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Subversion of Human Relation in Lawrence's *The White Peacock*

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Letter of Recommendation

Kailash Chand has completed his thesis entitled "Subversion of Human Relation in Lawrence's *The White Peacock* ", under my supervision. He carried out his dissertation from October 2017 to January 2018. I hereby recommend his thesis to be submitted for viva voce.

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled "Subversion of Human Relation in Lawrence's *The White Peacock*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Kailash Chand has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

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### *Abstract*

*This research paper examines how fear of intimacy subverts human relation in Lawrence's The White Peacock. Characters like Lettie, George, Leslie and Meg have this sort of fear and cannot come close to each other throughout their life which subverts their relation and make them alienated. This paper carries the idea of Sara Ahmed and Sigmund Freud who argue that each individual has fear of intimacy but the degree may vary. Human have such fear either to secure the relation or they think emotional closeness will hurt them and it is better to maintain distance with others. Most of the characters in this novel try to avoid even their sexual partners and try to make more sexual partners to maintain the distance with their partner. Thus, it is concluded that all human beings have fear of intimacy and it subverts human relation.*

*Keywords: Fear, Sexuality, Unconscious, Love, Human Relation, Subversion, Human Life*

### **Subversion of Human Relation in Lawrence's *The White Peacock***

This paper explores how fear of intimacy disturbs human relation in D.H. Lawrence's *The White Peacock*. Most of the characters suffer from this core issue and this also functions as a defense in their life. Characters like George Saxton, Leslie Tempest and Lettie Beards all have this fear which subverts their life. Freud argues human have such fear because they think emotional closeness can seriously hurt or destroy them. So, they want to stay away or maintain emotional distance from others. Sara Ahmed posits her view that people have this fear because they want to secure the relation. Lawrence's most of the works carry the theme of sexuality, human psychology, human relationship, class conflict, politics, nature, effect of industrialism and feminist movement and transition phase between traditional and modern society. The main concern of the writer is human relation in most of his writings but this relation is disturbed due to aforesaid aspect. In order to examine the issue of fear of intimacy researcher has used the theory of Sigmund Freud, Sara Amhed.

In this novel, the central character Lettie Beardsall has triangle love relationship with Leslie Tempest and George Saxton. Lettie is in love with poor farmer George Saxton and at the same time she has attraction towards industrialist Leslie Tempest. Lettie has feeling of love for both persons. She is sexually attracted with George Saxton and close to him physically. On the other hand, Leslie Tempest is the hero of her dream. Finally, she marries with Tempest and cannot come close to him because of fear of intimacy. Moreover, after her marriage she is sexually attracted with George Saxton and wants to keep physical relationship with him. It connotes that she fears intimacy and George Saxton too has the same feeling for Lettie because he

does not like his own intimacy with Lettie and is married to Meg to keep emotional distance with her. Even after his marriage with Meg, George Saxton cannot come close to his wife because of the same fear. He is in between with Lettie and Meg which makes him aloof from both. Furthermore, Leslie Tempest cannot love his wife due to the same fear. So, he does not give much time to his wife, Lettie and spends much of his time outside home. Bringing ideas from Sara Ahmad, Sigmund Freud, Luciano L'Abate, Sadell Sloan, Taylor Stoehr, Kayrn Z. Sproles, BenteTraeen, Dagfinn who favors that each individual has fear of intimacy, the researcher tries to clarify the core issue of fear of intimacy.

The behaviors of the characters reveal that they have some psychological problem. Lettie has two male lovers at the same time and both are equal for her in one way or the other. When one is absent she is present with another and misses other and she even talks about the absent lover with the present one. She does not want to come close to anyone rather wants to make distance with both. She feels attracted with both for certain aspects i.e. social status and sexuality. Saxton even marries Meg and cannot come close to his wife and his marital life is not good. He even feels attracted with Lettie. Lettie's behavior indicates the fear of intimacy with both George Saxton and Leslie Tempest. She does not want to come close to anyone. She has the feeling of anxiety and she wants to keep good relationship with both at the same time. Even though she marries Tempest she is not close to him and wants to have physical relation with Saxton. Both the couple of Tempest and Saxton have not intimacy due to fear of intimacy. Lettie is the real cause for the disturbance in relation. Human are not in control of self and guided by unconscious and on the top of that they are sexual being.

The purpose of this paper is to study human behavior and how it is affected by

core issue i.e. fear of intimacy and why human does not want to come close with each other. Why human feel that intimate person can hurt them. It too seeks how such aspect subverts the human relation. This research makes significant study of human relations and the essential issue of life. Although, there are many kinds of fear such as fear of abandonment, fear of low self-esteem, fear of insecurity, objective fear, neurotic fear, internal fear, external fear, psychological fear etc. However, this research focuses on fear of intimacy. The concept of fear of intimacy is pioneered by Freud and Ahmed further supports it. The outgrowth of this paper is fully psychological and this issue is related to human being. Human beings have fear of intimacy which disturbs human relations. This emotion is natural to all. Critics argue that this novel is a mutation of pastoral and Lawrence is a writer who writes about environmental consciousness. Michael Squires defends this novel as a mutation of pastoral. These lines state the following novel has pastoral setting and content and the writer asserts the transition of the time when the novel was written and he argues *The White Peacock* is a transitional novel between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, between traditional and modern; what makes it distinctive is that it begins as a nineteenth-century novel but ends on a dissonant, twentieth-century chord” (264). This novel shows the mutation of pastoral i.e. changing traditional society to industrial one. In the same manner, Del Ivan Janik argues that Lawrence is environmentalist writer in the lines given below:

