there are no important epiphanies that cause them to step outside of their present states to actualize alternate possibilities. Rather, they tend to stagnate in their "proper" places unwilling or unable to experience the ultimate freedom of unconsciousness. Lawrence's characters rarely achieve a state of unselfconsciousness regarding class. It is as if he cannot personally imagine unselfconsciousness for himself. Indeed Lawrence sees class consciousness as a hopeless inevitability. In his fiction, I will explore individuals as captives of heightened class consciousness, hence oppressed by a self and class consciousness they cannot escape.

D. H. Lawrence views the class system as an institution that forces people to bury their real emotions and desires so that they can fit in and succeed in their culture. He believes that despite our innate primal desires, we assimilate into the reigning system of thought and civilization because from birth we are socially trained how to behave and think. This training is not always conscious on the part of the trainers; it is the legacy of culture. However, we develop a consciousness that is aware of how others perceive us. As adults we have the choice to adhere to what is expected of us or not; however, it is very difficult for one to step outside the circle of society. And according to Lawrence, one who rejects the approval of society foregoes the security of one's "place" in that society for the psychological freedom that unselfconsciousness offers. Lawrence sees the human desire to be accepted or approved of as being in conflict with our primitive original nature. He feels that our consciousness of class difference and our desire for class acceptance presents us with limited choices; we must totally succumb to the demands of the system, continuously

struggle for relief from the oppression we feel, or blatantly reject society and become social exiles.

While Lawrence does not definitively present the best answer, he does create characters who exist in a variety of states of self-consciousness and class-consciousness as he explores their ability to live within society. He contemplates their ability to be authentic and live their lives genuinely. These characters are always conscious of their place in the hierarchy of the class system, and of the need either to remain in their current place or rise above it; therefore, they must always be conscious of themselves and of how they are viewed by the members of their culture because it is the reigning paradigm of thought that determines one's place in the social system.

For Lawrence, class systems repress the individual and promote self-consciousness and class-consciousness; Lawrence advocates complete submission to the unselfconsciousness, which for him works to produce an independent individual who exists outside of society's mandates. Lawrence believes that when one is unselfconscious he or she is being completely primitive—his or her original self; this original self behaves naturally and impulsively without regard to ideas of right and wrong or acceptable and unacceptable. In “Daughters of the Vicar” and *The Ladybird*, the author presents the characters who achieve this ideal state as transcending the reality of those who do not. For Lawrence, the unselfconscious individual's behavior is based upon his or her natural most innate desire unhampered by the rules of society. He views the person who behaves naturally as an independent individual who does not rely on others to determine values of right or wrong and does not care if others approve of his or her actions. However, it is

unclear whether this unselfconsciousness is achieved by a choice to reject social norms or if a choice even exists.

Count Psanek from *The Ladybird* seems to have made a conscious choice to reject those of his class and to willfully and openly show his disdain for the system. He achieves unselfconsciousness through a blatant rejection of the class system and his role within it *or* a lack of awareness that one is expected to function within specific perimeters determined by the system. Although submitting to unselfconsciousness often alienates one from the class structure around him or her, for Lawrence this alienation brings about true individuality and is therefore a benefit. This ideal individuality provides a freedom from expectation and conformity. One is responsible to none for his or her actions, yet with the benefit there is a hint of loneliness as if the individual is unable to completely connect to those around them. These class exiles feel an unquestionable devotion (Psanek for Daphne in *The Ladybird* and Mr. Massy for his children in “Daughters of the Vicar”) for someone; yet those people cannot completely surrender to or devote themselves to the individual, so he or she cannot express the free passion that he or she exhibits.

Lawrence seems to think that, left alone, man behaves best out of instinct; thus, the ideas for appropriate behavior do not come from the organization of civilization where mankind has banded together to form these class systems, which in turn establish ideas of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors as well as consciousness of a system and one’s place in that system. His analysis of this consciousness reveals that a person’s natural behavior is at odds with the demands of his or her class and that each person is taught to participate in “normal” relationships and interactions with members of the same class. In *The Ladybird*,

Psanek refuses to participate in the system thereby achieving what he and Lawrence see as an ideal unselfconsciousness, which allows him to experience life freely and authentically. In “Daughters of the Vicar,” Massy maintains unselfconsciousness because he is only conscious of himself as an individual and does not actively acknowledge the class system as the Lindleys do. Because Massy lacks this awareness and because the Lindleys are hyperconscious of the fragility of their place, they treat Massy unnaturally so that he can help them achieve stability; however, his lack of consciousness prevents him from realizing that the Lindleys’ treatment of him is superficial and exaggerated.

Known for his awareness and analysis of class issues in novels such as *Women in Love* and *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, D. H. Lawrence continues his examination of how people function in a class system with his shorter and less frequently analyzed novella, *The Ladybird*, and short story, “Daughters of the Vicar.” While his novels explore class in lengthy, intricate narratives, his shorter, less frequently analyzed works are equally as important studies of class systems and man’s degrees of awareness of the system and himself within that system. Perhaps those shorter, less known works are better portrayals of the inherent consciousness of class because they clearly display Lawrence’s ideas unencumbered by lengthy plot development. The characters in *The Ladybird* and “Daughters of the Vicar” possess various degrees of class consciousness and the self-consciousness that accompanies the class system. Some are, ironically, satisfied with their roles and hyperconsciousness of class and self. Others recognize the oppression of the system, yet they have given up fighting against it, while others are in the throes of the struggle to escape the oppression. Lawrence’s ideal character has escaped the confines of self and class

consciousness. In this novella and short story, he examines characters at differing levels of class-hence-self-consciousness so that the reader must acknowledge and analyze the turmoil and repression bred within the culture. Lawrence explores the wide range of human experience with the battle of the individual to achieve authentic identity within the constructs of the class system.

While Lawrence advocates absolute freedom, he cannot bring many of his characters into this state because he knows that most people will never exist in that ideal state. Most people will not achieve absolute unconsciousness with regards to class and self because human beings have an intrinsic need to belong to a group. We seek comfort, security, and acceptance from those around us, which causes us to measure our value and happiness by that sense of belonging. Attaining total unconsciousness of self's position in the class system requires a rejection of the social stratum or a most distant awareness of the reality of a social system and its requirements of the individual. When reared in a system, one tends to continue within that same system because it is familiar and safe and rebelling against the system is frightening; those who appear unaffected or unaware of the system are either completely blinded or they have rejected the system. Lawrence knew that stepping beyond social barriers and expectations was not likely to happen on a large scale because too many people had existed in this state for too long. Class systems are simply institutions of civilization; for him, they are necessary evils that continue to control the societies in which we live.

Chapter 1: Lawrence, Consciousness, and Class

In many of his works such as *Women in Love* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, D.H. Lawrence delves into the ideas of class consciousness, blood consciousness, and primitivism. With *The Ladybird* and "Daughters of the Vicar," D.H. Lawrence specifically criticizes blind acceptance of class mores and proprieties and the repression of the unselfconscious individual while he affirms the struggle of trying to become an unselfconscious individual. For Lawrence, class systems are blights on society that encourage conformity and acceptance while creating conflict and dissonance. This relentless conflict exists because the lives of the classes within the system are so drastically different. Each class is cognizant of its own reality in comparison to other classes; the upper class remains aware of its "superiority," while the bourgeoisie envies the prestige of the aristocracy and guards its opportunities and privileges against the proletariat, which yearns for opportunities and a better life. Because the classes are hyperconscious of themselves and the vulnerability of their positions, they are always at odds. The working class is under the control of the middle and/or aristocracy, which breeds resentment and a sense of inferiority in the working class while breeding a sense of superiority in the other classes. Although the bourgeoisie ranks above the proletariat, it is socially inferior to the aristocracy.

By the 20s, the middle class was politically and economically ascendant, but the aristocracy saw itself as the cultural elite. The lifestyles and experiences of each class are strongly contrasted as well. The inherent "haves and have nots" of the class system, as well as the differences in wealth and power available to each class, creates a tension and socioeconomic divide that does not allow a fair and balanced society; therefore the classes are always in competition and conscious of their differences.

