

**Tribhuvan University**

**Counterproductive Effect of Modernity in D. H. Lawrence's *The White Peacock***

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### Abstract

*This research work examines the counterproductive effect of modernity focusing on changing socio-economic spirit of time in terms of urbanization and industrialization and its negative impact on human life in D. H. Lawrence's The White Peacock. Characters like Lettie, George, Leslie and Meg go through transformation of society from rural to urban and agrarian to industrial. This transformation makes them to adapt in new trends of living. Priorities of their life alter which causes them to face emotional breakdown and familial disintegrity as they turn more individualistic, money minded and indifferent towards others. At the center of this crisis there lies industrialization and urbanization which reinforces the issues of individualism and materialism. This research work investigates sordid realities of modern world where people are highly motivated towards prosperity in terms of money and other materials. This research is done under the theoretical light of George Simmel's idea of money economy and blasé attitude. Modernist thinkers Anthony Giddens and Marshall Berman's views regarding the impact of modernity are used as additional theoretical insights while dealing with this research work. In short, it depicts an extended reflection upon the dehumanizing effects of modernity and industrialization in peoples' life and relationship.*

Keywords: Modernity, Materialism, Individualism, Indifference, Alienation, Familial Disintegrity,

## Introduction

This paper deals with the debilitating effect of modernity in human lives and relationship. Modernity here refers to industrialization, urbanization and change of society from agrarian to capitalist. These changes alter characters' thinking pattern and perception towards the world. They become individualistic, materialistic and fail to value human emotions and relationships. The study focuses on how characters are suffering from alienation, emotional barrenness and familial disintegrity in modern urban world.

D. H. Lawrence belongs to the traditional period that oscillates between the late Victorian and the early twentieth century England in which time England faced widespread transformations in several fields. As a modernist writer he criticizes the rapid social-political changes and cultural artifacts. *The White Peacock* is the first long piece of fiction of his career. Mostly Lawrence raises the issue of class conflict, sexuality, environment and psychology. In this novel the writer focuses on the transition of British society from rural to urban and agrarian to industrialization. The setting of this novel is in the valley of Nethemare, the fictional name of Eastwood Nottinghamshire the place of his childhood. Impact of modernity and disturbed family relationship and working class upbringing that he faced in his life are presented via this novel.

In the novel *The White Peacock*, D. H. Lawrence portrays the catastrophic uprooting of man from traditional spirituality and sentimentality but rooting to materiality in modern time. The shift was caused by industrialization, urbanization development of consumer society. It resulted in disturbed life and disturbed relationships among people and that is demonstrated in the characters of the novel. Lettie is in triangle love relationship with Leslie Tempest and George Saxton. Lettie

loves 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 not only sexually and emotionally attracted towards George Saxton but also close to him physically. On the other hand Leslie Tempest is the hero of her dream who can provide her name, fame, power, position and socio-economic standard. Letties' decision to marry Leslie reveals her desire for materialistically sophisticated life style though it finally causes her to live a life without satisfaction and happiness. Not only Lettie but other characters too are presented as the representative of modern people who are guided by money minded attitude and they try their best to be modern pursuing new socio- economic and cultural behavior. They desire for the new life in new urban areas forgetting their past rural lifestyle at the Valley of Nethermare. Next vital character George also selects his life partner Meg on the basis of her class and possessions so that he could upgrade his own socio-economic standard. By doing so he spoils not only his life but Meg's life too. They forget that relationship should be based on love and mutual understanding rather than economic. It makes life deserted and barren without happiness and harmony. George's relation is superficial which never touches his heart. Finally he turns to be drunkard and sexually perverted personality who does not care about his family.

Novel begins from the rural life in the Nethermare valley where all characters live happily. Beardsalls have close relation with Saxtons. Lettie and Cyril often visit to saxton's farm and enjoy having dinner with them. George and his sister Emily also visit Beardsalls for celebrations of their mutual relation. But these harmonious relations get disturbed after their shift to urbanized city areas. Not only relations between families but relation within family changes too. In city life everyone becomes money minded and fails to care for others' emotions and disaster comes into

their relationship. Novel ends with pathetic life of characters that valorize money and matters, face devitalizing effect of materiality over their life.

Various critics have portrayed their views on this novel by raising different issues from multiple perspectives. Michael Squires argues; “*The White Peacock* is a transitional novel between the nineteenth and twentieth century, between the 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). He defends this novel as a mutation of pastoral and Lawrence is a writer who writes about environmental consciousness. According to him the novel *The White Peacock* has pastoral setting and content and the writer asserts the transition of time when the novel was written. This novel shows the mutation of pastoral i.e. changing traditional society to industrial one. People’ life and changes brought by industrialization are presented through the representative characters of the then society. Novel begins from the rural setting and village life but gradually setting and characters shift towards urban modern life. This change carries the theme of how the changing scenario of outer world makes impact in peoples’ behavior and finally whole life changes accordingly. The novel demonstrates transitional phase of England from traditional agricultural to modern industrialized worldview.