Lawrence and other modernist writers who in a sense are his followers in the development of a new environmental consciousness celebrate the whole way of life, and recognizes human potential for creative rather than destructive participation in it...it asserts that man can be, if he abandons his anthropocentric assumptions, a contributor to, rather than the destroyer of, the



pattern of nature. (359)

These lines suggest that environmentally conscious writer and writes the subject matter of natural world. Janik too asserts that Lawrence is also the writer of human relationship and nature. In addition, according to Chaman Nahal, the novel *The White Peacock* valorizes nature and sets in natural world. Nahal further argues:

*The White Peacock* is cast in such a setting; it is a portrait of the universal health and vitality, a song in praise of the beauty of the world. It offers a panoramic view of the seasons – of summer, autumn, winter and spring – and within this large frame work we have men, and the animals, and the plants, all fitted in a homogeneous whole. (60)

To Nahal, *The White Peacock* personifies nature:

Not only that, almost every other observable object is described as a heaving mass of living personality; the leaves “chatter”, the corn “stands drowsily”, the oat sheaves “whisper”, to each other as they stand “embracing”, the wild raspberries “hod”, the clouds tumble and sweep by like “companies of angels”, the window- panes “shiver”, winter “gathers” her limbs as she “drifts with saddened garments north-ward”, the hill have “breasts” and they “heave”, water has “blue eyes” which shut and open, the full moon looks “like a woman with child. (61)

All the natural entities are personified beautifully. Nature is so much important and significant in D.H. Lawrence’s writings. Furthermore, Ileana Cura – Sazadanic argues, “nevertheless, it seems as if Lawrence is engaged with three stages of an industrial era: the transition from a rural community to an urban society- presented in *The White Peacock*. (20) Sazadanic also views this novel as criticism of industrial and modern society:

It is also in *The White Peacock* that one finds Lawrence's almost unique comments on the London poor, the deprived and homeless people of a big capital sleeping on the embankments of the Thames. Considering that Lawrence, as a critic of modern industrial society, concerns himself mainly with the problems of the mining country, and the effects of industrialism on human relationships. (113)

In spite of these views, Lawrence views, *The White Peacock* is about suffering of poor people. This view is present in these lines, "The scene of shameful poverty is severely contrasted with the unnecessary luxuries of the rich, for instance, the party Lettie gives for her friends in London" (114). This lifestyle is criticized by the mouthpiece of the writer through George. For George this sort of life is more "idiocy" leading to both human and financial waste. The critic F. R. Leavis mentions Lawrence as the writer of class in his book "D.H. Lawrence, a Novelist". Leavis mentions, "I want to show what he can do where, in that early phase of *The White Peacock*, presents the aspect of class" (73). In the same way, R.P. Draper argues this novel as class based and character suffer due to this, "Lettie loves his physical strength and the completeness of his submission, and wisely enough, according to her lights, marries the other man because his money and social position make him a suitable match"(43). If Lettie really marries Leslie for money and social position then why she come back to George and loves her and enforces him to love her. Money and social position are all secondary aspects whereas unconscious, human psychology and sexuality are primary aspects. The behavior of Lettie signifies that she has fear of intimacy.

Although, D.H. Lawrence writes about nature, pastoral, class, poverty, sexuality, and human relationships. In *The White Peacock* he subtly presents fear of intimacy that subverts human relation. It is one of human emotions which affects

human and their relation. According to Sigmund Freud, “fear of intimacy is the chronic and overpowering feeling that emotional closeness will seriously hurt or destroy us and that we can remain emotionally safe only by remaining at an emotional distance from others all the times” (16). To Freud every human being has fear of intimacy. He asserts, “It is true that the little boy becomes afraid of his libido’s demand; in this case, he is afraid of his love for his mother, thus this is in fact an instance of neurotic fear” (79). The child is fear of his own love for mother shows that the child has the fear of intimacy with his mother. Heidegger argues that fear is felt in the absence of the object that approaches:

That which is detrimental, as something that threatens us, is not yet within striking distance, but it is coming close...As it Draws close, this ‘it can, and yet in the end it may not’ becomes aggravated. We say, ‘it is fearsome’. This implies that what is detrimental as coming close by carries with it the patent possibility that it may stay away and pass us by; but instead of lessening or extinguishing our fearing, this enhances it. (179-80)

According to him, fear responds to what is approaching rather than already here. Our body fears when it goes close to another body. It is the fear of intimacy in which person thinks that another person will hurt him/her if he/she goes close to him or her.

Similarly, Sara Ahmed posits her view in fear of intimacy in this way:

As we have seen from my analysis of Franon’s encounter, fear is an embodied experience; it creates the very effect of the surfaces of the body. But an obvious question remains: Which bodies fear which bodies? Of course, we could argue that all bodies fear, although they may fear different things in adifferent ways...Given this, why are some bodies more afraid than others? How do feelings of vulnerability take shape? (68)

Ahmed argues that each body fears but its degree might vary. It indicates that human has fear of coming close to someone which portrays the fear of intimacy. Luciano L'Abate and Sadell Sloan categorize intimacy as physical, mental and emotional:

Recently, a number of writers have attempted to develop models of intimacy...The six categories listed above are the facets of intimacy. The first term in each category is the dominant means of communication, while others terms are content or basic polarities... Scheafer and Olson derived a five factor model of intimacy including the following factors; emotional, social, sexual, intellectual, and recreational. (245)

These lines suggest that different kinds of intimacy has different behavior such as, in sexual sphere there is sensuality i.e. touch, giving/taking pain and pleasure. This paper focuses on sexual intimacy and shows how Lettie has fear of intimacy and has relation to both Saxton and Tempest.