Lawrence suggests that many people live every day abiding by rules that they never question and that repress their “original” nature. To Lawrence, most people are blithely unaware of their complete commitment to the “rational” structured demands of their society. Typically, members of class systems simply do as they have always done by abiding by their society’s perception of right and wrong, proper and improper. Lawrence asserts that individuals do not recognize their innate originalities and they suppress any thoughts or feelings (passion, discontentment, and anger) that threaten to break through the confines that the class system has created. As Martin Price indicates, Lawrence’s “sense of repression goes well beyond deliberate suppression” (262). It is more confining and deliberate with larger consequences and stronger emotions. These middle class members and some working class members deny their passion, frustration, anger, perverseness, and rebellion, and they are not aware that these characteristics are parts of them. They assume that these emotions and drives are bad and must be overcome and eradicated from their person. Class structure has clearly defined ideas about how one should function in that society and the behaviors that are appropriate. Lawrence views the class structure as one that pigeonholes people into “rationally” organized places that require them to fulfill duties and promote proper behavior. For Lawrence this society does not allow people to become aware of who they are outside of their class involvement. They are not individuals who bring their individual potential to the community; rather, they are voiceless tools that further the community by maintaining the status quo.

Lawrence understands that many people are forced to subdue their natural tendencies and increase their self-consciousness to meet the expectations of society.

Our natural “primitive” beings are a complex combination of emotions and desires that yearn to be exhibited; however, our involvement in the social order insists that we deny our urges in favor of more rational, accepted behaviors. Class systems reject the “irrationality” of unselfconsciousness and individuality. Unselfconsciousness is either an unawareness of or a refusal to acknowledge one’s obligation to adhere to the rules of a social system; therefore, one is not conscious of himself or herself as a member of the class system. Individuals may have been conscious of the system and its control over them or they may have purposely rejected the system in search of liberating individuality. The class system cannot accept the difference and uncontrollability of the passionate, rebellious, unconfined man. If one exists outside of society's conventions, he or she is either rejected or forced to repress what is unacceptable to the community. By dictating every thought, word, and deed, class systems seek to own their members. To truly function within one’s class, a person must adhere to the social and moral expectations of that class. To venture beyond the boundaries established by the class ensures rejection by those who remain within it.

Class demands, for Lawrence, possess the power to oppress individual desires and tendencies that do not further the interests of the class or abide by the restriction of the class. As a result, individuals are lost and become instruments of their class. For Lawrence, the ultimate personal betrayal is allowing society to perpetuate self-consciousness and suppress individuality. When people permit their society to suppress their individuality and force them to structure their lives around the conventional values of society, they have allowed the system to continue. Society suppresses individuality by making the lives of those who wish to be genuine

difficult. They are often criticized and ostracized; therefore, to be accepted they adhere to what society demands. Lawrence speaks out against these controlling class systems that by their very nature make demands of citizens and force them to subdue the genuineness and behave and think according to parameters set by the system. For Lawrence, a release from self-consciousness and class-consciousness would allow “the genuine” to manifest itself. Seeking satisfaction of his needs and desires the genuine man is unencumbered by a desire to please others or compete with the bourgeoisie’s insatiable need for amassing material wealth. The ideal man for Lawrence is primitive and raw, and unconcerned with propriety. He expresses his emotions honestly and fully rather than inhibiting or taming himself in an effort to receive society’s approval. He experiences life in a fundamental way because he is not hampered by concerns with what others will think of him or how they will judge him. The working class is not consumed with fashion or physical appearance; therefore, the people are able to delve more deeply and wholly into their daily activities. For Lawrence, this manifestation of the genuine is the ideal state of man.

With both *The Ladybird* and “Daughters of the Vicar,” D.H. Lawrence exposes the pressure and repression that England’s class structure imposes as well as the struggle that ensues as people become more unselfconscious and actualize their individuality. The author recognizes the struggle of class members who begin to see themselves as more than tools of a system. He dramatizes the battle one must fight with the class consciousness that does not want to relinquish control and the unselfconsciousness that is reaching for freedom. For him, there is a harsh struggle between what one has been and what one is becoming. The conflict between community adherence and unselfconscious individualism is, for Lawrence, a

torturing reality. He presents the recognition of constraint and the fight against that constraint as a painful and arduous process. As individuals realize that they are being confined and defined by the environment and struggle to escape they are pulled in opposing directions and must step outside of what is safe. By its definition, class society places its concerns in front of its constituents. Because it relies on conformity and submission, the class system, particularly in early twentieth century Britain, fights against those who try to assert themselves to escape their stifling confines.

Unselfconsciousness is either the rejection of, or the unawareness of, self's behavioral obligations to the societal structure. It is acting and reacting in ways that are unfiltered by decorum or a prescribed idea of appropriate behavior. Even if one's original nature is dark and ferocious, Lawrence views that originality as genuine and as a manifestation of the individual's unselfconsciousness. Unselfconsciousness is being natural and genuine even if one's naturalness is dark and ferocious; therefore, individuality springs from the channeling of the unselfconsciousness or it is the manifestation of unselfconsciousness. Lawrence would like to see the unselfconsciousness displayed even if it is wild and unseemly by society's standards because he believes that it is only through total abandon that one achieves true self-actualization. For him, class systems, which discourage unselfconsciousness and individuality in favor of conformity and rationalism, alienate those who do not exist within the confines of self-consciousness and class-consciousness. The unselfconscious individual thinks differently, places value differently, and can function independent of class acceptance. The mere existence of an unselfconscious independent person alienates him or her from the larger multitude. Lawrence

valorizes unselfconsciousness and individuality, but he also realizes that class systems do not accept the unconstrained individual. For Lawrence, class, community, and society indicate an inevitable oppression of the individual and a promotion of self and class awareness. He sees them as directing what people think, feel, say, and do as well as who is worthy of admission into the community. By alienating the natural, autonomous being, the class protects itself from devolving into a collection of freethinking, autonomous persons.

D. H. Lawrence views class systems as centered on securing their own dominance, but he favors the situation where the individual can express himself with a naturalness that is not chained by class, mores, or expectations. Lawrence cannot see the unselfconscious individual thriving or even really existing in a class-structured society. Those who reside in a class system doom themselves to conformity and unnaturalness, while the few who try to assert themselves find that they are alienated and cannot reside in the system without becoming its victim. For Lawrence, the individual must be able to explore and manifest him or herself independent of class and its expectations. Lawrence views the working class as the most able to be natural and unselfconscious. He feels that because they are unencumbered by the expectations of the middle and upper classes, they possess and exhibit an innate freedom that he envies. He tends to idealize what he perceives as natural freedom.

Although very aware of the harsh realities of poverty, poor working conditions, and unfair wages indicative of the lives of the proletariat, Lawrence is enamored of the authenticity of the group so much that he focuses on this ideal portrayal rather than a more realistic one. His appreciation for the group allows him

to understand and value the necessity of its contributions to the country while he opposes its position in a culture that continually represses it. “His respect for any kind of skill, including that of the manual laborer, conflicted with his persistent, often explosive impulse to repudiate existing social mechanisms through a refusal to submit human energy to the demands of an impersonal system” (Kiely 90). For Lawrence, experience with the bourgeoisie led him to see it as confining and repressive, so that he and most others have been forced to abandon their inner selves in order to achieve their place in society.

Lawrence most succinctly states his distrust and disgust for the bourgeois in his poem, “How Beastly the Bourgeois Is” where he describes this class as so “presentable”—in a seemingly perfect and acceptable state but which is in reality only presenting an affected façade that masks meaningless existence. He describes the middle class as engaged in fruitless pointless pursuits such as chasing “. . . partridges, or a little rubber ball” (ll 8). For Lawrence, the bourgeoisie are unable to be involved in purposeful interactions with self or others; the class cannot empathize with another’s problem or engage in any meaningful activity or emotion. Who and what they are appears desirable, but they are really parasites stealing life from the working class.

During the first part of the twentieth century, the old culture was passing away and the middle class was losing its distinct position yet both the upper and middle classes refused to give up their facades of propriety and prosperity. Lawrence describes them as “. . . old mushrooms[s], all wormy inside, and hollow under a smooth skin and an upright appearance.” (ll 30-31). They were, in fact, haunted by a hollow, meaningless void. While Lawrence’s observations of his class are reliable, his

distrust and dislike of the bourgeois society causes him to idealize the working class and dramatize the ways in which working class life can brutalize its members. While the working class may be more authentic and genuine than the middle and upper classes, Lawrence's description of them is most likely filtered through and heightened by his intense feelings against the bourgeois. The working man lives every day trying to survive and has no capacity for dealing with the trivialities of the middle and upper class social society. It is as if he pities the middle and upper classes because they have to experience repression.