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 followers in the development of a new environmental consciousness celebrate the whole way of life, and recognize human potential for creative rather than destructive participation in it. Lawrence’s post – humanism looks at the human species as part of a larger living whole, valuing that whole in its complexity and

integrity. Post- humanism values all living things and the inorganic environment on which they depend, sustain life are interrelated. 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 writes the subject matter of natural world. Janik too asserts that Lawrence is also the writer of human's relationship with nature and focuses on mutual relationship between human and nature. Human's treatment regarding nature always remains in vital position in Lawrence's writings. He tries to capture the human attention towards environmental destruction caused by scientific and technological progress of modern time.

Environmental consciousness in modern people is necessary because while stepping towards modernity i.e. industrialization and urbanization people forget their duty for nature. They forget natural bond between human and environment which can not only hamper human progress rather can destroy the world too. In short, forgetting natural entities and the relationship with nature leads people to negative consequences.

Another critic Karyan Z. Sproles reviews this novel as related with feminine sexuality. D. H. Lawrence's often gives voice to women, female sexuality and psychology through his writings. These below mentioned lines clarify this:

Lettie inability to find one man who can satisfy both her sexual desire and the social standard she has internalized parallels the novel's struggles 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)

The above mentioned lines are evidence to show Lawrence's attempt to touch

previously not discussed issues about feminine sexuality. From very beginning of the novel Lettie involves in love relationship with two persons at the same time. Her inner conflict about whom to marry suggests repressed sexual and physical desire for the fulfillment of socio- economic necessities. Her instincts are confined by the motto of time i.e. economic prosperity. Lettie's struggle to choose one perfect man also shows ignorance of individual instincts (emotions) by modern people to meet socio-economic standard that was trend of writer's contemporary time presented through this novel.

Another critic Howard J. Booth highlights the representation of repressed male homosexual desire. He opines:

When writing *The White Peacock* between 1906 and 1910( the novel was published in 1911) he seems to have been unaware of how close physical contact between men was seen in society. Though the reporting of the Wilde, trials in 1895 had widely disseminated the figure of ' the homosexual', and the view that it was particularly important to be vigilant about sexuality in the arts, Lawrence produced a novel that was belated, provincial, and surprisingly open in its language about male-male relations. In the chapter 'A Poem of Friendship', the narrator Cyril says that he and George established an 'almost passionate attachment which later years slowly wore away. (87-88)

These lines make clear that the novel *The White Peacock* minutely exposes homosexual desires of males. Lawrence consciously or unconsciously expresses issue of homosexuality. As the literature portrays the then socio-cultural phenomena *The White Peacock* demonstrates upcoming voice of homosexual people in early twentieth century. Though homosexuality related issues were not openly expressed and widely discussed before 1960s, Lawrence writes about those issues even from his first novel

(in early twentieth century). It is one step forward to modernity in the sense it breaks down traditional heterosexual normativity and establishes new concept of homosexuality. This type of radical issue starts from urban (modern) areas than rural (traditional) areas. And advocacy for newly arisen issue gives flavor of 'modern' to this novel.

Additionally, the critic F. R. Leavis mentions, "I want to show what he can do where, in that early phase of *The White Peacock*, presents the aspects of class" (73). Lawrence focuses on class conflict prevalent in his contemporary time which was caused by rapid transformation of society into industrial one. Leavis adds; "The Scene of shameful poverty is severely contrasted with the unnecessary luxuries of rich for instance, the party Lettie gives for her friends in London" (114). George person from working background criticizes unnecessary show off of rich people. For him this sort of life is more "idiocy" leading to both human and financial waste. It depicts modern people's hypocritical attitude and their trend to valorize sophisticated lifestyle and money minded attitude.

Though this novel is critiqued from different perspectives, the researcher focuses on the shift of society from rural to urban, agrarian to industrialize and feudal to capitalism and analyses impact of urban lifestyle and industrialization in human relationships. This shift refers the transition of society from tradition to modern way of life. Industrialization and urbanization come along as the element of modernity at the time late Victorian and early twentieth century, the context of this novel. Characters bring newness in traditional rural life which is full of integration and mutual understanding. Social harmony of rural life gets disturbed as well as familial integration also dies under the influence of modernity. In order to show this disturbance researcher deals with modernist theorist George Simmel's perspective.

Simmel highlights on modernity and individualism in his book *The Metropolis and Mental life*. He focuses on the psychological change in people caused by city life. Urbanized city life shapes people's mentality in different way in which everybody becomes individualistic, and money minded. In cities, lots of changes take place regularly and human mind can not reflect of every single changes. To escape from the burden of coping with multiple changes people starts losing interest for changes. Rapid changes of outer world create defense mechanism and people become indifferent towards others' concerns. This indifference refers 'Blaze attitude' which is product of rapid changing and closely compressed stimulations of the nerves which is the mental characteristics of metropolitan life.

