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SEPARATION BETWEEN CONSTANCE "CONNIE" CHATTERLEY'S IDENTITIES IN *LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER*

Davinna Anggita Putri Zulkarnain

English Studies Program, Universitas Padjadjaran
davinna19001@mail.unpad.ac.id

Abstract

Constance Chatterley's many identities in "Lady Chatterley's Lover" are indicated by how she is addressed by the narrator, other characters in the novel, as well as herself. In the novel, she is referred to as three different names: Constance, Lady Chatterley, and Connie. Those three names also consist of several different identities including her as Constance Reid, Connie, Lady Chatterley, Constance Chatterley, Constance as a woman, and finally Constance as a female. This paper aims to study the distinctions between those identities by looking at the involvement of "narrative mood", a device to portray "different points of view" that the life or action in the story is observed from (Genette, 1983:161), which can be seen through how the narrator describes Constance according to the characters' varying views of her. Though the narrator is nameless and invisible, s/he has all of the information about Constance (not only the things visible outside but also the things going on in her mind) and uses all of that information to show the differences of how Constance is seen in society through her eyes. The difference between "Constance" and "Connie" indicates her position if compared to the men around her, the distinction between "Constance Reid", "Constance Chatterley", and "Lady Chatterley" are significant in showing her position in society, while Constance's identities as a "woman" and a "female" show the difference in how she thinks she is viewed by men.

***Keywords**: Constance Chatterley; identities; woman; female*

A. Introduction

D. H. Lawrence's major works bring forth the attempt to redefine a relationship between a man and a woman as a device to reach "liberation" and "self-realization" (Bond, 2016: 21). It is apparent that he amplifies the "female gaze" and puts his focus on women's desire, disrupting the "masculine discourse" regarding "women's bodies and sexuality" (Yao, 2017: 205). One of those "major works" is *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in which Constance, the main female character, constantly tries to question her sexual relationship with her husband and the other men around her. Throughout the novel, it is apparent that she constantly tries to separate herself from a certain identity of her own that she is not fond of, which is her identity as "Lady Chatterley" (or "Clifford Chatterley's wife").

Upon further observation, it is found that Constance Chatterley's identity in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is actually separated into six (6) different identities, according to the different ways she is seen by different characters in the book as well as the narrator. The existence of this separation implies the possibility that a woman may have one body, but she bears different "values" when she embodies each of her different identities according to how society sees and treats her.

Dawson (2019) has conducted a research regarding female sexuality in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, putting focus on how Constance's consciousness is most "raw" not when she's "examining her heart" and question her desires, but when she's having a sexual intercourse with her male partner(s) instead. This study emphasizes the importance of examining Constance's relationship with men, with Dawson's main argument being that the "notorious" sex scenes in the novel are actually the result of a years-long effort in following a "trajectory" for creating consciousness scene in fiction.

Further study regarding Constance's relationship with men has been conducted by Bond (2016). The research focuses on how having a romantic relationship that is "independent" from bearing a child turns out to complicate the process of self-knowledge for Lawrence's female characters. Lawrence, as quoted by Bond, suggests that pregnancy, sex, and love can possibly be used to gain self-realization that is "exclusive to women" (2016: 24). However, the female characters in his works (including Constance) are portrayed to not have the desire to bear a child and/or have a sexual intercourse, even fearing it, which leads to a series of conflicts in their respective books because society, especially the men, expect them to not have that fear.

The female desire of self-realization and liberation has also been researched by Yao (2017), putting focus on female characters who choose to "withdraw" from society and search for their "authentic self", expressing their distrust towards authority figures and society as a whole. Although Constance is not among the female characters studied in the article, she has several resemblance to the female characters who do, such as how she constantly tries to discover her "self" through her relationships with the men in her life, as well as distances herself from the title that the society has given her as Clifford's wife: "Lady Chatterley".

These studies are relevant to this research due to their topics being female sexuality and the desire to find an authentic "identity". Dawson's study, with its focus on consciousness, will help me identify the differences in Constance's consciousness when she's embodying a particular identity, as well as studying the connection between her withdrawal from sexual intercourse and her desire of self-realization. Bond (2016) provides insights about how the importance of sexual intercourse for women is presented in Lawrence's works, and how it may be a reflection of Lawrence's own experience, which will help me analyze the way Constance is written as both a "female" and a "woman". The study by Yao (2017) is relevant for its focus on women's desire for an "authentic self" and their effort to not get involved in society's expectations towards them.

Along with their relevancies to this research, however, the mentioned previous studies also leave a similar gap, which is how none of the studies have considered the separation between Constance's identities, especially the difference between her being seen as a "woman" and a "female", as well as how each of the identities defines her position differently in the same society she lives in.