Lawrence exposes the unhappiness and restlessness of working class life. For Lawrence, members of the working class are often less self-conscious because they are not hobbled by hypocritical bourgeois propriety and are physically freer and more expressive. He knows many working class people are cognizant of their inferior position and of what exists outside of their class. They are aware of their life's fate, and they resent the hand that has been dealt to them. They know that they have always struggled and will always struggle in order to survive. Even though he idealizes them, Lawrence also sees them as occupying a vexed position. They see the advantages of other classes and their desire to experience what appears to be better causes them to feel resentful of their position. But they are not fully aware of the sacrifice of self that must occur in order to live in the middle and upper classes. Having never had the "privileged" life, the "have nots" want it badly; it is the hopelessness that Lawrence empathized with; however, Lawrence also knew that "having" brings complex responsibilities that mangle the honest needs and desires of humanity. While he maintained a bitterness and distrust towards the bourgeois, he felt, to some extent, that the entrapped middle class too deserved empathy.

Although Lawrence does not reconcile the problem of freedom in a class society, he does force the reader to examine the various positions and see that human beings want the existence they do not have because they always see the “other” as more desirable.

Lawrence understands the middle and upper class people who are terrified of losing their position. During this time in history, the lines between classes were becoming more blurred as the common people gained more power. Those in the middle or upper classes were terrified of losing status and those beneath them were conscious of the possibility of rising above their current station. Those afraid of losing place molded themselves so that their middle class could maintain dominance; however, as the lower classes watched the class boundaries thin, they became aware of the possibilities before them. While many wanted more, many were also petrified to attempt a different life than they had known.

Chapter 2: Consciousness in *The Ladybird*

D. H. Lawrence's *The Ladybird* examines the social and political arena of England during the second decade of the twentieth century when the old social structure was crumbling and the country was suffering from the physical, mental, and emotional wounds of the Great War. The novella illustrates Lawrence's criticism of the social class system that privileges one group over another and impeded the freedom of the individual by elevating the importance of community and encouraging conformity to social norms. In *The Ladybird*, D.H. Lawrence lays bare the blind acceptance of social demands that class systems promulgate. He represents the blithely unaware, such as Lady Beveridge, who further the English class system and who have repressed their primitive, original selves to conform to society's demands. For Lawrence, these individuals are struggling between self-consciousness and unselfconsciousness.

Throughout the novella, Lady Beveridge remains kind and genteel and maintains her "place" as an aristocratic woman in a patriarchal society. She is not conscious of herself as an individual because her consciousness centers on her duties as a member of the aristocracy – humanitarian, wife, mother, etc. Lawrence recognizes that many people are so caught up in the roles society has ordained for them that they never become aware of their own desires as an individual. Class systems encourage conformity and constant awareness of one's actions and how those actions affect the class in which he or she lives. Lawrence presents Lady Beveridge as the "soul of England," who "would never lower her delicate silken flag;" "she was a little frail, birdlike woman, elegant, but with that touch of the nineties which was unmistakable" (Lawrence 157 & 158). He calls her "the genuine article,"

which suggests that she is proper English society. Despite the loss of children and the debilitation of her social standing and culture, she never admits or acts on her anger, pain, or bitterness; rather, she upholds the “out-of-date righteousness and aesthetic” (Lawrence 158). The reader does not see Lady Beveridge acting with anger, passion, or aggression; rather, she remains docile and outwardly content. Her female status in this class system keeps her “content that men should act, so long as they breathed from her as from the rose of life the pure fragrance of truth and genuine love” (Lawrence 160). It is irrelevant what she really feels; she must always present herself as the ideal or she has failed to fulfill her cultural duty.

Lady Beveridge seems satisfied with her roles as humanitarian, wife, and mother, and she enjoys being “the woman behind the man.” Because this society places aristocratic women on pedestals to be adored, she remains a symbol of goodness and love that the men who carry out the affairs of the world can keep in a safe untouched place to provide inspiration for what they do. She becomes the thing they protect, the reason for their actions. Lady Beveridge is conscious of the place that she holds and initially is content to remain in that place. Her class-consciousness and self-consciousness do not allow her to be a self-actualizing unselfconscious individual because as Lawrence suggests, unselfconscious individuality has no place in a class system. For Lawrence, the greatest tragedy is those people who blindly accept and never question themselves or their society remain unaware that the most significant parts of their beings remain hidden and dormant. They remain a tool of the class community and never realize their individuality.

According to Lawrence, class structure represses the will of the individual in order to increase conformity to social codes of do's and don'ts. It emphasizes a hierarchical structure that categorizes people based on economic status and family heritage. Members of class systems are either unaware of the repression or they succumb to it, or most rare, they fight against it. In *The Ladybird*, Lawrence illustrates the repression of the unselfconsciousness and the individual who allows himself or herself to be subdued to become a part of the larger community. Lawrence recognizes that there are members of class systems who were once or who might have been original, genuine, unrepressed, "irrational" individuals who thought, spoke, and acted from the deepest most natural recesses of the self, but have now subdued their inner being to become a part of the class structure. On some level, they realize that their "real" self is not wanted; therefore, they restrain themselves to become more "rational." If they want to exist comfortably within the culture, they must repress their physical sexual desires.

Lord Beveridge is from a "desperate race" that began with "a riotous, daredevil border soldier," and his "dark passionate nature, and his violent sensitiveness" mark his difference from upper class English society. He was once a freethinking, rebellious, unselfconscious individual, but after years of "repression, condemnation, and repudiation . . . he had almost come to believe his own wrongness" (Lawrence 161 & 206). Lord Beveridge's innate will and passion have been repressed and disdained by the class society in which he lives and he has been forced to alter his behavior to satisfy the demands of his society. His gentle humanitarian wife and the society that she represents have worn down his passion and rebellion and he has become –rationally self-conscious; as a result, he has

repressed his individuality to please the world around him. Lawrence admires Lord Beveridge's passionate, virile nature. For him, Lord Beveridge represents the tortured soul that possesses an awareness of its original nature and wants to embrace it, but is so controlled by class norms that it has accepted defeat. Although Lord Beveridge has become a part of the system, he resents its demands and the role that he must play. He is conscious that he has repressed his genuine self and continues to feel as if he has sacrificed himself for his class position. When Count Psanek comes to stay at his home, his first instinct is to refuse him, but to avoid and even "defy scandal," he allows Psanek to stay (Lawrence 206). His true nature feels bitterness and hatred, but the genteel class system of England demands that he be "gracious" and he succumbs to these demands so as to avoid disapproval from the system; however, within himself he still feels the desire to rebel against society. With the character of Lord Beveridge, Lawrence shows that he understands that many people are forced to subdue their natural tendencies and increase their self-consciousness to meet the expectations of society.

Lawrence reserves the most empathy for individuals who are coming out of the blinding stupor of class oppression to realize that they have been forced into prescribed roles and behaviors and are now struggling with this new awareness. From the beginning of the novella, Lawrence presents Daphne as a woman stifled by the class system in which she lives and as a woman struggling with her growing sense of herself as a genuine being independent of class. Her society idolizes the beauty and docility of woman, and thereby transmits these demands from one generation to the next and forces the role of woman to be subordinate even as she is idealized. Lawrence presents this class system as one that deems women objects of beauty and

grace and places them on pedestals that remove them from their original natural being to make them conscious of themselves as objects of beauty. Because of society's and her husband's fascination with her beauty (she is "like the beauty of all life"), Daphne has come to see herself only as the symbol of physical beauty that society has made her. She is "lovely, fair, and with a soft exotic white complexion and delicate pink cheeks . . . like a hot-house flower," and she thinks of herself as "purely an English blond, an Aphrodite of the foam," and she loved her loveliness almost with obsession" (Lawrence 160, 190, & 196). Throughout *The Ladybird*, Daphne and her family are consumed with her beauty and her role as a woman of proper society. Although she is unhealthy and poor, she and those around her are consumed with her outward appearance, which signifies the importance of beauty and genteel nature that women of the upper class are to exhibit. This preoccupation with the woman's outward appearance stems from a basis in this society, which views women as showpieces that cannot be valued for their intellectual prowess because they are not given the education that is given to the men of their class. For this class of people, the appearance of beauty and prosperity is enough to keep them superior to the outside world, regardless of their true state of existence.