In an interview taken by Bente Traeen and Dagfinn with Vigidis, a 25 years old woman, had 10 coital partners during the past year but she does not like to come closer with another person. She argues:

To meet people, talk and drink and make a pass – for the excitement. Perhaps Find a sweetheart, that's the real drive...if I feel someone is getting close and it's serious, I become anxious because I'm afraid of loosing my freedom, even though I miss someone to share my life with. You can't have it both ways (laughs). (291)

Vigidis claims she is particular about men, as well as afraid of loosing her freedom. Her statement about the desire to get close, and anxiety of doing so, highlights her fear of intimacy.

In the same way, Karyan Z Sproles too talks about the issue of sexuality

explicitly and issue of fear of intimacy implicitly. These mention lines convey this message:

Lettie inability to find one man who can satisfy both her sexual desires and the social standards she has internalized parallels the novel's struggle to integrate conflicting images of femininity and the novel presents various attempts to define feminine sexuality...Lettie's conflict over whom to marry- the wealthy but passionless coal magnate Leslie or the physically powerful but somewhat thick farmer George. (237)

This excerpt indicates that Lettie's inability to select is not her weakness rather she wants to remain in relationship with both George and Leslie at the same time it indicates that she does not want to go close to anyone individually. So, Lettie is suffering from fear of intimacy. Leslie has money but that is secondary matter.

However, subconscious and physical desire is primary need. It would focus on the discursive study of Sara Ahmed's "Cultural Politics of Emotions", Sigmund Freud's fear of intimacy, and Michael Foucault's "Origin of Sexuality" and it too focuses on the research articles of the critics such as Karyn Z. Spole's "Victorian Art and Feminine Sexuality in D. H. Lawrence's First Novel", Taylor Stoehr's "Mentalized Sex" in D.H. Lawrence, Luciano L'Abate and Sadell Sloan's "A Workshop Format to Faciliate Intimacy in Married Couples", Bente Traeen and Dagfinn Sorensen's "Breaking the Speed of the Sound of Loneliness: Sexual Partner Change and the Fear of Intimacy and M. Heidegger's "Being and Time". All these foresaid books, article, research talk more or less about fear, biological fear, fear of intimacy, sexuality, sexual partners change and fear of intimacy, intimacy in married couples, mentalized sex etc.

The narrator, Cyril Bradsall, describes his parents' relation which is not good,

“The marriage had been unhappy. My father was of frivolous, rather vulgar character, but plausible, having a good deal of charm. He was a liar, without notion of honesty, and he had deceived my mother thoroughly” (36). Here, the husband is not honest and he is a liar. Moreover, he deceives his wife which shows that the husband is not close to his wife. Freud defines fear as, “Fear was an affective state, that is to say, a combining of certain sensations of the pleasure- unpleasure series with their corresponding release- innervations and our perception of these; we also said, however, that it was probably the residue of a certain significant event rendered innate through heredity, thus comparable to the hysterical attack inherited by the individual” (74). Cyril’s father has the fear of intimacy with his wife; “When he left her for other pleasures- Lettie being a baby of three years, while I was five- she rejoined bitterly. She had heard of him indirectly- and of him nothing good, although he prospered- but he had never come to see her or written to her in all the eighteen years”(36). Lettie’s father leaves her mother and never comes back, rather he seeks other kinds of pleasure in his life. Freud distinguishes fear as objective and neurotic fear and the neurotic fear is related to psychological fear and it is internal fear which is closely related with fear of intimacy which is internal and psychological. Her father does not care about his wife and does not come back for eighteen years. It shows fear of intimacy with the wife.

From the very beginning of the novel, Lettie has dual role towards Leslie Tempest and George Saxton and she is in love with both at the same time which indicates that she does not want to stay with one and wants to divide her love between two young fellows. It means she has the fear of intimacy with both of them. She flirts with George and Leslie in the same manner. Lettie plays equally with George and Leslie and shows love to both. She coquettes with Leslie in this way, “It is a queer

way of showing it. Her voice was now a gentle reproof, the sweetest of surrenders and forgiveness. He leaned forward, took her face in his hands and kissed her, murmuring” (87). It shows both love each other seriously and devoted with each other. “Leslie- oh- let me go!” she exclaimed, pushing him away. He loosed her, and rose, looking at her reproachfully. She shook her dress, and dress, and went quickly to the mirror to arrange her hair” (49). Lettie engages herself with Leslie physically as well. She does romance with him fully but talks as if she is not close to him, “He held her in his arms and kissed her repeatedly, again and again, till she was out of breath, and put up her hand, and gently pushed her face away” (89). She does not let Leslie come close to her and she is pushing her to make emotional distance while kissing. “Look how fond your hair is of me; look how it twins round my fingers. Do you know, your hair- the light in it is like- oh- butter cups in the sun. It is like me- it won’t be kept in bounds, she replied” (91). Lettie compares her hair with herself and says she cannot be in bound of anyone. It means she does not like bond and does not want to stay in formal relationship with Leslie. She has fear with bond with another person.