B. Methodology

To achieve this research's objective, I begin with identifying the passages in which Constance seems to distance herself from her titles, as well as the passages where she is not referred to as

"Constance". To add to that, I will also identify the distinction between the narrator and Constance by using the argument proposed by Bradley (2015) about the "fourth person singular" point of view. I will then analyze in what way does Constance separate her identities, as well as the differences of how people, especially men, treat her when she's embodying each of her identities. The analysis will be carried out by taking Irigaray's (1977) theory into consideration, which argues about economy under capitalism is similar with how women are treated in a patriarchal society.

From that, I will be able to determine how exactly Constance is seen by the people around her; what "values" does each of her identities have and what makes them different in society's eyes. To determine the "values" that need to be paid attention to, I will refer to Irigaray (1977) and Spivak (1978).

The previous studies conducted by Dawson (2019), Bond (2016), and Yao (2017) will be used to help shape my analysis according to the findings of each of the studies.

C. Results and Discussion

Constance Chatterley's position as a woman in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is indicated by how she is addressed in the novel. In the novel, different people refer to her as three different names: Constance, Lady Chatterley, and Connie. Those three names also consist of several different identities including her as Constance Reid, Connie, Lady Chatterley, Constance Chatterley, Constance as a woman, and finally Constance as a female.

The story in the novel is told by a nameless narrator with Constance as the focalizer. Genette states that, if purely looked from a grammatical lens, a narrative's function is to simply speak of a story; to portray "facts" (either real or fictive) instead of stating a condition, expressing a wish, and so forth (Genette, 1983:161). However, we can object to that statement by considering how there are differences not only between "affirming, commanding, wishing", but also between various degrees of affirmation, command, and wish (1983:161). Those differences are shown by what is called a "narrative mood" which, according to the *Littre* dictionary, functions as a device to portray "different points of view" that the life or action in the story is observed from (1983:161). The narrative is capable to manage how much information it should give away, according to the knowledge capacity of the participant(s) involved in the story (1983:162).

The involvement of narrative mood in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* can be seen through the distinctions between Constance's identities that are made by the narrator, but according to the views of Constance herself and the people around her. The "voice" of the narrator is spoken through a character (in this case, Constance) even though it actually belong to someone else, the narrator his/herself (Bradley, 2015: 194). The fact that the narrator is able to create distinctions by putting him/herself in Constance's shoes, telling spoken dialogues between Constance and other people, without having to "play the role" of Constance, shows how the novel's narrative may be a Proustian narrative. According to Genette, the narrator of a Proustian narrative never leaves the story. His/her presence is constant and s/he serves as the source of information, the "organizer of the narrative", and even a commentator to the story (Genette, 1983:167). Those characteristics fit the narrator of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* well.

In the novel, everything is told from Constance's views. How she feels, how she thinks of people, how she sees, and so on, but Constance is not the one telling the story. The narrator is nameless and invisible, but s/he has all of the information about Constance (not only the things visible outside but

also the things going on in her mind) and s/he uses all of that information to *show* (not tell) the differences of how Constance is seen in society through her eyes.

The first distinction that will be talked about is between her as Constance "Connie" Reid, Constance Chatterley, and Lady Chatterley. She is first called "Constance" at the beginning of the story by the narrator, as seen in the line, "This was more or less Constance Chatterley's position" (p. 37). She is referred to as Connie by whom she is close to (such as her sister, Hilda) and the narrator who uses her as a focalization point.

To begin with, there's a difference between how she is talked about when she's still Constance "Connie" Reid (her maiden name) and when she has become Constance Chatterley. When she was still Constance Reid, she (and her older sister, Hilda) is talked about as a woman who is not submissive towards men. Not only is she not submissive, but she is also described as a woman who thinks of men as lesser, sex-driven creatures, as shown in the story of her early life, especially when the narrator explains about her education and how she viewed the male students of her school in Dresden. When arguing over the matters of philosophy, sociology, and arts, she believed that she and her sister were almost "as good as the men". *Better*, even, because they are women (p. 39). They also have the common desire to have "pure freedom", as they believe it is much better than any "sexual love" with men.

After marrying Clifford Chatterley, however, she adopted his surname and became Constance Chatterley, resulting in the erasure of her two identities as "Constance" and "Connie". This is because, throughout her marriage with Clifford, the people around her, as well as the narrator often refer to her as Lady Chatterley instead. One of the examples can be seen when the narrator tells that "Clifford was now a baronet, Sir Clifford, and Constance was Lady Chatterley" (p. 37). Constance is not referred to as her given name but by her husband's family name, which she has been taking since marriage. Her position is not as a woman, but as Clifford Chatterley's wife. Aside from the narrator, Connie Mellors' grandmother also refers to Constance as Lady Chatterley, though her accent makes it so the name is heard more like "Lady Chat'ley" instead (p. 101).