Although Daphne is miserable and her family is poor, by appearing affluent to those of their society, they are acceptable. According to Lawrence, it is this pretentiousness that is in conflict with Daphne's awakening innate self. The pedestal on which she has been placed is in conflict with the "wild energy damned up inside her" (Lawrence 161). Daphne's self-consciousness is so heightened that her natural self and her individuality are stifled and she is fighting the outward beauty and the pedestal to assert herself. All of her life, she has experienced a ". . . perverse denial

of her essential self” (Daleski 202). With Daphne's awakening and struggle, Lawrence reveals both the repression of society and the individual's fight for emotional, intellectual, and physical freedom.

Despite society's repression of the individual and promotion of self-consciousness, many people like Daphne struggle to become unselfconscious and realize their individuality. With Daphne, Lawrence is showing an awakening awareness of self as tortured by its battle with the class-consciousness that controls it. Those who fight to subordinate class and self-consciousness so that they can strive towards unselfconsciousness and individuality find themselves in constant battle between their innate natural desires and society's sanctioned actions.

Lawrence describes Daphne as someone with an innate “reckless, anti-philanthropic passion” that frustrates her, turns “her own blood . . . against her, beat[s] on her nerves, and destroy[s] her” (161). She suffers this struggle because the deepest part of her self is antithetical to the demands of society. Like her father, Daphne is rebellious, passionate, strong-willed, and opinionated, but society seeks to repress these characteristics and make her a docile emblem of beauty and femaleness. As she looks at herself in the mirror, she thinks of her eyes, which are “drawn tight like a screen. Supposing it should relax. Supposing it should unfold, and open out the dark depths, the dark dilated pupil! Supposing it should?” (Lawrence 182).

Daphne's eyes hint at her wildness, yet mask the intensity behind her guise of proper behavior that she might lose this guard and be exposed as a wild natural being unacceptable in her society. While she wonders about the possibilities, she affirms to maintain her distance. And then she determines that she could not “give way to the relaxation that the Count wanted of her” (Lawrence 182).

Daphne's conflict results from a desire to cultivate her mind, her spirit, "the inside" of her which is in opposition to culture's mandate that she remain frigidly conscious of her beauty, her "place," and her obligations as a member of a class system. The Count encourages her to question her reality, become unselfconscious, and assert her individuality so that she can become independent of the system. To question her life and admit her fascination with and attraction to the Count would be to betray all that she has known. Lawrence creates this struggle to show the inner turmoil of class members because there are those who want to live differently—who yearn to actualize the freedom of self that hovers just outside their reach.

Lawrence asserts that people should not be seen as parts of a machine, which work to ensure the proper function of that machine; likewise, their worth should not be judged by their adherence to society's rules. They should be seen as individuals with various needs, desires, and flaws. Daphne's struggle is with her society, but her most intense struggle exists within herself. Although Daphne is afraid to reveal parts of her self because society would not approve, she fights to break free yet she fights to remain veiled. She can't decide if it will be worse to live within the confines of society or live outside the acceptance of that same society. Daphne's consciousness of her class and her place within the class system, is evidenced by her admission that she would have loved a gamekeeper "if she had not been isolated beyond the breach of her birth, her culture, her consciousness" (Lawrence 211). She knows that the only reason she rejected the gamekeeper is because he is beneath her in the eyes of her society. Lawrence shows Daphne's awareness that this behavior is a flaw, yet she seems powerless to behave differently.

Daphne is exceptionally aware of class distinction and she recognizes people by their social position, yet she feels doomed because she will never experience the reality of the “other—those not bound by class consciousness”. This desire to be connected to the lower classes reveals Daphne’s yearning to trade in her class-consciousness for a connection with humanity and ultimately actualization of her genuine self. She is “nailed inside her own self-consciousness” and burdened by the life that she lives. She feels trapped and sacrificed by self-consciousness that does not allow her to assert her genuine self. For Lawrence, self-consciousness is like a coffin that confines and forces the individual to exist within its narrow space. Daphne cannot escape the self-consciousness to experience the reality of others or the naturalness of her self that corresponds to others. Lawrence relates the struggle of awaking from self-consciousness with the words, “To be gone from this her self, from this Daphne, to be gone from father and mother, brothers and husband and home and land and world: to be gone” (213). She wants to be free from the repression and able to embrace aspects of life that she knows nothing about. Daphne wants the freedom to explore the darkness of the unknown just as Lawrence did. And, as Daleski attests, “She comes to recognize too that, in contradistinction to the ‘superconscious’ finish of Basil and herself, the Count, like her father, has some of the unconscious blood-warmth of the lower classes . . .” (204). Throughout his work, Lawrence connects the lower class to the primitive warm liquid that sustains life in an effort to show that this class is usually closer to its original self than the classes that are higher in the system. Even though Lawrence often tends to idealize the working class, it is those same men and women who must concern themselves with

the daily struggles of survival that he sees a vitality and truth that he fails to find in the middle and upper classes of English society.

This class society perpetuates itself by passing its expectations from generation to generation. From Lord Beveridge's desire that Daphne marry well to Lady Beveridge's insistence that she "admire only the good" and present herself as a devoted wife and humanitarian, Daphne has gained an understanding of her class' expectations. Lawrence is critiquing the system's Puritanical expectations in relation to good works, marriage, beauty, goodness, passivity, and conformity. During an episode with Count Psanek and her husband, Daphne is angered by the fact that she is expected "to sit as a passive medium between two men who are squibbling philosophical nonsense to one another" (Lawrence 205). The patriarchal class system dictates the roles and expectations of women, and all that Daphne has ever known has perpetuated these same ideals. Through Daphne's repression, Lawrence epitomizes the mores and ideals that class systems dictate to their members. They are expected to fulfill obligations, employ attitudes and behavior, and subvert their natural difference in an effort to further the community and class values.

The characters of *The Ladybird* present an array of people existing in various states of self and class consciousness. Lady Beveridge remains blithely unaware that she is but a tool of the system, while her husband battles to oppress his primitive nature so that he behaves appropriately. As the most tragic figure of the novella, Daphne exhibits a growing awareness that her life has always been dictated by her society and her culture; however, she is never able to completely abandon class expectations in favor of complete freedom. The author pities his society because its structure forces its members to adhere to inhibiting rules and expectations, which

cripples the individuals. Lawrence wants to find a way to correct the problem, but his characters never seem able to escape the constraints placed upon them.

Chapter 3: Consciousness in “Daughters of the Vicar”

Like *The Ladybird*, “Daughters of the Vicar” is a story that “turns on a conflict of class values” (Martin 36). It is the story of “The sterile and repressed Lindley family, obsessed by proud class superiority, push one daughter into a marriage whose sole recommendations are money and position. But the other daughter rebels by choosing ‘life’, her relationship with a young collier of the district, overcoming both the cold hostility of her family and the subtler barriers within her own and her lover’s class-influenced feelings” (Martin 36). As individuals and as a family, the Lindleys do not have characteristics or emotions that are uniquely their own or that can be described as natural and personal. Rather, their interactions with one another and the rest of the world are shaped by their need for approval from the social hierarchy in which they live. For D. H. Lawrence, this inability to function as individuals is brought about by the relentless repression of the innate desire to be independent and original so that the need for belonging and excelling dominates. It is this act of repressing the natural and shaping a hyperconsciousness of one’s class self as simply a part of a societal order that results in people such as the Lindleys, who struggle to maintain their position in middle-class society in order to be whole. In “Daughters of the Vicar,” Lawrence explores characters who are satisfied in their oppression, those who openly reject it, those who are struggling but seem unaware, and those who are imprisoned by it as well as those who have lost the battle against class-consciousness.

The Lindley family believes that it is superior to the community of colliers simply because of its position in the social hierarchy. Despite their poverty, they try to sustain the image of affluence so that they can maintain a more genteel

appearance. Although they are a part of the middle class, Mr. and Mrs. Lindley have no real power or affluence save their acute consciousness of class divisions. Because they believe that they have more breeding than the working class colliers, the Lindleys remain aloof so as to distinguish themselves from the working class. The Lindleys have “. . . no particular character . . .” and are dependent upon their “position in society” (Lawrence 137). Their identity is controlled by their fraught position on the social scale. They are incapable of genuineness because they must maintain a hyper propriety mandated by the class system. Lawrence suggests the effects of class-based self-consciousness and self-repression as he shows Mr. and Mrs. Lindley to be bitter, lifeless, and emotionally dead.