In spite of Lettie's relationship with Leslie she is close with George physically and emotionally. Both George and she have the feeling of love for each other:

Her light flying steps followed his leaps; you could hear the quick light tap of her toes more plainly than the thud of his stockinged feet . . . I could see her lips murmur to him, begging him to stop; he was laughing with open mouth, holding her tight; at last her feet trailed; he lifted her, clasping her tightly; and danced twice round the room with her thus. (103)

The behavior of Lettie clearly shows that she does not want to stay with one man. She has two lovers at the same time. She wants to avoid both of them. She divides her love and emotion between two fellows. While describing the past Lettie remembers,

“Oh, I had a good time, I had plenty of boys. I liked them all, till I found there was nothing in them; then they tired me” (125). From childhood Lettie does not go close to any of her boyfriends. She is close to all and like them all to avoid the intimacy with the particular one. She does not like to be in relationship with other. Similarly, Ahmed argues, " fear does not come from within and then move outwards towards object and others rather, fear works to secure the relationship between two bodies; it brings them together and moves them apart (63). Leslie Tempest proposes Lettie for engagement after the month but she does not become ready for it rather postpones the date. She wants to secure her relation by making a distance:

“When shall we be properly engaged, Lettie”?

“Oh wait till Christmas- till I am twenty- one?”

“Nearly three month! Why on earth-”

“It will make no difference. I shall be able to choose thee of my own free choice then.”

“But three months,”

“I shall consider thee- it doesn’t matter about other people.”

“I Thought we should be married in three months,”

“Ah- married in haste-, but what will your say”? (93)

Engagement binds people together and Lettie does not want this closeness with Leslie. She wants to avoid the date of engagement. She has the fear of intimacy. Freud argues that every human being has fear of intimacy. He argues, “It is true that the little boy becomes afraid of his libido’s demand; in this case, he is afraid of his love for his mother, thus this is in fact an instance of neurotic fear” (79). The child is afraid of his own love to his mother and he does not want to go close to his mother because the child has the fear of intimacy with his mother.



Even after the engagement with Leslie, Lettie continues physical relationship with George because she wants to avoid upcoming intimacy with Leslie. She remembers how George loves her, “He caught her in his arms, and held her mouth in a kiss. Then, when he released her, he turned away, saying something incoherent about going to fetch the lantern to look” (107). She even does not show interest in wearing the ring of Leslie:

“But it feels so heavy- it fidgets me. I should like to take it off.”

“You are like me, I never could wear rings. I hated my wedding ring for months.”

“Did you mother?”

“I longed to take it off and put it away. But after a while I got used to it.”

“I am glad this isn't a wedding ring.?”

“I am glad this it's not- not yet. I begin to feel a woman, little mother- I feel grown up Today.” (114)

It shows that Lettie is afraid of this relation with Leslie and she wants to stay away as far as possible. She does not want to be a woman means she does not want to become wife of another person. She has the fear of intimacy with Leslie. Lettie's mother becomes happy with the engagement and his brother Cyril too but George is not.

George abuses Lettie for being dishonest to him:

“She she's like a women, like a cat- running to comforts- she strikes a bargain.

Women are all tradesmen.”

“Don't generalize, it's no good.”

“She is like a prostitute-”...

“He started, and looked at me queerly. He looked quite childish in his doubt and perplexity.”

“she, what”- ?

“Loves him- honestly.”

“She had loved me better,”. (98)

George scolds Lettie being disloyal to him. He does not have respect for her and calls her a prostitute. It connotes that George is not intimate to her. In reality, Lettie does so because she wants to avoid intimacy with George. Even though she loves George she becomes ready to marry Leslie. She is afraid of intimacy with Leslie at the same time, “And we are going to be married, aren’t we? He resumed, looking pleading at her. She stirred, and exclaimed: Oh, why don’t you go away? What did you come back for?” (189). Lettie does not like the presence of Leslie anymore after the engagement despite the marriage is fixed. Dr. Joseph Murphy defines marriage as:

To be genuine, a marriage must begin on a sound spiritual basis. It may be of the heart, and the heart is the chalice of love. Honesty, sincerity, kindness, and integrity are all aspect of love. Each partner should be perfectly honest and sincere with the other. It does not a true marriage when a man marries a woman to lift his ego or because he wants to share her money or social position. This indicates a lack of sincerity, honesty, and true love. Such a marriage is a farce, a sham, and a masquerade.” (178)

marriage is a social contract. After marriage people are connected emotionally. But Lettie does not like this emotional closeness i.e. fear of intimacy.

Lettie is not honest to George and Leslie. She wants to stay away from Leslie:

Don’t you think, dear, she said, it would be better for us not to marry.?

Do you mean not yet? He asked.

Yes- and perhaps, - perhaps never.”

“Ha,” he laughed, sinking down again. “I must be getting like myself again, if

you Begin to tease me.”

But, she said, struggling valiantly, I am not sure I ought to marry you.”

Not likely- but I wish you would let me go. (208)

Lettie does not want to engage with Leslie, she wants to stay away with him. Lettie even does not marry George to whom she loves because of the fear of intimacy and now she is avoiding Leslie as well. She wants to be free from any kind of attachment. Lettie has ambivalence position towards both of them. After the engagement with Leslie, Lettie depicts her love towards George, “Don’t – don’t say anything- it's no good now, its too late. Its done, and what is done is done, if you talk anymore, I shall say I’m tired and stop the dance. Don’t say another word” (132). Even after engagement she is close to George and asserts that propose of George for marriage is late and she cannot do anything for him even though she loves him more than Leslie. “She takes up the threads of her broken life, unwinds them, and lets them grow in other direction” (69). The new direction is with Leslie. It’s time to say good bye to George and she does so, “she said farewell to George, and looked at him through a quiver of suppressed tears. George was somewhat flushed with triumph over Lettie; she had gone home with tears shaken from her eyes unknown to her lover; at the farm laughed with Alice” (149). George becomes happy to let her go and he is laughing with Alice. He really wants to maintain distance from Lettie when she goes with Leslie, George becomes glad. George does not like to be close with Lettie and wants to be free from her.