Another critic Anthony Giddens in his book *The Consequences of Modernity* describes modernity as 'double edged phenomenon'. In another word modernity encapsulates transformation of society from traditional beliefs to modern way of life focusing on industrialization and urbanization which are materialistic by their nature. It has positive and negative, progressive and somber sides. According to him modernity is related social theory and has close relation with human society. Its impact upon human life cannot be ignored. Here negative sides of modernity will be discussed to support the argument of this research work

Marshall Barman in *All that is solid melts into air* views that modernity brings everything in the same maelstrom. He analyses modernity from the Marxist perspective and focuses on class issues saying that previously established categories of class get destroyed and new structure starts with the access of all that is called modernity.

The above mentioned theorists and their theoretical insights are used as the theoretical tools while conducting this work.

The term 'modern' comes from Latin word *modo*, which means 'current. To quote Peter Childs, "The word 'modern' represents the avant-garde but since Second World War, the meaning changes from 'now' to 'just now'" (13). And "Modernist denotes the modern man in the sixteenth century while in the eighteenth century; it signifies a follower of modern ways and supporter of modern over ancient literature" (14). It leads to the creation of new concept known as modernity and modernism. Child mentions "Modernism can be taken as a response by artists and writers to several things, including industrialization, urban society, war, technological change and philosophical ideas" (21). It is response to contemporary culture resulted from industrialization, technology and science. Modernity carries the awareness of new cultural trends and designates the exit of tradition and beginning of attitude of newness. It refers adaptation of political, economic, social, religious, philosophical changes. In short, modernity covers multi-dimensional changes of the world.

The novel *The White Peacock* presents degraded human values as the society changes from agrarian to capitalist and rural to urban socio-economic culture. Lettie prefers change in her lifestyle and wants to live life in city amidst name and fame. Though she loves George from very core of her heart she leaves him and accepts Leslie, an affluent person as her life partner because her mentality is shaped in that way which does not allow her to live traditional life in countryside. Life in a village with a farmer surely cannot provide her sufficient luxuries, status, power and confidence to sustain in modern capitalist cultural tendency. George says; "And Lettie said to me: 'Here, you can't live as you like- in any way or circumstance'" (69). She wants change in their way of living. George utters this line with Cyril while they talk about Lettie's response about the village life. They further talk:

"No- I thought she looked down on us- on our way of life. I thought meant I

was like a toad in a hole.”

“You should have shown her difference”.

“How could I when I could see no difference?”

“It strikes me you’re in love.”

He laughed at the idea, saying, “No, but it is rotten to find that there isn’t single thing you have to be proud of.” (70)

These lines demonstrate that for Lettie and for George too life in a village is similar to life of a toad in a hole. It reflects Lettie’s desire to go away and to be free from the boundaries of traditional lifestyle of village area. George also does not see any good thing to be proud of while living traditional farmer’s life in village.

Likewise, Lettie’s willingness for new industrialized and urban areas shows her inner desire to be modern and her lust for monetary value. Rural life with traditional values is nothing for her. She can leave even her love for the transformation of her way of living. Her changed thinking pattern does not let her to live in previous condition. The narrator describes Lettie’s behavior after getting some amount of money from her father:

Since the death of our father she had been restless; since inheriting her little fortune she had become proud, scornful, difficult to please. Difficult to please in every circumstance; she, who had always been so rippling in thoughtless life, sat down in the window sill to think, and her strong teeth bit at her handkerchief till it was torn in holes. She would say nothing to me; she read all things that dealt with modern women. (79)

Lettie’s thinking and behavior changes drastically. She bears proud and scornful attitude even for her brother Cyril. Access to some property raises further greed for monetary success and modern life. She tastes money which generates desire for

sophisticated life in advanced urban area. Not only Lettie, but other characters too enjoy living in urban industrialized world full of glittering of consumer culture.

Furthermore *The White Peacock* encapsulates declining condition of human relationship under the shadow of modernity i.e. urbanization and industrialization followed by capitalist economy. In capitalist world people valorize money more than anything else. Materialistic ideology overpowers the true love and relationship between George and Lettie. Their love from childhood gets disturbed because George's socio-economic status cannot satisfy Lettie's hunger for money and prosperity. In short monetary value gets high priority even more than human relationship. This causes disharmony and disintegration in familial love and relationship. People use relationship to satisfy their materialistic needs and desires. Relationships are commodified in the sense they are subverted by commodity value and compared with money. George, recently after break up with Lettie, decides to marry Meg. Meg is for George what Leslie is for Lettie i. e. source of upgrading their socio-economic condition. They are mediums to fulfill materialistic lust to get way out from past life and to get suitable power and position in the society. George never struggles to gain his love but searches the person from higher economic background than him to change his life standard.