The father, Mr. Lindley, is “. . . pale and miserable and neutral” because the repression of his real feelings has drained the life from him; he has become bloodless and unhappy (Lawrence 137). By denying and repressing his truest original self, Mr. Lindley has become a shell of a person. The mother, Mrs. Lindley, has experienced the raw genuine feelings of the natural being; her feelings have been “. . . so strong that she frightened herself”; therefore, she suppresses those feelings because she knows that inherent, raw, dark, dangerous feelings are not allowed in the bourgeois society (Lawrence 137). As a vicar’s wife and member of an ordered class, Mrs. Lindley is expected to be able to exhibit emotional control. When her real feelings surfaced, she was so afraid of them because they were not deemed socially acceptable. Her anger was too violent so the only way to escape was to repress it. “Gradually, broken by the suppressing of her violent anger and misery and disgust, she became an invalid and took to her couch (Lawrence 137-38). Rather than expressing her feelings, she buries them until they consume her and render her

lifeless and bitter. She is no longer capable of embracing life because her genuineness has been pressed out of her. For Lawrence, Mrs. Lindley is one of the most tragic figures of the class system because she recognizes that she has willfully suppressed her genuine feelings in an effort to be what her class position expects of her. Lawrence feels pity and disgust for individuals, particularly working class individuals, who have lost their individuality because they are consumed with a consciousness that self must succumb to the class system.

For Lawrence, the class system disallows freedom, regardless of class; ironically, this lack of freedom is inherited by the next generation. Lawrence believed that although wealth and position bring more economic and social advantages, with these advantages comes the constant pressure of behaving as one's class dictates. While the working classes are kept "down," the upper classes are socially and expressively confined. While ". . . certain individuals escape . . . the objective determinations of class persist, scarcely recognized as such" (Martin 37). The Lindley's continue this legacy of oppression; Lawrence describes them as parents ". . . bitterly repressing and pruning their children into gentility, urging them to ambition, weighting them with duty" (Lawrence 138). Although the Lindley's are probably unaware of the brutality of the heritage they are passing onto their children, they make them hyperconscious of their duty to uphold particular ideals and social barriers as members of a particular class.

For Lawrence, the Lindley's represent the way in which generations inherit the oppressed spirits of their ancestors, and the ways in which parents force their children to conquer their innate feelings in favor of scripted, socially acceptable attitudes and actions. Lawrence sees this inheritance as a vicious cycle of bitter

repression and cruelty that keeps the masses of humanity separate, alienated, and self-alienated. By being most conscious of one's self and one's place in the social hierarchy, the individual cannot act or react in a natural way, which keeps him or her from really knowing others. Instead he or she must remain aware of how his or her actions will be viewed by others. Lawrence prefers the unselfconscious, naturally genuine individual, to the suppressed individual whose entire identity is immersed in his or her social position.

When her family treats Alfred horribly, Louisa “. . . suffer[s] in her soul, indignant with all of them, . . . but quite unable to say why she was indignant” (Lawrence 178). By embracing Alfred, Louisa is stepping outside the confines that the class system has created. She is marrying outside her class and against the wishes of her family. Rather than understanding her parents' disapproval, Louisa is indignant at their treatment of Alfred. She is experiencing the raw natural feelings of love and devotion that supersede society's ideas of class propriety. She has transcended the repression of class division and is experiencing the feelings of originality. “Class-division, class-feeling exist as poisonous facts about English society, and Lawrence hates them. But they can be overcome by ‘life’ that is to say, by individual men and women sufficiently courageous, tender, and fiery, to establish human relationships beyond class” (Martin 37).

Lawrence believes that it is the participation in a class system that has made the vicar unhappy and insignificant, and as the head of the Lindley family he has dictated his family's sense of societal duty and class distinction. He has led them to feel superior and in need of hyper-focused self-awareness and class-awareness. He goes through life blindly without real, honest emotions, and it is only when his

“place” is threatened that he is capable of showing any amount of passion. Tragically, his passion is not for life, but for the superiority to which he is accustomed. When Louisa shames him by agreeing to marry Alfred Durant, Mr. Lindley explains the basis of his opposition when he says, “I have my position to maintain, and a position, which may not be taken lightly” (Lawrence 184). Mr. Lindley is so controlled by his need for society’s approval that he refuses to allow Louisa’s marriage to the inferior Alfred on the basis that it threatens others’ respect for him.

Mr. Lindley considers himself superior and revered, and this air of superiority is more important to him than the happiness of his daughter. If his parishioners witness the fact that his daughter is married to someone beneath her, he too will be affected. Lawrence understands the petit-bourgeois fear of losing position. As the lines between classes blurred, those in the middle and upper classes saw the closing of the gap and were terrified of losing status. Those afraid of losing their place in the middle classes molded themselves so that their class could maintain dominance; if individuals stepped beneath their class, their action was viewed as a threat to the whole class; therefore, the class demanded adherence to certain standards of behavior. On the other hand, as the lower classes watched the class boundaries thin, they became aware of the possibilities before them. While many wanted more, many were also petrified to attempt a different life from what they had known. Although Lawrence often idealizes the lower class as the ideal primitive, the Durants do not fit into Lawrence’s ideal philosophical picture.

Lawrence expresses the effects of self and class-consciousness when he writes of Mary “. . . there was always a weight on top of her, something that pressed down

her life.” Mary feels this way about her life, she feels “. . . oppressed and depressed . . .” (Lawrence 156). With these descriptions of Mary’s oppression, Lawrence asserts the draining effect that class consciousness has on her. Forever being conscious of class expectations and class convention bleeds dry her enjoyment, energy, and happiness. Her parents’ constant reminders of her “place,” the difference between herself and the colliers, and her husband’s control of her and her life keep her real innate emotions and desires bottled up; Lawrence uses Mary, her family, and her husband to illustrate the mindset of the middle class, which cannot get enough of anything. They always want more. Throughout her life, the class system’s ideals have required that she deny her true desires and submit to its demands. She is to be the obedient wife and mother of the socially esteemed husband regardless of her own needs. Lawrence shows that Mary is aware of her oppression and unhappiness, yet she is not unselfconscious enough to actualize her real desire. Both the Lindleys and their daughter are so cognizant of Massy and his every desire that they cannot exercise their own needs or thoughts.

Class-based societies, founded upon ideas of one group being better than and more important than another, disapprove of original feelings and actions because they are often unpredictable and seemingly irrational. When repressed by society’s expectations human desires and emotions often reveal the worst in humanity. Mary may have wanted to marry outside her class or choose not to marry at all, but these were not real options in the eyes of her culture. Mary never had the freedom to think about what she really felt because her entire life has been influenced by what is and is not acceptable. Mary is aware of feeling oppressed yet she is still too conscious of her role as wife, mother, and member of the middle class to venture outside the

parameters that have been set for her. Lawrence uses Mary as an example of people who fashion their lives after the precedent set by those in their society. As Lawrence writes of her, “She had station, she could patronize: it was almost all that was left to her. But she could not have lived without having a certain position. She could never have trusted herself outside a definite place, nor respected herself except as a woman of superior class” (Lawrence 174). Here Lawrence shows that Mary’s entire identity is consumed by her place in society; she does not believe that she can exist within the structures of the system nor could she accept being considered inferior by others. She is not focused on what really makes her happy but on how others view her.

Lawrence knew that many people struggled with a sense of oppression that made them want to rebel, yet he was also aware that these same people could not overcome their need for approval from those around them. Without approval and “fitting in” in a particular place, these people feel worthless and without purpose. Those in the middle and upper classes gain their satisfaction from being above another group of people. Lawrence recognized and detested this need for power and superiority. He felt that these cultures twisted the natural being into a placid-seeming facsimile of itself without real passion. Lawrence saw this need for approval as the driving force behind the hyperconsciousness of self and the self’s place in class society.

By fulfilling her obligations of proper marriage and motherhood, Mary only continues in the role that society has designed for her. Mary does not marry Mr. Massy because she is in love with him, but because he has the power to get her out of the poverty she has always known. Mary marries Mr. Massy because he has “some” money and is a representative of a decent income” (Lawrence 145). With him, she

will maintain her social position and have the money to support that position. With Mary, Lawrence shows the hyperconsciousness of social position and material wealth and how this hyperconsciousness can cause one to forsake love for position.