Lawrence believes marriage as, “marriage for Lawrence is rooted in genuine love and genuine love and genuine love is rooted in genuine sex.” (95). Unlike Lawrence, Lettie does not have genuine love towards George and Leslie nor the George and Leslie have the genuine love towards Lettie. Lettie somehow loves

George but does not want to marry him. The marriage between Leslie and Lettie is not genuine. The marriage of Lettie is fixed for July and George wants to meet Lettie before marriage in the wood. Actually, Lettie too wants to meet him to avoid the intimacy with Leslie i.e. her upcoming future, “George was waiting. I saw at once he was half distrustful to himself now. Lettie dropped her skirts and trailed towards him. He stood awkwardly awaiting her, conscious of the clownishness of his appearance. She held out her hand with something of a grand air.” “see,” “she said” “I have come”. (176) Lettie is happy to meet George even she is engaged with Leslie. She is in between of both lovers. “Besides – it's dark, it will be too dark to see in the wood, won't it?” (175). It seems they have physical relationship. George enforces Lettie to marry him but she refuses and Lettie feels happy to keep distance with George:

You are not really sorry to go, are you?

No, I am glad

Glad to go away from us all.

I suppose so- since I must. (176)

Lettie is happy to go away from George and she wants emotional distance from him. George accuses Lettie of being money minded because she selects rich industrialist Leslie and feels sorry for being poor, “you know it is- look at me now, and say if it's not impossible a farmer's wife- with you in Canada” (180). The overtone of class is presented in this line though R.P. Draper argues about Lawrence that, “Mr. Lawrence is supremely unconscious of class. His characters simply do not know that class exists... and his characters are the sons and daughters partly of miners and partly of quite small farmers” (38). It shows that human beings are guided by unconscious. Sigmund Freud defines it as:

The unconscious is the store house of those painful experiences and emotions,

those wounds, fears, guilty desires, and unresolved conflicts we do not want to know about because we feel we will be overwhelmed by them. The unconscious comes in to being when we are very young through the repression, the expunging from consciousness, of the unhappy psychological events. (12)

Freud argues human are guided by unconscious and it is based on experience of a person. It shows Lawrence depicts the burning issue of the class of early 20<sup>th</sup> century. He portraits the suffering of poor people because he experiences the poverty. He too sufferes due to it and bound to live in society painfully. He shows the class distinction through characters, Lettie and Leslie are present as rich whereas George and his sister as poor and sufferer of the society.

While talking about Lawrence himself, he was the son of coal miner and he had worked as a clerk in a factory in his early age. F.R. Leavis mentions “Lawrence as the writer of the class in his book, D.H. Lawrence, a novelist” (73). Leavis further asserts, “I want to show what he can do where, in that early phase of *The White Peacock*, presents the aspect of class” (73). The novel shows the condition of Britain in the early phase of twentieth century. Lawrence has all these experiences of early 20<sup>th</sup> century which are in his unconscious. Lettie does not want to marry Leslie and she complains that Leslie is forcing her to marry:

“You know you hold me- and I want you to let me go. I don’t want to-”

“To what?”

“To get married at all- let me be, let me go.”

“What for”?

“Oh- for my sake”? (209)

They are not connected with the heart and mind. Lawrence defines real marriage as,

“It is the coming together of a man and woman in the complete silence of their mind, complete silence of their ego” (101). The marital life of Leslie with Lettie is not good because they have fear of intimacy. “Lettie had allowed her husband to forget her birthday. He is now very much immersed in politics” (303). Leslie does not spend time with his wife rather he spends time outside the home and does not want to come in touch with his wife because touching makes intimate to each other. “As Lettie was always a very good wife, Leslie adored her when he had the time, and when he had not forget her comfortably” (295). Most of the time, Leslie is busy in politics and stays outside of home.

The critic Ileana Cura- sazdanic analyzes the behavior of the Lettie and Leslie and asserts:

The relationship between Leslie and Lettie is a failure par excellence. We are all the time aware that something crucial is lacking in their marriage, and the image we find in the book is definitely not that of full rapport between husband and wife. We are convinced that there is no deep emotional or physical contact between them (134).

The main aspect is intimacy which is lacking between them and this does not lead them to be connected as husband and wife. Furthermore, they are not connected emotionally. After the marriage of Lettie, George decides to marry his cousin, Meg and talks with his father:

Would you advise me to marry meg?

His father started and said:

Why, was you thinking of doing?

Yes- all things considered.

Well- if she suits you-. (201)

To remove intimacy with Lettie, George becomes ready to marry with Meg to whom he does not love. He has not feeling towards her. George relation with Meg only seems physical. “gi’e me a kiss- thou’rt a little beauty, thou art- like a ripe plum! I could set my teeth in thee, thou’rt that nice- full o’ red juice- he playfully pretended to bite her. She laughed and gently pushed him away” (216). George pretends as if he loves Meg and his love seems more physical rather emotional. Even Meg does not like her intimacy with George so she pushes him away. They both take love as a minor aspect and flirt with each other. “Go on,” she said, and kissed him (217). It seems the sexual love between them. George asks Meg to get married soon because he wants to avoid the closeness of Lettie as soon as possible, “we’ll be married soon, my bird- are ter glad?- in a bit- tha’rt glad, aren’t ta (217). He wants to engage soon with Meg so that he can forget Lettie.