Different from her other two names, Constance and Connie, "Lady Chatterley" is the only name with which she doesn't seem to have any personal connection since she treats "Lady Chatterley" as *something* rather than someone. When she talks about her title on page 104, she calls it "the Lady Chatterley business", which shows how she distances herself from that name.

There are many definitions for "business", which is why there are also many possible reasons why she calls the "Lady Chatterley" name that way. The word "business" is generally understood as an occupation; the activity of doing commercial work. It is derived from the Old English word *bisignes* that, aside from occupation, may also mean “care” or "anxiety". Throughout her whole marriage with Clifford, Constance has been put through heavy stress and anxiety, may it be about her married life or her own body. It has taken a toll on her physical condition as shown by Hilda's reaction upon seeing her again on page 118. Hilda insists that Constance is ill and Clifford states he *did* notice that she is a little thinner, though without showing any signs of wanting to do anything about it. In fact, he didn't think it was necessary (p. 119).

Its definition as "the activity of doing a commercial work" and "occupation" can also be used to explain the reason why Constance treats her title that way. As Clifford's wife, Lady Chatterley, she constantly feels obligated to listen to him telling about what he is writing, even when she doesn't feel like it, when her father said that his stories have "nothing in it" and are not worth paying attention to, and she herself felt his stories are "meaningless" (p. 50). Accompanying him in writing stories is as if a duty to her, enforced by her status as a wife. The word "occupation" itself means "a being employed in something" ("Occupation", n. d.), which fits the characteristic of Constance's "employment" as

someone who is there to listen to Clifford, no matter what. This kind of situation has already been talked about on page 40 which tells about the two sisters' ideal of being women in relationships with men. For them, a man is the same as a child with an appetite, and a woman is required to give him what he wants. Otherwise, he would throw a tantrum and ruin what had been a good connection. In Constance and Clifford's marriage, Clifford is the hungry child looking for someone to pay attention to him while Constance is the woman who has to provide that.

In page 103, it is revealed that Constance has decided to help Clifford with his writings and they managed to make money out of it, though the amount of money is significantly lesser than what she could have gotten if she was with Michaelis. According to that, it can be understood that Constance's activity of helping Clifford with his writings is both an occupation *and* a commercial work. Moreover, there may be a connection between Constance's preference towards the money she earned with Clifford and her desire to have agency in her marriage, where she is already stripped off of her identity as Constance. It's stated that she "preferred" that lesser amount because, unlike what she could've had with Michaelis, she actually has a role in making the money since she has helped Clifford with his writings (p. 103). It means that Constance can regain her agency over her self through (not despite) "giving" herself in to her marriage.

However, the way Constance is treated throughout their marriage also implies that she is not only the subject that does the "commercial work", but also the commodity herself. Marx (1887) states that a commodity is an object that bears two kinds of functions in a transaction: an object to be utilized and to deposit values. Irigaray (1977) incorporates Marx's theory into her argument, stating that a woman in a patriarchal society is treated the same way as commodities in a capitalist system. A woman's use-value is their ability to reproduce, while their exchange value is their constitution or body (1977: 174). Spivak (1978) adds that there is another value possessed by a woman, surplus-value, which means that in the process of production, the laborer (in this case, Constance) is made to work harder than she should in order to give the laborer's work's buyer (in this case, Clifford) more benefits than the laborer herself. By giving in to her marriage and doing her "job" as a wife, Constance creates yet another "identity" for herself, which is a "commodity" in her relationship with Clifford.

Aside from being a commercial work, "business" also carries the implications of sexual intercourse, depending on the context. Of course, Constance and Clifford's marriage is the perfect context to use that definition as well, considering how their relationship and their opinions of each other are quite centered around whether or not sex between them is necessary. Clifford is convinced that both of them have no need for sex because he feels that their emotional connection is already strong. Constance, on the other hand, constantly second-guesses Clifford's mindset in silence despite always agreeing to him outwardly. Moreover, Constance thinks of "sex" the same way she thinks of "Lady Chatterley", which is by seeing it as a business, as seen on the line "[T]his sex business was one of ... connections and subjections." (p. 40).

The name "Lady Chatterley" acts as a reminder of her position in the marriage. When she is referred to that name, she is not seen as Constance or Connie. She is the nameless "lady", or woman, of Clifford Chatterley's.