Lawrence stresses the materialism of society and the way in which the desire for wealth and place dictate personal life choices. Mary has married Massy only because he can secure her safe and comfortable place in proper society so that she can maintain the life to which she is accustomed. Lawrence believes that the bourgeois or bourgeois-aspiring members of the class system are unable to resist the temptation of gaining more wealth and stronger, more secure positions. It is the fear of not having and not belonging that drives Mary and those like her. If Mary had any chance of accessing her raw individual self, her marriage to Massy robbed her of that chance. Not because Massy is a tyrannical husband, but because Mary has limited her life choices by marrying a man she does not love for the guarantee of material and social security. She could have pursued other interests or options or she could have married for love, even if that meant risking her position. By succumbing to his power, she sacrifices her self; she becomes merely a tool of her husband and society. As his wife, she must think and be what he deems right, and questioning his rightness is not a possibility because her “place” as wife demands that she acquiesce to him.

Perhaps the most complex aspect of “Daughters of the Vicar” is how Mary relates to her husband. Although he never suspects the truth of Mary’s reasons for marrying him, she is well aware of her motivation and that she has chosen this marriage in spite of her natural desires. Mary’s genuine original self is repulsed by Massy; her body’s reaction is to despise him; however, her mind is under his power.

“She knew that Mr. Massy was stronger than she, and that she must submit to what he was. Her physical self was prouder, stronger than he, her physical self disliked and despised him. But she was in the grip of his moral, mental being” (Lawrence 150). She has allowed his power over her mind to conquer her raw physical reaction to him. While Mary is joined to Massy physically without desire, mentally, she has chosen class position over life. While there is an unexplainable attraction, Mary cannot mentally connect with her husband because he exists alone and because their marriage represses rather than feeds her most innate thoughts and desires.

According to Lawrence, Mary is tormented by the conflicts between genuine unselfconsciousness and the hyperconsciousness of self and class that cause her to marry for social position rather than love. Her raw feelings stir up a passion that her parents have repressed throughout her life; therefore, it is not strong enough to overcome her need for acceptance or the dark mental power of her husband. For Lawrence, the power of the mind is a complicated and curious aspect of human relationships. Lawrence questions the mind’s willingness to succumb when its natural reaction is to deny or resist. In “Daughters” he critiques the way in which this power begins and in what ways the power holder exercises and attains his power.

Describing Mary’s reaction to intimacy with her husband, Lawrence writes, “To this she had to force herself, shuddering and yet desirous, but he did not perceive it” (146). Because he is her husband, Mary forces herself to be with him in every way, yet she is not comfortable or natural. She makes herself be with him because she knows it is her duty as a wife; however, she is also strangely attracted by his inhumanness in a way that she cannot understand or explain. Lost in his own

dark world, Massy is unaware of Mary's true feelings. Because he is so consumed with himself, he is totally unaware of Mary's needs or desires; he is unable to see the passion that she is squelching by marrying him, and he is also unable to see how he is merely satisfying a material need. With the Massys' relationship, Lawrence contemplates the complex workings of marriage, both mentally and physically. The marriage of convenience, the combination of attraction and repulsion that unites people together in order to serve the greater class good are vehicles that further the goal of the class system—to keep each class distanced from the others.

When he writes about Mary's reaction to the birth of her child, Lawrence reveals the most shocking, seemingly irrational repression of the self's primal desires in class society. When Mary has her child, "She hate[s] it because it made her live again in the flesh, when she could not live in the flesh, she could not. She wanted to trample herself down, down, extinct, to live in the mind" (Lawrence 154). The birth of a child is a primal act that forces the mother to abandon proper behavior as she endures the throes of childbirth; it is an instinctive withdrawal into the body as she owns the pain as well as the emotions of giving birth. It is this intensity of physical awareness and earthiness that she hates and wants to escape. By repressing her deepest desires of the flesh in order to achieve the supreme self-consciousness and class-consciousness that allow her to marry Massy, she has buried her instinctive spontaneous reactions to life. For most of the story, Lawrence shows Mary as living in the mental "rational" state of the mind that convinces her to make choices sanctioned by society; however, once her child is born, her deepest, inherent, most natural feelings again assert themselves. But she has lived in the mind and suppressed the rawness of the flesh for so long that she feels incapable of and

unwilling to embrace these powerful desires, instincts, and feelings that have been awakened by the primitive connection between mother and child. Mary is so tormented by the conflict between the body and the mind that she wants to extinguish the raw, primeval feelings of the flesh. Lawrence believed that people like Mary sacrificed their sense of self, the most genuine, for the other (public) self that is open to scrutiny and the need for approval. Although Lawrence understands why people acquiesce to become what is expected of them, he cannot reconcile himself to those who would choose class and self consciousness over unconsciousness. Lawrence's characters that are cognizant that they are oppressed either resent their current state or are struggling against it.

With the words, "She honored it so, and yet she shrank from it" Lawrence describes Mary's feeling about her marriage to Massy (Lawrence 146). With Mary, Lawrence again creates the woman controlled by her desire for the man, not necessarily her physical desire, but it is what he represents: difference and mystery. Mary feels a distant reverence for the mysterious power of her husband, yet even she cannot fully accept the attraction. While she is attracted, she is also repelled. Perhaps it is the darkness combined with her need for her family and society's acceptance and approval that draws her to him. Lawrence uses the Massy marriage and Mary's reaction to her husband to explore an individual's battle with the complexities and oppositions of love and social expectation. Lawrence sees the genuine passion of humanity at odds with the repression of class distinction and separation. He believes that the one who stays true to his or her original self will be better off than those who conform to class convention. For him, those consumed by

class distinction and material worth are inured to the raw feelings of originality and have ultimately become tools of the class system.

When Mr. Massy reacts vehemently about the specifics of his daughter's bathing, Mary and her family are "subduedly angry" (Lawrence 159). Although they realize how preposterous Massy's attitude is, they repress their anger. No one says anything about his ridiculous behavior; they cannot even muster the full feelings of anger. For so long, they have held him in awe and allowed his "position" to dictate their treatment of him. With the relationship between Massy and the Lindleys, Lawrence expresses how concern for position in society does not allow people to honestly feel or express their innate reactions. Because they do not want to offend him, rather than tell Massy that he is being ridiculous, they pretend that nothing is wrong. He is their link to a secure position; they do not want to place any strain on the relationship. Class members are afraid of alienating themselves from other members of their class and becoming outcasts. Each of them wants to be a vital part of their class' position and their sense of value comes from their class roles.

Lawrence illustrates the enculturation of consciousness when he shows the complete unselfconsciousness of Massy's young children. While the Lindleys are always conscious of Massy and his wishes, ". . . his children were the only beings in the world who took not the slightest notice of him" (Lawrence 157). His children are natural beings who have not yet been taught the cultural lessons of class divisions. While Massy may control Mary and mesmerize others whose unselfconsciousness has been conquered, these young children see their father through innocent eyes. Because they have not learned crippling class expectations, the children do not feel a responsibility to behave in any particular way. They are not afraid of society's

disapproval or of losing “place.” Their behavior is the result of primal instincts; they do not behave as if Massy possesses any social power or psychological control because they have not yet learned of the existence of class distinction. These young innocents do not know that they have been saved from a life of lower class demise purely by the luck of being born the heirs of Massy. For them, he possesses no real power; they react naturally to him. Lawrence uses these children as examples of unselfconsciousness at work. These children have no concept of class. Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the relationship between Massy and his children is the fact that those who are the least conscious of him and the least mindful of his desires are the ones whom he adores unconditionally. For Lawrence, the Massy children are examples of the genuine being whose unselfconsciousness has yet to be molded by society’s obsession with belonging and obedience. They answer no demands and act and react with primitive necessity.

From the beginning of the story, Lawrence describes the working class Durants as “raw” and “disaffected” because to him they are the unpretentious natural man in their mundane surroundings. Although Lawrence is fascinated by the genuineness of the working class colliers, they also disgust him. Their behavior is uncouth and unacceptable. Lawrence presents characters that are bound by their social position. Mrs. Durant is a mother and wife in a family of working class colliers. As such she has served as housekeeper, nursemaid, and chef with an “... air of having been compelled all her life to serve unwillingly, and to control where she did not want to control” (Lawrence 140). Her position has forced her to give herself in ways that she resents. It has forced her to tame emotions, thoughts, and actions that she inwardly wishes to display. This internal repression of the working class

individual goes against Lawrence's often-idealized version of the working class, which portrays the lower classes as primitive and genuine and unencumbered by concerns of class-consciousness. Rather than showing the working class as free, with his vivid portrayal of Mrs. Durant, Lawrence illustrates the pride of the working class as well as the class system's repression of its members, regardless of rank. The lower class has needs and desires that go unfulfilled as they succumb to the incessant struggles of poverty and labor. Although Lawrence often tends to idealize the working class in his writings, in "Daughters of the Vicar" he explores the working class as conscious of itself as repressed and resentful of this repression. The Durants cannot be who they want to be because society will not allow it. Mrs. Durant must be a mother and wife because it is the role that she has been given to play.