George Simmel lights on the issue of 'money economy' in his essay "Metropolis and Mental Life". He highlights on the features of urban metropolitan cities and its effect upon the psychology of who reside there. He mentions; "The metropolis has always been the seat of the money economy (178). And money economy directly connected with intellectuality, economic exchange gets importance everywhere. Person gets value according to his/her materialistic possessions. People follow mere intellectuality whether they can get monetary success or not ignoring

emotional relations with others. About metropolitan which refers modern man, Simmel mentions- “He reacts with his head instead of his heart” (178). This line talks about modern urban people’s attitude regarding the concept of money and material success where emotions do not have space. They try to evaluate everything in terms of money. “For money expresses all qualitative difference of things in terms of “how much?” ...All things float with equal specific gravity in the constantly moving stream of money”(181). As money becomes standard to judge the quality of people if somebody lacks money and material belongings s/he loses his/her true value or importance in society even in family too. Money is a concrete expression of the economic value of things. It is valuable because it is the means for the acquisition of value in modern world. Money and value go side by side in modern world view. To get respectful life one must have economic prosperity. But the question is that can this prosperity makes the person happy?

The narrator Cyril Beardsall reveals about unsound relation of his parents. His father left his family for materialistic purpose. “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 had prospered but he had never come to see her in all the eighteen years” (36). Narrator’s father values more to money and other pleasures in life but it costs a lot to him. He never gets chance to spend some happy moments of his life even in his deathbed too. He just regrets for his doings in his young days and realizes importance of familial emotional bonding for happy life. He writes to his wife; “If you knew how awfully lonely I am, Lettice- how awfully I have been, you might feel sorry... I have had the worst of it Lettice, and I’m glad the end has come. I have had the worst of it” (36). Excessive valorization of money declines his life. He lives fruitless life. His wife talks about his

alienated life and loneliness; “Well! - He died all alone, Rebecca- all alone”(46). Money fails here to buy happiness and to guarantee satisfaction. This failure of modern monetary value shows necessity of traditional humanitarian values and emotional aspects in human life.

In the novel *The White Peacock* rural social structure changes into urban and agrarian into industrialized (capitalist). This change denotes modernity ignoring traditional value and finally causes unhappiness and destruction in the lives of characters. Shattered relationships caused by modernity are roots of unhappiness and dissatisfaction as Lawrence demonstrates through his characters in this novel. Lettie, Leslie, George and Meg are dissatisfied with their life not because of monetary unsuccessful but their disturbed relationships caused by their disregard towards emotional aspects. Married life of all these characters go through gap and distance. George says: “In the marital duel Meg is winning. The women 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 a stranger. And I feel that I’m losing- and don’t care” (306). George could not love Meg wholeheartedly as she wants because his marriage is based on his greed for up grading of social standard rather than love. They suffer from emotional distance in their married life. They are hungry of satisfaction in terms of love life and mutual caring and sharing. All of them pursue modern sophisticated lifestyle far away from traditional trends of living life but its outcome does not match with their expectations.

Additionally, the emphasis of this paper goes to study human behavior and how it is affected by the core issue of modernity i.e. industrialization and urbanization. To be specific, impact of modernity in shaping human behavior and its consequences upon human life and relationships is the focus of this research work.

Lead characters such as; Lettie, George, Leslie's instinct for monetary success and inherent desire for materialistic life and further consequences of it is the focus of this research paper. Everything gets value for its outer appearance ignoring its inherent genuine qualities and situations. People run after what they can see and what they can show up to others, emotional bond lacks there. It hampers on mutual relationships while they forget to value the inner core of their relationships and they neglect each other's emotions and desires. In the novel characters are not directed by their choice while dealing with their relationships rather they are trying to justice their mere responsibility. Attachment lacks in each and every relationship, they are just connected outwardly.

Furthermore, *The White Peacock* reveals class conflict after the transformation of society from feudal to capitalist. Many people turn jobless with the replacement of machines in farms and factories. Then working class people start seeking for their right. Finally revolution takes place. Authority of higher class gets challenged. People from all layer of society have right to live and work freely and should get suitable wage and respect in the society otherwise harmony cannot be maintained. Workers' agitation expressed through this novel becomes clear from the given extract:

The man in the mines of of Tempest, Warrall and Co. came out on strike on a question of the rearranging of the working system down below. The distress was not awful, for the men were on the whole wise and well- conditioned, but there was a dejection over the face of the country-side, and some suffered keenly. (134)

People started seeking for their right everywhere. Old traditions of feudal system got destroyed with the rise of scientific and technological advancement in industries.