Jose Goris argues the character of the novel, *Wuthering Heights*, and *The White Peacock*, Cathy and Lettie have the similar character. “Cathy, similar to Lettie, divides her amorous interests between two men, the sedate middle- class Edgar Linton and foundling of unknown parentage, the passionate ferocious Heathcliff” (94). Catherine divides her love between two people shows that she does not want to go close to anyone due to fear of intimacy. After the marriage with Leslie, Lettie wants to meet her former lover so that she can make a distance with Leslie. They meet in a wood and George decides to go home but Lettie does not agree with him and Lettie offers, “shall we go into the wood for a few minute?” she said in a low voice, as they turned aside” (227). Because of Meg, Lettie does not go with George in his home. They both want the avoidance with their partners. They get married and again want to have extramarital affair with their former lovers. It symbolizes that they both have fear of intimacy with their life partners. In addition, George and Lettie have fear

of intimacy with each other as well. George asserts Lettie to stop for him:

Tell me what to do- yes, if you tell me.

I can't tell you- so let me go.

“No, Lettie,” he replied, with terror and humility. “No, Lettie; don't go. What should I do with my life? Nobody would love you like I do- and what should I do with my love for you? – hate it and fear it- because its too much for me”.

(228)

George is already with Meg and again he asks Lettie to stop with him. George already decides to marry Meg and she is too fix but he wants to avoid the intimacy with Meg from his life. Lettie kisses George mouth to mouth and has physical attachment and relationship. Lettie too is passionate for him. “In the end it had so wearied her that she could only wait in his arms till he was too tired to hold her. He was trembling already” (229). They both share love to each other and George feels tired holding her and in the same time Lettie feels sorry for Meg. The activities of George too contradictory with Meg and Lettie. He decides to marry Meg despite that he never feels love towards her:

There are two people I could marry- and Lettie's gone. I love Meg just as well, as far as love goes. I'm not sure I don't feel better pleased at the idea of marrying her. You know I should always have been second to Lettie, and best part of love is being made much of being first and foremost in the whole world for somebody. And Meg's easy and lovely. I can have her without trembling, she's full of soothing and comfort. I can stroke her hair and pet her, and she looks up at me, full of trust and lovingness, and there is no flaw, all restfulness in one another. (247)

Meg substitutes Lettie in George's life in order to avoid intimacy with Lettie. George



does not feel any pleasure with Meg and she is a second choice of George. “love or no love, she is willing to surrender herself to him without any reservations, to give herself completely to him, physically” (69). The love of George is only physical towards Meg. He never takes Meg as serious wife, “He was always laughing at her quaint crude notions, and at her queer little turns of speech” (56). He does not feel connected to Meg and it signifies that George does not have emotional closeness to his wife, Meg. George describes Meg’s love as easy love, he does not have respect for her love. Even though, Lettie is his first choice George flirts physically with Meg, “George appeared in the doorway, holding Meg by the arm. She was crying in a little distress. Her hat with its large silk roses was slanting over her eyes” (151). They both share love with each other when they meet. George does have engagement with Meg, “They were merry together as he tried on her wedding ring, and they talked softly, he is gentle and coaxing, she is rather plaintive. The mare took her own way, and Meg’s hat was disarranged once more by the sweeping elm- boughs” (253). Engagement ties people together and make bond, “Meg like an impatient white flame stood waiting in the light of the lamps. He covered her, extinguished her in the dark rug” (258). It shows they both have physical relation. It seems as if they are intimate.

George and Lettie are engage with Meg and Leslie respectively but they both are not loyal to their partners due to fear of intimacy. Lettie wants to come close to George after her marriage to Leslie, “...she put out her white hand from her draperies. He took it, and answered, “I am very well – and you-?” However, meaningless the words were, the tone was curiously friendly, intimate and informal” (262). They are intimate and friendly with each other means they are avoiding their partner for being close to them. Their intimacy is great contradiction to them because Lettie leaves George for Leslie and George lets Lettie go with Leslie without compelling her to

stop even he has authority. Chaman Nahal analyzes the behavior of George:

“No, my dear, no. The threads of my life were untwined; they drifts about like Floating threads of gossamer; and you didn’t put out your hand to take them and twist them up into the chored with yours. Now another has caught them up, and the chored of my life is being twisted, and I cannot wrench it free and untwine it again- I can’t.” (53)

George does so because he does not want to spend his life with Lettie and it shows that he too wants distant from her:

The life was there, but they did not claim it. George particularly is too slow, and this appals Lettie. Notice the contempt in her voice when, a little before her marriage, she meets him in the last hope that he may still be bold enough to claim her, but George just stands there dumb and shy, in the end, he says “good night” and departs. (53)

Even Lettie expect the claim from George and she expects so because of the reason to avoid intimacy with Leslie. And George does so because he does not want to come close to Lettie. After marriage with Meg, George and Meg have not sharing habits. Abate and Sloan asserts that in good relation communication is necessary between couple. They view, "But being one's own person is not enough to sustain an intimate committed marriage. One also needs the skills to communicate oneself to one's partner and skills to receive communication from, accommodate to and negotiate with one's spouse" (246). The marital life of George is not good because he sends a letter to Cyril about his wife, Meg, explaining “Meg won’t let me. She doesn’t like me to read at night," she says "I ought to talk to her, so I have to" (250). Actually, George does not want to talk with his wife at night rather he prefers reading books. It signifies that he does not want any closeness with his wife and does not want to spend time talking

with her. They do not negotiate with their interests and desires.