Besides between Constance Reid and Lady Chatterley, there is also a stark difference between how the narrator talks about her by referring to her as Constance and Connie. Constance is called Connie when the narrator compares her and Clifford while putting her in the lesser position of the two. This can be seen when the narrator states that "Clifford Chatterley was more upper-class than Connie" (p. 43). Even when the narrator is about to talk about what is lacking from Clifford, thus putting him in a lesser position than Constance, the narrator still includes "Clifford, while he was

better bred than Connie," (p. 43) adding in another one of Clifford's plus side before finally talking about what he is lacking in. As soon as she's shown to be the one having more "value" in Clifford's view, however, the narrator switches to calling her Constance:

"Therefore the peculiar soft assurance of a girl like Constance Reid fascinated him (...)" (p. 43)

When she is Constance Reid, she is the woman who is powerful enough to be able to give some kind of comfort and invites fascination from Clifford who, according to the previous passages, has been described as someone of a higher social class. While he's a timid and nervous man, she is described as a fascinating "rebel".

The difference between her identities as Constance and Connie, however, is most prominent on page 98 when she saw a little girl crying with the company of Mellors, the keeper. When she's referred to as Constance, her bravery in facing the keeper is emphasized through her asking the question "What's the matter? Why is she crying?" in a demanding tone. After that, however, the keeper answered her "callously" and she felt "as if he had hit her in the face". At that moment, her name is immediately switched to Connie as soon as her fear is being told through her face changing color. Moreover, on the next page, "Connie" also had the realization that Mellors does not view her as someone worth listening to. In the narrator's words, "the man did not respect her" (p. 99).

The transition from Constance to Connie happens rather quickly and it happens just between the changing of her demeanor in front of the keeper, which is why I argue that the transition is made on purpose to show the difference between two of her identities: Constance, the assertive, and Connie, the disrespected. There is also the matter of another person who goes by the name "Connie". She's a girl named Connie Mellors, the keeper's young daughter. It may seem to be a coincidence, but it is most likely not, considering the circumstances in which both of them first met, as well as how both "Connie"s are treated by Mellors. Connie Mellors is not respected as a daughter and Constance "Connie" Chatterley is not respected as a woman. Mellors called his daughter a "false little bitch". Constance does not hold any respect for Connie Mellors either. She thinks of the little girl as a "spoilt, false little female" and, after she finished her visit to the grandmother's house, she was "heartily relieved to get away from the contact" (p. 101).

At one point in her marriage, there is also an instance where Constance, who is referred to as "Connie" during that part, thinks of herself as a "hostess" whom men really like. She doesn't consider the hostess a true part of herself, though, but rather as a role she has to play as. Playing the hostess has been done very often that it is "almost second nature" to her, but "decidedly second". This means that no matter how much being that woman feels familiar, Constance still wants to separate her *self* from that identity.

That separation of identities also happens during the time when Constance makes a distinction between her as a person, which is equivalent to being a woman, and her as a female. The distinction is seen by how she ponders about her strictly business "relationship" with Mr. Linley, the general manager of the collieries, an elderly man who is acquainted with Clifford. She refers to every other woman as a woman, while she talks about herself as a "female". "She was only really a female to him," (p. 169) she said. It might be a different case if she simply said that she is a female while also referring to other women as female, but it's not the case for Connie. Besides making the distinction, she also puts "only really" which carries the implication that being a female is somehow lesser than a woman for Mr. Linley.

However, Connie thinks of her relationship with Mr. Linley as a better situation instead. The reason behind it is because Connie has never had any men who are kind to her as a female. "Men were very kind to the person she was, but rather cruel to the female," she thinks (p. 169). Connie is treated kindly by men around her when she is a "person", either Constance Reid or Lady Chatterley, but it is not the case for her "womb". For Mr. Linley, however, it's the opposite. Neither Constance Reid nor Lady Chatterley is visible in his eyes. What he sees when he sees Connie is not Constance Reid nor Lady Chatterley, but "her female" or, in other words, her physical features such as "her loins or her breasts".

Based on the entirety of Constance's contemplation about her self and her body above, it can be inferred that, when she refers to "female", she means the organs by which she is defined as a human which (not who) is not a male. Referring to a self as "female" implies the "reducing" of one's identity from a person to simply the person's biological organs.

D. Conclusion

To summarize, the way people see Constance Chatterley in the novel heavily depends on what name she is referred to, either by the narrator or by the characters in the novel. The difference between "Constance" and "Connie" indicates her position if compared to the men around her while "Constance Reid", "Constance Chatterley", and "Lady Chatterley" are significant in showing her position in society. Constance as a woman and Constance as a female also shows the difference in how she thinks she is seen by men.

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