Revolution of working class people shows inherent class struggle in modern industrial

world. Previously established economic system gets challenged and all people come in common ground of production as modernity incorporates with all people from all social background. Marshall Berman views;

The maelstrom of modern life has been felt from many sources: great discoveries in the physical sciences changing our images of the universe and our place in it; the industrialization of production, which transforms scientific knowledge into technology, creates new human environments and destroys old ones speed of the whole tempo of life generates new form of corporate power and class struggle. (15)

According to Berman, expansion in science and technology alters feudal society into capitalist. Minority group turn into power holder over all the means of production where as majority of people become wage laborers. Though majority laborers contribute for the production and profit, they do not have share for that profit. This situation ultimately creates distance between these two groups of people. At climax point this distance brings class conflict in the society. Human beings are counted as numbers as they do not have feelings or emotions. Human values get replaced with economic value. The notion of modernity can be understood by the process of comparison and contrast with tradition. Destruction of pre-established rules and regulation, norms and values and perspectives with the help of scientific discoveries and technological advancement refers to modernity in which one establishes new knowledge and understanding and whole system of life changes. Pre-existed beliefs and customs get alteration on them and new environment gets creation.

In *The White Peacock*, modernity with its two aspects urbanization and industrialization, influences characters like Lettie, Leslie, George and Meg. They proceed towards modernity in the sense they leave their previous lifestyle, migrate

from rural to urban area, agricultural working pattern to industrialized one and valorize money and matter instead of human relationships. But consequences do not suit them. They suffer from emotional detachment and familial disintegrity. In short, Lawrence critically examines emotional conditions amidst industrial development and materialistic progress.

Furthermore, Lawrence portrays changing socio-economic phenomena of England from traditional agricultural society to modern industrialist society. It is stepping towards modernity. What they used to think and what they think at present is obviously different. Changing phenomenon of world around there plays vital role to shape their psychology and behavior. Consequently industrialization negatively influences human relationships and leaves people to be emotionally alone, frustrated, depressed and dissatisfied with their lives. Lettie has to go through inner conflict to select her life partner. Her psychology is overpowered by importance of monetary value and she finally selects money rather than the person of her choice. She kills her sexual desire and love for George only because she thinks he cannot meet the socio-economic standard that she wants with his farming background. She wants to live far away from traditional farming life style dreaming of sophisticated city life. George asks Lettie:

“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 becomes ready to leave George which makes George feel sorry for not being rich because he realizes what is happening with him is caused by his class. George refers tradition as he belongs to agricultural background but Lettie’s altered thought

motivates her for new way of living

Likewise, the novel *The White Peacock* exposes the danger of gross materialism in the society. Characters take money as the nexus of affection instead of cultural stable values. They shift from former village life towards urbanized city life in search of monetary success. The protagonist Lettie, obsessed with materialistic greed decides to marry Leslie a well off person who can fulfill her inherent desire for money and power. Lettie's materialistic desire becomes clear from the line; "Nor do I . Blue for hope, because Speranza in 'Fairy Queen' had a blue gown – and diamonds for – the crystalline clearness of my nature." (116) She says this to Leslie after looking her ring gifted by Leslie as the marriage proposal. In her engagement ring she wants something very precious and unique quality. She sees outer appearance of everything but never reaches to the core of things. She sees quantitative value instead of qualitative one. Ring is not just a jewelry rather it symbolizes new bond of love and marriage. She fails to realize cultural value of ring. She is victim of money minded attitude.

Simmel argues "It has been money economy which has thus filled the daily life of so many people with weighing, calculating, enumerating and the reduction of qualitative values to quantitative terms" (13). Qualitative value of family relation is subverted by quantitative value of money which kills emotional aspect of their life. Leslie realizes lack of love and attachment with him. Leslie shares his feeling with Jove; "I don't think she feels for me as I do for her". It is reality of Lettie's personality that she lacks emotional attachment with Leslie. Mere focus on materialistic values finally causes her dissatisfied and alienated family life. She happens to face indifference even from her husband.

By the same token distanced familial relationship of George caused by

capitalist culture becomes clear from the Cyril's narration about him. "He often made a beast of himself drinking, he thought more of himself than he ought home was not good enough for him, he was selfish to the back-bone, he cared neither for her nor the children, only for himself" (303). George turns into uncaring and indifferent husband and father. He forgets his responsibilities towards his own family members. He prioritizes his business and later on involves in politics too. Individual freedom and economic success is motto of his life. He runs after success and fails to live happy life with his family.

Lettie's family life, after her marriage too, faces disturbances. Lettie and Leslie do not give priorities to each other's love and companionship in later years of their marriage. They live with emotional gap created by the then scenario of society and spirit of time. In Lettie's thirty-first birthday, Leslie forgets that important date instead of sharing the moment with Lettie. Cyril narrates; "Lettie had allowed her husband to forget her birthday. He was now very much immersed in politics, foreseeing a general election in the following year, and intending to contest the seat in parliament"(303). The gap between Lettie and Leslie caused by changed scenario of their outer world and its effect on their personality as well as in their relationship. Both of them are equally responsible for the distance between them. Neither Leslie being a husband remembers and celebrates Lettie's birthday nor does she herself feel necessary to invite him to share some happy moments of her life with him. Leslie spends great deal of time in politics, at the conservative club with the people from southern division. And "Lettie encouraged him in these affairs. It relieved her of him"(303). Thus it is the cause she lets him to forget her birthday. Instead of giving and seeking interest from her life partner she expresses her discomfort to be with or to spend time with him. Leslie is described as a burden by his wife, the person who

should be very close to his heart. This shows hollowness of human relationships of early twentieth century Britain.