Although Lawrence often romanticizes the life and unselfconsciousness of the laborer, he cannot deny that they too are conscious of class divisions. They may not have to satisfy the expectations of superior society, but they are definitely aware that they are not a part of the middle or upper class. They may not have to fulfill certain roles but they are ever mindful that who they are is somehow less valuable than others. When Lawrence writes that Louisa thinks to herself that Alfred ". . . had ranked himself inferior, subordinate to her. And that was how he could get away from her, . . . She felt the cowardice of it, his calmly placing her in a superior class, and placing himself inaccessibly apart . . ." he explains how Alfred Durant has already defined himself as beneath Louisa in an effort to keep a distance between himself and what the rules of the class system dictate is unobtainable and wrong (151). By distancing himself from her, he can suppress the growing feelings and rationalize not being with her. Alfred is succumbing to society's pressure to

maintain strict class divisions. With Alfred, Lawrence reveals the torture of the working class, which just as the middle class is hyperconscious of itself as “beneath,” yet is also conscious of how close the next level of the system really is. Although Lawrence wants to see the working class as primitive and unaffected, Alfred proves that the working class too struggles to overcome the confines of the system.

With Alfred, Lawrence explores the individual who exists in one class and is aware of himself as socially inferior. The individual who is cognizant of his inferiority by his culture’s estimation, yearns to be free of that feeling. “For years he fought with himself under the military discipline, for his own self-respect, struggling through blind anger and shame and a cramping sense of humiliation. Out of humiliation and self-hatred he rose into a sort of inner freedom” (Lawrence 164). Lawrence examines the lower class that has experienced interaction with those socially superior and is cognizant of not belonging to that group. Those like Alfred have gained an awareness of a life better than theirs, which makes them resent their own yet be unable to attempt to rise above their current position. They have seen the failure to rise, they have experienced rejection, and they refuse to isolate themselves from others in their class by actively trying to transcend the class barriers. They are so hyperconscious of themselves as the “have-nots” that they are too paralyzed to try to escape their prescribed positions.

Lawrence uses Alfred Durant as a prime example of this tortured individual when he describes how Alfred feels with the following—“He would have changed with any mere brute, just to be free of himself, to be free of the shame of self-consciousness. He saw some collier lurching straight forward without misgiving, pursuing his own satisfaction, and he envied him. Anything, he would have given for

this spontaneity and this blind stupidity which went to its own satisfaction direct” (Lawrence 165). Alfred is first of all aware of himself as more aware of himself and his class than a collier who goes through life doing as he pleases. Alfred knows that he has been educated enough to now be conscious of himself as an individual and conscious of his place in the class system. He is also cognizant of those who are above him in the social system. Alfred wants his life to be this simple—unbounded by the need for acceptance or approval, but it isn’t. He has seen the possibilities that lie outside of his reality—what one can have if he or she is born into privilege. He wants it yet hates himself for wanting it and especially for not being able to get it.

Like Lawrence, Alfred sees the working class collier as the epitome of personal freedom, yet there is also some sort of shame that accompanies the working class. Lawrence is too aware of the disadvantages of the working class, and this awareness made him a working class exile—indeed an exile within British class society. Alfred has already been exposed to the possibilities of social position, and its pull (regardless of how it represses the individual) is too powerful to ignore. “He held firmly to his own independence and self-respect” even though he knows that he does not satisfy the Lindleys’ desires for their daughter (Lawrence 183). He does not have position or money; therefore, he fails to meet their standards. They want to either maintain the status quo or rise above it; Alfred cannot help them do either. As Lawrence writes, Alfred knew “. . . they would not think him good enough” (184).

Once again Lawrence reveals the relentless plague of self and class consciousness—consciousness of class divisions and consciousness of the self as being a part of a certain division. “He felt abashed and humbled by the big house, he felt again as if he were one of the rank and file,” Lawrence analyzes the class system

and the way in which it categorizes individuals just as the military separates and represses the individual so that it can better serve the whole (174). To ensure that the members of the military can function as one unit, its members' individualities are suppressed, and they are drilled to think as one. So are members of the class system; their genuineness is pressed down methodically so they can ignore their inherent need for individuality and work as one body. They become one rather than individuals. While this repression of the individual is necessary in order to secure a strong military force, the class system's mimicry of this mindset erases the individual in order to perpetuate a cultural system that systematically divides and categorizes people by social and financial position.

With the characters in "Daughters of the Vicar," Lawrence manages to represent a wide range of consciousness—while the father and mother are tortured and beaten by years of oppressing their true nature, Mary is in a battle against herself to bury her primitive side, Mrs. Durant is beaten by bitterness for what she cannot have, Alfred wants to rise above his station and knows the pain that class divisions have already inflicted upon him, and Louisa embraces the chance to throw off the restraints of her culture. These characters represent kinds of awareness of and adherence to the regulations of the class system. Lawrence sees the pain that each person feels and presents a very stark image of reality. While he yearns for the ideal to immerge, he is not able to create the solution or realistically imagine the class reforming itself; therefore, he leaves his characters in their current states rather than creating the utopia he looks for.

Chapter 4: Lawrence's Ideal Individual

Lawrence's ideal individual is a powerful yet somewhat mysterious persona who is not encumbered by self and class consciousness. This ideal individual does not need, and indeed, rejects the approval of society. He is a physical being motivated by emotion and instinct, but not encumbered by a top-heavy rationality. Ideally the individual is well aware of the system and rejects it because of its many flaws and confines. However, some characters who are independent and appear unaffected by class position do not satisfy the ideal because they are not purposely rejecting the society but are simply unaware of it. For Lawrence, the ideal man openly criticizes his the society and challenges it to reform itself.

Count Psanek is Lawrence's ideal man—one who consciously rejects the confines of society. For Lawrence, Count Psanek represents an achieved anti-rationality, unselfconsciousness, and a bold individualist not afraid to go against the class system that surrounds him. Psanek is estranged from the dominant system and ideology; there is no room in the society for someone with such perverse and independent thinking. Lady Beveridge and Daphne view Psanek as “primitive,” “aboriginal,” and “shot away from the heart of humanity” (Lawrence 159, 163, & 167). Because Lawrence views individuality and unselfconsciousness as ideal goals, setting Psanek apart of is a benefit to the Count. If he is alienated for possessing these attributes, then he has achieved the greatest goals. Lawrence views alignment with society/community/class as a detriment to the individual; it is better to exist as a genuine person outside of the majority than to be enslaved by it.

When Count Psanek thinks of the world as England with its “little red-brick boxes in rows” and “Little fields with innumerable hedges” he is angered and

disgusted by the ordered rational simplicity of England (Lawrence 175 & 176). Because the social structure is organized like the land and houses, both Psanek and Lawrence reject the ordered similarity and repressive cohesiveness of the English class system. They also reject the idea of needing to belong to, stay connected to, or be accepted by the larger community. When Major Apsley suggests that when one actively participates in introspection he or she “loses contact with reality,” the Count says, “I feel . . . in the dark of my soul” and that to a man “His will, his good will is absolute to him” (Lawrence 199 & 201). For Lawrence, man’s ultimate source of truth and knowledge is himself. He insists that to be unselfconscious and the ideal individual one must rely solely on himself independent of community. Only by depending on one’s self and thinking about one’s reality as strictly his or her own can one achieve totality. For Lawrence, Psanek is that man who is no longer dependent upon the culture in which he lives for emotional or physical survival. Lawrence admires that Psanek does not want the approval of others; in fact, he earnestly seeks to earn its disapproval.