George is engaged with family and he has two children and Lettie too is involved in family having one child. It seems as if their love turns into friendship, they both become friends but the reality is totally different, “The friendship between Lettie and himself had been kept up, in spite of all things. Leslie was something jealous, but he dared not show it openly, for the fear of his wife’s scathing contempt. George went to “Highclose” perhaps once in a fortnight, perhaps not so often. Lettie never went to the “Hollies,” as Meg’s attitude was too antagonistic. (303). Leslie is jealous with Lettie for her behavior towards George and afraid of his wife’s comment to him. In the same way, Lettie is afraid with George’s wife because she is close to George and Meg is rebellious to Lettie, who is the dream girl of her husband, George. It is the 31<sup>st</sup> birthday of Lettie and her husband is out of town and she invites George where George complains about Meg to Lettie, “In the marital duel Meg is winning. The woman generally does; she has the children on her side. I can’t give her any of the real part of me, the vital part that she wants – I can’t, any more than you could give kisses to the stranger. And I feel that I am losing- and don’t care” (306). The real part women want is love and care from her husband and George is not ready to give it to his wife. George does not want to share his love with his wife. It means he is not close to her. At night, at Lettie’s home Lettie tries to have sex with George:

You mustn’t talk like this,” she said. You know you must not.” She put her hand on his head and ran her fingers through the hair he had so ruffled... “Aren’t you going look at yourself?” she said, playfully reproachful. She put her finger- tips under his chin. He lifted his head and they looked at each other, she smiling, with his lips, but not with eyes, dark with pain. (308)

Lettie wants to remove her closeness with her husband, so she tries to have sexual

relationship with George. She has not met with George for a long time. Freud studies the behavior of the different persons and explains the personal psychology of the people in this way, " If I get too close to someone I will lose myself or be emotionally harmed- because varying our sexual partners can protect us from getting close to any one person as effectively as avoiding sexual encounters completely" (25). Here, Lettie desires sex with another sexual partner to keep herself safe from her former sexual partner i.e. her husband. She wants to show her love towards George:

We can't go on like this, Lettie, can we? He said softly.

Yes, she answered him, yes; why not?

It can't he said, it can't, I couldn't keep it up, Lettie.

But don't think about it, she answered, don't think about it.

Lettie, he said. I have to set my teeth with loneliness...

It is not good, Lettie, he said, we can't go on. (308)

Although, George loves Lettie but he does not want to have sex with her and he wants to keep distance with her physically. He loves Lettie to avoid the closeness with his wife, Meg but at the same time does not want to go much nearer to Lettie because sex is the medium which bring closeness among partners. "No"! he repeated. "it is impossible. I felt as soon as Fred came into the room- it must be one way or another." "No, he said, and at the sound of his voice, Lettie went pale and also stiffened herself." (309) Lettie does so because she wants be in between of George and Leslie. R.P. Draper asserts about the behavior of George and Lettie, "Lettie, the daughter, is a full- fledged flirt, fascinating and conscienceless, with just enough passion in her to make her flirtation dangerous. She turns George's head, and makes violent love to him. Even after she has married a rich husband, and he has declined on his humble cousin Meg..." (34). It shows that the both lovers are flirting with their partners to

avoid intimacy.

In fact, George does not want Lettie to come close to him because he fears intimacy and Lettie wants to avoid intimacy with Leslie, her husband. Due to such behavior by George, Lettie becomes furious and careless towards George, “she listened to me sadly, but her attention was caught by each movement made by the child. As I was telling her of the attitude of George’s children towards their father and mother, she glanced from the baby to me, and exclaimed ; “see how he watches the light flash across your spectacles when you turn suddenly- look! (320). She does not care about George condition and family.

Lettie does not give any attention to George and his family because he does not help Lettie to avoid the intimacy with her husband, Leslie. Lettie even leaves caring own life:

Like a nun, she puts over her living face a veil, a sigh that a woman no longer exists for herself; she is the servant of God, of some man, of her children, or may be of some cause. As a servant, she is no longer for herself, which would make her terrified and lonely. Service is light and easy. To be responsible for a good progress of one’s life is terrifying. It is the most insufferable form of loneliness; and the heaviest of responsibilities. (363)

Gradually, it becomes clear that Lettie is reckless towards her life, serves her son, who is ‘her work’ and tolerates her husband, she is living life as second hand. She is alienated because she cannot get love of her husband and lover as well due to fear of intimacy.