Similarly, the society of early twentieth century moves towards capitalism as the result of industrialization. Society goes through changes in several sectors which bring new way of life known as modernity. It refers to establishment of new trends and conditions after the rejection of tradition, and adaptation of changes brought by industrialization. Industrial revolution invited radical changes in society in the history of world. Rapid development of modern industrial societies, rapid growth of cities, and rise of consumer culture, scientific and technological development are changes of modern societies. All these changes give birth to concept of individualism which results in loss of humanitarian values. For instance coldness between Meg and George shows their carelessness for each other. Cyril narrates his visit to their home: “George sat looking glum and listening to us. Meg was quite indifference...she humiliated him and was hostile to his wishes” (282). Meg does not respect George as a family member. It suggests that modernity which comes with industrial revolution and urbanization does not value human life and people’s emotional aspects.

Additionally, theories of modernity held prominent position in social theory. Modernity is the change in social system as presented in the novel *The White Peacock*. Capitalism, scientific and technological development, urbanization, industrialization are incorporated on it. Modernity is the historic condition that characterizes modern societies, cultures and human agents. New values and trends get established in society with the passing of time. These new values and new social structures sometime create conflicts and contradictions among people. *The White Peacock* captures increasing industrial activities and rapid urbanization of western countries of early twentieth century. In one hand existed farming pattern of agrarian

Valley of Nethermare gradually transforms into machinery based farming pattern in other hand unnecessary flow of people towards city abandoning all previous trend of living, working and social pattern emphasizes rapid urbanization .

Anthony Giddens in his writing *The Consequences of modernity* mentions: Modernity is marked by transformation...the major transformative force shaping the modern is capitalism. With the decline of feudalism, agrarian production based in the local manor is replaced by production for markets of national and international scope, in terms of which not only an infinite variety of material goods but also human labour power become commodified. The emergent social order of modernity is capitalistic in both its economic system and its other institutions. (11)

The second name of modernity is transformation in terms of socio-economic system of society. Local into global, feudal into capitalism, rural into urban, agrarian into industrial are socio-economic transformations which bring modernity by commodifying all means of production along with human labour too. Not only goods but human beings, too get value in terms of money that they can be exchanged for. Existence disappears if one fails to meet the demand of capitalist economy.

Furthermore, people turn alienated in modern capitalistic society unlike traditional rural society. Capitalistic values encourage people to desire for excessive material prosperity. This desire leads to commodification when it increases. It causes crisis in life and thought which leads to alienation in people. They focus on individualism to sustain in alienated life. The novel *The White Peacock* demonstrates miserable condition of modern humans of the then time. Childs Peter defines modernity; "Modernity is considered to describe a way of living and of experiencing life which has arisen with the changes brought by industrialization, urbanization and

secularization; its characteristics are disintegration and reformation, fragmentation and rapid changes, ephemerality and insecurity” (16). As modernism encapsulates theme of loneliness, alienation, frustration and meaninglessness, the novel presents characters suffered with these themes. The material progress in the novel creates alienation in characters’ life which makes them suffer from dissatisfaction and distress. Each and every character and their priorities are guided by money and materialistic prosperity. They exist physically but emotionally they are dead. They brutalize their emotional health under the influence of modernity. In this way, the physical change of outer world shapes the way of thinking which affects person’s relationship with other people.

Additionally, the industrialization of early twentieth century creates the unmanaged lifestyle of English people. This research focuses on negative impact of industrialization on human life. Industrialization and urbanization attack on traditional, cultural norms and values along with bounded familial love and relationship in *The White Peacock*. Unveiling the wretched condition of modern human brought by industrialization and its resultant on individual human lives as well as on mutual relationship is the aim of this research. The base of degraded condition of humanity is merely caused by industrialization. In *How Modernity Forgets* Paul Connerton states; “ What is being forgotten in modernity is profound, the human-scale- ness of life, the experience of living and working in a world of social relationships that are known” (5). He views that modern people have forgotten humane values and social relationship. They negate family bonding for the sake of modern pattern of life.

In the novel, though characters are jointed with familial ties emotional bonding, attachment and compassion lack among them. For instance Meg shares with

Cyril about the brutality of George; “You couldn’t imagine what it’s like, Cyril,” She said. It’s like having Satan in the house with you, or a black tiger glowering at you. I’m sure nobody knows what I’ve suffered with him-“(297). This quote denotes Meg’s complain about George’s inhuman behavior. He has lost humanitarian values and familial love, care and affection. Relation with George is burden for Meg. Selfish turned personality of George and his ignorance regarding family concern is evidence of degraded social relationship and family life in modern industrialized world.