Although Lawrence advocates the unselfconscious individual, he recognizes a tension between the “ideal individual” and a type of “free-choosing within the choices presented” individual. Lawrence is drawn to a doctrine of submission in which the individual is fulfilled by making a choice to submit to another. Through Psanek, Lawrence presents a quasi-fascistic doctrine of submission in which men will willingly submit to someone greater who “is born able, able to be alone, to choose and to command” (202). He wants Daphne to choose to submit to him and insists that by doing so she is choosing freedom by choosing a lack of consciousness. As Daleski explains, “The Count, it emerges, is bent on disrupting the established

order, an order founded on democracy and love, and substituting for it, an order based on “the sacredness of power” (205). Lawrence further suggests that this type of willing submission is a new freedom that allows people to choose their own masters. Psanek sees the doctrine as providing an ever-widening circle that is “Always more wonderful” (203). He truly believes that Daphne will only become less self-conscious and freer by submitting to him. Lawrence is intrigued by this ideology and sees its benefits, but he never seems able to reconcile this doctrine with the idea of the unselfconsciousness and individualism; therefore, there is no resolution to the tension.

While Lawrence advocates individualism, he also suggests that man/woman can find fulfillment of the individual through submission to the “Great Man.” This doctrine advocates a “ . . . more emphatic and bizarre individualism” (Bentley 64). However, many critics believe that Lawrence’s desire for a changed society would not benefit those he claims to admire—the workers. As Scheckner writes regarding Lawrence’s desire for a new society that benefits all, “. . . a community of interests did not include the British people as a whole, only a few “natural” aristocrats. The masses were still the enemy” (14). Lawrence felt that those who were capable of creating or leading his ideal society were naturally able to do so and thus aristocratic. These two viewpoints or ideas seem antithetical because once someone submits to another person, the chain of repression begins again. When power lies in the hands of one, individuals become the masses and masses create class systems. As Kiely explains, Lawrence’s “. . . polarized political fantasies alternate between visions of a classless, propertyless, preindustrial utopia and an authoritarian hierarchical state” (90). Lawrence does not fully explore the opposition of his two ideas or provide a

definitive “best” answer. This unreconciled tension suggests that neither Lawrence nor society can fully understand or achieve genuine individuality because it is an ideal state that cannot really exist in the world. Someone will always be above, someone will always be below, someone will always suppress, and someone will always be suppressed.

In “Daughters of the Vicar,” Lawrence again explores the dark mysteriousness of human nature—the aloof individual whose power over people borders on evil. Lawrence describes Mr. Massy as a man “. . .spectacled, timid in the extreme, . . .with a certain inhuman self-sureness” (Lawrence 145). He further describes this character as a man whose “. . . body was almost unthinkable, in intellect he was something definite” (Lawrence 145). With Mr. Massy, Lawrence gives the reader a character similar to that of Count Psanek in *The Ladybird*. Like Psanek, Mr. Massy is a dark mysterious character who possesses unexplainable power. He is not physically attractive or powerful, yet he demands respect and intimidates others. While Psanek has no use for God and is a representative of Lawrence’s idealization of pre-Christian and non-Christian culture, Massy is a minister who mesmerizes those around him so that they have a reverence for him that should be reserved for spiritual figures rather than humans.

While Psanek is able to control Daphne in both a physical and spiritual way, Massey, who represents social power and strength forces Mary to succumb to his demands. She feels powerless with him. Mary marries him “. . .without feeling or impulse. She shut herself up, . . . She was a pure will acquiescing to him” (Lawrence 153). Like Psanek’s control over and mental marriage to Daphne, Massy’s marriage to Mary is characterized “. . . by the imposition of ideas upon the reality of passional

life . . .” (Martin 43). Massy is genuinely dark and unattached, something about him is inhuman. Is he so repressed that he has become permanently detached or is he so tired of the social system that he is naturally this way? Lawrence describes Massy as “. . . always apart in a cold, rarefied little world of his own” (Lawrence 146). Like Psanek from *The Ladybird*, Mr. Massy is emotionally detached from those around him. His reality is not the same as others rather it is separate and different. “He had some curious power, some unanswerable right. He was a will that they could not controvert” (Lawrence 152).

In his essay, “D. H. Lawrence and Class,” Graham Martin describes characters like Massy as “. . . the mysterious potent ‘dark’ male figure” (43). These characters exist independent from and unattached to those around them. They are superhuman beings who are not connected to the society around them. Although Massy affords Mary the capability of having and maintaining place, he himself is not concerned with it. He is not publicly bothered by class-consciousness. Either he has totally succumbed to it or he has never really fought it. He is only conscious of himself and his desires. As Martin suggests, “. . . the exile is internal” (43). Both are powerful, detached figures, yet these women cannot resist them. While Daphne and Mary are repulsed, they are at the same time drawn to these beings who defy the norm. With these dark, complex relationships, Lawrence is questioning the complexities of human interaction, especially between men and women.

Mr. Massey seems to be unconcerned with what others expect of him, but what appears to be freedom is really a complete unawareness that he is ultimately controlled by the culture in which he lives. While he seems unfettered like Psanek, he has not come to a higher understanding of himself as Psanek has. Psanek is

purposefully rejecting society's precepts and expectations by choosing his own path no matter how dark it may seem. He invites Daphne on this journey to unconsciousness, and while she knows it exists and experiences it in her heart, she cannot bring herself to publicly deny her society in favor of the darkness he offers. Is it real darkness in that Psanek is willingly embracing powers of darkness or is it dark simply because society sees this rejection of itself as dark? I am not sure Lawrence could reconcile this darkness in Psanek. He seems to be intrigued by the idealism of freeing one's self from the oppression of England's class system yet he kept these characters at bay—removed, even feared, by others so that their originality is viewed as dark/evil. Lawrence realized the unlikelihood that most people would be strong enough to forsake the safe and familiar, even if it is oppressing, to actualize ensure freedom.

Lawrence sees the possibilities of the original individual as boundless because he or she is able to relate to the world with true abandon and instinct. But he also recognizes a dark power that the ideal possesses and he does not seem able to reconcile how that power will be used. He wants this figure to be the ideal leader yet does not seem sure that those like Psanek can be such a leader. The dark, brooding aspect of these characters is genuine but it could also be dangerous to others. Lawrence admires the ideal individual but cannot come to terms with him.

Conclusion

As an analyst of the human condition, D. H. Lawrence saw in himself and those around him the insatiable need to belong and be approved of. It is a plight that society cannot escape; no matter how many people free themselves from the clutches of class consciousness, people generally remain conscious if not hyperconscious of their place in society, differences in class, and their class status. Any behavior that threatens their place is seen as negative and unacceptable. The thought of losing the security of what is familiar in regard to class, reputation, money, and decorum frightens them so that they force themselves, sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously, to squelch anything inside themselves that could threaten that security. The human desire to be successful, liked, and accepted often impedes the ability to react to situations in the instinctive way that is natural. The sense of morality society forces upon us causes us to reject reactions that would be deemed inappropriate or wrong. Lawrence understood mankind's need for approval, yet mourned the inability to behave genuinely. He does not seem to address the issue of how our genuine reaction to things may be harmful to others; his works ignore the consequences of unbridled primitive behavior and how detrimental that could be.

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of Lawrence's progression of thoughts about his world is his insistence that individuals can choose not to be self-conscious about how they fit into the society around them. Ideally, he seems to want us to reject a consciousness of class and ourselves as components of class so that we can achieve a transcendent state of self-acceptance that embraces individuality over the confines of class acceptance. Yet only few of his characters achieve this transcendent state. Louisa is rejecting the class divisions of her culture in order to embrace the

pure genuine love that she feels for Alfred while Daphne is struggling to free herself; however, she has not yet reached that place of complete unselfconsciousness.

Although Massy appears unaffected by class consciousness, he is such a withdrawn character that the reader can never fully grasp his true state of consciousness. On the other hand, Psanek adamantly opposes the structure of society and seeks to free himself socially and spiritually from its oppressive regime. He is angered at the forced obedience that the class system demands from individuals so that each eventually become only a shell of the person each were meant to be.

Some part of Lawrence was as opposed to the system as Psanek is; however, as an actual member of the middle class, he could only protest with so much fervor. Also, Lawrence had ideas about solutions, but he had no workable solutions to the problems that he saw within the class system; nor did he have a complete understanding of how these unselfconscious individuals could exist in a civilized world where everyone else followed a different set of rules and expectations. Undoubtedly, D. H. Lawrence's contribution to social awareness during the modernist period is incalculable because he forced controversial issues into the public's mind in an effort to effect change; however, he could not reconcile the contradictions in his ideals, nor could he abandon them.

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