In the later phase of manhood, George falls ill physically and mentally where he cares little about his family. In the conversation between Emily, George's sister and Cyril, Emily comments “In bed ,” she replies briefly. “He is recovering from one of

his orgies. If I were Meg I would not live with him” (313). It means George has extra marital affairs with other women along with Lettie. Orgies indicate group sex among people and George is involved in that. It shows that George becomes careless about his wife and he does not want to remain in touch with his wife. He marries Meg to avoid intimacy with Lettie and he does not have intimacy with both of them. This condition of in-between makes George frustrated and failure in life because he cannot get the love of one due to fear of intimacy. George becomes violent to others and himself as well. “Bad!” she replied. He’s disgusting, and I am sure he’s dangerous. I’d have him removed to an inebriate’s home” (314). Tom describes about the condition of George to Cyril, “He does have dreadful bouts, though! He’s killing himself, sure enough. I feel awfully sorry for the fellow” (314). Dr. Joseph Murey gives the causes of alcoholism which defines it as, “The real cause of alcoholism is negative and destructive thinking; for as humans thinketh, so are they. The alcoholic has a deep sense of inferiority, inadequacy, frustration, and defeat” (238). On the top of that, George has the feeling of inferiority and defeat with Leslie which leads him towards alcoholism.

George is frustrated with his life because he becomes failure in every aspect of life such as farming, love. His pathetic situation makes him dead alike. His words are represented in these lines, "Meg wept to me as she told me of him, how he left the business slip, how he drank, what a brute he was in drink, and how unbearable afterwards. He’s sick every morning and almost after every meal” (320). Jose Goris compares George with Hindley, “This is again a theme found in *Wuthering Heights*, in which Hindley drinks himself into himself into oblivion after his wife’s death”. Loss, isolation, frustration are the causes of alcoholism. George and Hindley lose their love in their life and alienated. “George is losing more and more ground and ends up a

helpless wreck, drinking himself into delirium tremens". Sara Ahmed asserts that it is difficult to control emotions for a person. Furthermore, George becomes like an object in his further life. "Like a tree that is falling, going soft and pale and rotten, clammy with small fungi, he stood leaning against the gate, while the dim afternoon drifted with the dim thick sweet sunshine past him, not touching him" (329). George cannot remain aloof from his past memory. After the initial experiences of joy with Meg, he returns to his dead past with Lettie and elects to live within that; he cannot forget Lettie. He takes drink and becomes abusive; even in the sight of his own children, just delivered, does not mean anything to him.

In this novel, Lawrence shows the disturbance in human relations. The relation between and among different characters is not good, Lettie and George, Lettie and Leslie, George and Meg are negatively presented in the novel. This disturbance is guided by past experience and unconscious. The book *Modernism* describes "Lawrence was born in Nottinghamshire, the son of a genteel, middle class mother and a coal miner between whom there were many tensions" (91). Lawrence's mother left his father after marriage symbolizes the quitting of George by Lettie. Because of his past experience Lawrence makes Lettie to leave George. Furthermore, in the beginning of the novel, Cyril remembers that his father left his mother for eighteen months and never come back again and his father was careless. It connotes that Lawrence makes Cyril's father careless and dishonest because of his past bitter memory. Cyril's father does not care about his mother. Lawrence childhood was full of conflicting memory between his parents and all that is filled in his unconscious. So, he shows the conflict among his characters.

Meg does not care for her husband because she is only intimate with her children. Her love for George is not platonic. Chaman Nahal argues "Love as a great

thing; it beautifies one's outlook, but healthy life is even greater than love- it has a charm of its own" (68). The couple has not love between them. "As she moved about the room she seemed to dominate everything, particularly her husband, who sat ruffled and dejected, his waist hanging loose over his shirt" (317). It suggests that they are not connected emotionally. Moreover, the behavior of the Meg is not good towards her husband. "You are having your character given away, said Meg brutally, turning to him" (319). Meg gives up caring about her husband after the birth of her first child and it makes her distant with her husband. "Meg never found any pleasure in me as she does in the kids, said George bitterly for himself" (284). It shows that they do not have good marital life and one cannot come close to another because of fear of intimacy. George too spends time out of the home far from his wife. "You know where to find him, replied Meg, with that careless freedom which was so subtly derogatory to her husband," (280). There is not respect for each other and Meg is careless with George. "George as a father was first servant; as an indifferent father, she humiliated him and was hostile to his wishes" (282). George is not treated as family member and insult is so frequent. "It is like having satan in the house with you, or a black tiger glowering at you. I'm sure nobody knows what I, have suffered from him" (297). Meg does not care for her husband and in the same way, George is careless towards her. Being in a relation is like suffering to one another. In their whole life they cannot come close to each other because of fear of intimacy.

In nutshell, D.H. Lawrence has written about the human relations, love, psychology, class, nature, sexuality, human conditions etc. The human relation has subverted by fear of intimacy in this novel. People have their past experience and unconscious which guided people throughout their life. The novel has presented this fear negatively which has destroyed human life and most of the characters have this



fear. This aspect is part of emotion and one cannot control it. The major character Lettie has destroyed her life as well as the life of George and Leslie and they two too do the same due to fear of intimacy. Due to fear of intimacy Lettie cannot go close to any one of her lovers and this distance enforced to destroy the life of her lovers.

Moreover, the love of George is not platonic and emotional towards his wife, Meg and lover, Lettie. George loves Lettie but does not want to marry her and marries Meg to avoid intimacy with Lettie and wants to come close to Lettie after marriage to keep distance from his wife, Meg. In the same manner, Lettie does the same to her lover, George. She does the same to George and Leslie as George does to her i.e. marries Leslie and has extramarital affair with George to avoid intimacy with her husband. Leslie too does not give much time to his wife, Lettie and does not care much about her to remain aloof from his wife. Meg too has the same fears and give much importance to her children rather than her husband, George. She does not care about his life. Finally, all these aspects of the characters show that they have fear of intimacy with other people in one way or another and this fear has subverted the human relation and furthermore, destroys human life.

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