Furthermore, uprooting from traditional cultural values makes people face alienation. In the novel George’s lonely life in urban area shows failure of modern people’s unnecessary desire for the new sophisticated world leaving well managed traditional life full of love and care. George destroys his life and happiness by rejecting his traditional cultural values. He writes on his letter to Cyril:

Sometime I wonder where I am going. Yesterday I watched broken white masses of cloud sailing across the sky in a fresh strong wind. They all seemed to be going somewhere. I wondered where the wind was blowing them. I don’t seem to have hold on anything, do I? Can you tell me what I want at the bottom of my heart? (270)

George feels uncomfortable in his new lifestyle in new place, away from the valley of Nethermare which was the place of his childhood filled with traditional pastoral life along with natural beauty. This extract shows alienation of urban people in industrialized world. It is hard for George to feel content in his new modern life and to forget past harmonious family and social life. Nostalgia of past rural life disturbs him when he does not get satisfaction from present urban life. Blow of urbanization brought him in present alienated condition away from village life where he feels powerless even his own life is strange for him. What is happening and what

consequences it will bring is out of his mind. Kasturi Mishra criticizes modern trend of ignoring tradition; “we never had been developed from our ancestors rather we are heading towards destruction by breaking the traditional values” (55). Total rejection of tradition causes destruction because rootlessness harms. George leaves past life for the quest of monetary success and economic progress. He becomes unhappy from his heart despite his well going business and standard lifestyle. He feels pathless and rootless in present new place. He has turned into flying bird without any destination to get and any shelter to take rest. This recklessness of George’s life is caused by the conflict between tradition and modernity that he has gone through.

In addition to this, the narrator Cyril Breadsall expresses his loneliness and nostalgic feeling for natural beauty of the Valley of Nethermare and human bonding with it. Though he entered into modern life in the urban area of Norwood he cannot enjoy with new environment. Pastoral life in the lap of nature has gone away in present urban area. Leaving his childhood place faces great loss rather than opportunity. He says; “A Strange voice within me rose and called for the hill path; again I could feel the wood waiting for me, calling, and I crying for the wood, yet the space of many miles was between us. Since I left the valley of home I have not much feared any other loss” (267). This feeling of loss refers his internal willingness for the past rural life in his childhood place of Nethermare which was harmonious and satisfactory. Modern urban world is strange to him which never provides him solace and cheerfulness. Cyril Bearshall describes his new urban life as an exile. Memories of Nethermare haunt him. “I suffered acutely the sickness of exile in Norwood. For weeks I wandered the streets of Nethermere” (262). People’s failure to adapt with changes creates negative effects or in many cases rapid changes themselves are unhealthy for the human life and relationship as presented in this novel. It does not

matter how rich and success the person is if he never feels happy with his modern life. It demonstrates the conflict of tradition and modernity not only in Cyril but also his contemporaries who have rejected traditional life and remain unhappy with their new life.

Furthermore, modernist quest for excessive material success creates distance among human beings. Not only quest but acquisition of monetary success brings distance in human relations. George's quest for money is the base of his relation with Meg. Once he says; "...Besides, I've only a hundred pounds in the world, and no prospects whatever. That's why- well – I shan't marry anybody- unless its somebody with money" (13). He gets marry Meg for economic propose and steps forward to city life dreaming about successful and happy life. But he has to suffer from emotional barrenness. When Meg's Grandma dies leaving properties to both George and Meg, these two guys become emotionally apart gradually. It becomes clear via this extract:

When the grandmother died, in the October two years after the marriage of George she left him seven hundred pounds. To Meg she left the inn, and the two houses she has built in the Newerton, together with brewery shares to the value of nearly a thousand pounds. George and Meg felt themselves to be people of property. The result however was only a little further coldness between them. (286)

The core reason of coldness between husband and wife is due to valorization of money, they focus on money instead of their mutual emotional relationship. While talking about acquisition of money George and Meg get separated emotionally after getting money and property. Simmel's idea of money supports this argument as he mentions :

Money is concerned only with what is common to all: How much? All

emotional relations between persons are founded in their individuality, whereas in rational relations man is reckoned with like a number, like an element which is in itself indifferent. Only objective measurable achievement is of interest.(184)

In the novel *The White Peacock* disturbance in human relationship caused by money or material progress has presented thoroughly.

In the same way, Leslie's mere hunger for post and position i.e. he wants through political and economic success destroys his familial integrity and harmony. When Lettie does not get proper attention from her husband she feels alienated. And to avoid her loneliness she wants closeness with George, her ex-boyfriend. At birthday night she tries to have physical relation 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)

When family becomes secondary to Leslie, he cannot maintain familial bonding and faces disloyalty from his wife. She replaces Leslie with George because Leslie's involvement into business and politics creates emotional gap between them. It is the failure of modern money minded attitude of people which leads to crisis and degeneration in human relationship.

Adaptation of something new in different aspect of society is necessary to come under the title of Modernity. For feudal agrarian society as presented in the novel, heading towards industrialized capitalistic system is modernity. Beyond pastoral social structure capitalistic economics and democratic political structures are

characteristics of modern societies which are highly industrialized and divided into social classes based on economic status. These characteristics include regular pattern of everyday life, urbanization, influx of women at all level of employment and business, secular outlook and sexual freedom. The overall social systems get changed in modernity along with their traditional concepts, thoughts, actions and institutions.

“The old man went out and began his work, carrying the sacks of corn from the machine to the chamber” (261). This line reveals the changed pattern of working in farms. Impact of industrialization has brought machinery things to use in farms.

Giddens views: “The era of modernity is the revision of convention radicalized to apply (in principle) to all aspects of human life, including technological intervention into the material world. It is often said that modernity is marked by an appetite for the new” (39). To be modern ‘newness’ must be adopted by peoples. And happens in the novel too.

In *The White Peacock* characters are keenly interested to follow modernity i.e. going away from pre- existed life style. For instance in the day of George’s marriage with Meg, George takes Meg to hotel, some miles away from their village. For the first time, he goes to hotel, it symbolizes his steps towards modernity in the sense enjoying and visiting hotels does not belong to village life. Cyril narrates: “He suffered exquisitely from self- consciousness and nervous embarrassment, but he felt also the intoxication of the adventure, he felt as a man who has lived in a small island when he first sets foot on a vast continent” (225). Jumping suddenly in new trend is not easy so it is not easy with George. His village Nethermare Valley denotes traditional lifestyle from which he wants to go away. George wants change in his lifestyle and does so by starting doing things which are totally new to him no matter how uneasy and difficult it becomes for him.

The narrator Cyril describes about George's nature as a materialist who does not believe in religion and existed notions of civilization. He mentions :

He was man of one idea- that all civilization was the painted fungus of rottenness. He hated any sign of culture. I won his respect one afternoon when he found me trespassing in the woods because I was watching some maggots at work in a dead rabbit. That led us to a discussion of life. He was a thorough materialist- he scorned religion and all mysticism. (157)

This description of George's attitude reveals that modern people do not follow old traditions. George prefers to reject existed religion, culture, civilization and calls them rotten.

In addition to this, the whole scenario of the novel *The White Peacock* moves towards modernity in the sense characters like George, Lettie, Leslie and Meg are accommodated with the values of industrialization, urbanization and secularization which are essential elements of modernity. Especially darker aspects of modernity are presented in the novel to show necessity of intermingling of tradition and modernity.

Michel Foucault claims:

Modernity refers to a period marked by a questioning or rejection of tradition; the prioritization of individualism, freedom and formal equality; faith in inevitable social, scientific and technological progress and human perfectability; rationality and professionalization; a movement from feudalism towards capitalism and the market economy; industrialization, urbanization and secularization; the development of nation- state and its constituent institutions and forms of surveillance. (170-71)

According to Foucault, modernity is not possible moving on the track of tradition.

Focus goes to individual than group. There develops the concept of freedom, public

education, equality and the society faces changes with scientific inventions. Familial integrity is violated in the novel as George involves into pre-marital and extra marital affairs. Women character Meg has equal access to the property as her husband. Instead of family relations she prioritizes economic development. She sacrifices family relation for money. And novel presents fall of spiritual world with the people who have no space for emotion.

After some years of migration to urban capitalist world characters especially George and Leslie turn individualistic and ignore others even their own family members. Their total focus goes to how to make more money. Gap among family members is presented throughout the text. George and Meg both husband and wife never care for each other's feelings. There is lack of cordial relation between husband and wife. Similarly, Leslie and Lettie too never try to share feelings with each other rather they feel happy in the absence of each other. More than family bonding characters give value to money and other materials. There is no emotion, compassion and attachment despite their familial relationship. It refers the counterproductive effect of modernity demonstrated through the novel *The White Peacock*.

In a nutshell, D. H. Lawrence has demonstrated the scenario of his contemporary (Late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century) society of England. His writings reflect money minded attitude of people and degraded relationship caused by it in the modern world of rapid urbanization and industrialization where consumer culture subverts human relationship. Excessive desire for money and success is presented negatively which destroys human life and relationship. Due to rapid urbanization and industrialization greed for money increases in unwanted way which enhances characters' self centeredness and individualistic attitude and brings emotional barrenness and loneliness.

Moreover, Characters of the novel *The White Peacock* represent the people from Lawrence's the then society who wanted changes in their lives leaving their traditional way of life. Priorities of their life alter with the change of their society. Transformation of their society from rural to urban and agrarian to industrial makes changes on their psychology. They focus on individuality, money minded attitude and indifference to others. These priorities shape behaviors of characters which directly affects their life and relationships with other people around there. Individual character's disgust for traditional lifestyle and embodiments of industrial revolution and cultural transformation in modern Europe killing their instinctual drive, people become emotionally sterile in the quest of economic progress and material prosperity without their close bond with the humanity. Consequently alienation, frustration and depression appear as integral part of human life under the influenced of modernity.

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