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## Infidelity as Social Resistance and Class Struggle in Tonnerre's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (2022) Movie

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### ABSTRACT

The film *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (2022) depicts a forbidden relationship within the context of class differences and gender inequality. This study aims to explore how adultery is portrayed as an act of social resistance and how class conflict is revealed in the interactions between Connie Chatterley and Oliver Mellors. This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach with a sociological perspective. Data were drawn from selected scenes and dialogues in the film and analyzed through the lenses of literary sociology, contemporary intimacy theory, and class theory. The results indicate that Connie and Clifford's marriage is portrayed as an aristocratic institution that stifles emotional intimacy and drives Connie to seek freedom outside it. Her relationship with Mellors not only violates marital norms but also challenges rigid class boundaries. In this context, the affair is seen as both a form of social resistance and an opportunity for personal transformation. This study concludes that the affair in the film functions not only as a violation of norms but also as a reflection of resistance against class structures and social boundaries in modern society.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Film is more than just entertainment; it is also a cultural medium that reflects social realities, power dynamics, and community norms. In sociological literary studies, film is regarded as a social text shaped by historical context and social structures[1]. Through its narrative and visual imagery, film often addresses issues such as class inequality, gender roles, and social order.

The film *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (2022) explores marriage, class differences, and individual freedom. The relationship between Connie and Clifford is portrayed as an emotionally distant bond, constrained by social norms and reflecting elite values. This

situation raises the central issue of how social structures, particularly class hierarchies, influence personal relationships.

Against this backdrop, this study aims to analyze how infidelity is portrayed in the film and its connection to class dynamics and individual freedom. This study also seeks to understand how the film reconstructs meaning by adapting the literary work into a modern cinematic context.[2]

The method used in this study is a qualitative descriptive approach with a sociological perspective [3]. The collected data includes approximately 10–15 selected scenes, along with key dialogues that depict emotional conflict, interclass interactions, and relationship dynamics. The data was analyzed using literary sociology[4], modern intimacy theory[5], and class theory[4], [6]

The findings indicate that the film portrays marriage as a structured social institution that can constrain emotional relationships. The relationship between Connie and Mellors reflects a shift from strict social norms toward deeper, more emotional interactions. This dynamic highlights how individual actions are intertwined with a broader social context. In conclusion, the film presents a representation of personal relationships as part of a social process influenced by class and cultural values. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of how films can be analyzed as social texts and how intimate relationships can reflect broader social structures.

Films are generally regarded as cultural vehicles that both reflect and shape social reality, encompassing power, social class, and gender dynamics. From a sociocritical perspective, films can be viewed as social texts influenced by historical contexts and ideological forces. Therefore, films serve not only as a source of entertainment but also as an arena for the production and negotiation of social meanings.[7]

The film *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (2022) presents a story focused on married life, class stratification, and emotional bonds. As an adaptation of D. H. Lawrence's novel, this film offers a new context to the original story through a modern visual presentation. Rather than merely transposing the narrative, this adaptation includes a reinterpretation influenced by current social and cultural conditions.[2]

In the film, the interaction between Connie Chatterley and her husband, Clifford, is depicted as a relationship with a severed emotional connection and a rigid structure. Their marriage reflects aristocratic values that prioritize status over intimacy. This raises a crucial question: how are personal relationships, particularly in the context of infidelity, influenced by broader social structures such as class hierarchies and social demands?

Previous research on *Lady Chatterley's Lover* has largely focused on the literary text, analyzing themes such as class differences and cultural dualism, as well as class identity through language and sexuality. However, these studies rarely examine film adaptations as standalone cultural texts. More importantly, critical sociological analyses of the representation of infidelity in film adaptations within social structures and class dynamics remain limited [8].

Given these gaps, this study aims to analyze how infidelity is portrayed in film as a socially constructed phenomenon and how class relations are depicted through the interactions between Connie and Mellors. Using a sociological approach, this study seeks to

contribute to the development of literary and film studies, particularly in understanding film adaptations as a medium that not only retells a story but also reconstructs social meaning.[9]

To address this issue, this study employs a sociological approach, drawing on theories of modern intimacy and social class. Modern relationships emphasize emotional equality and individual autonomy, while social class structures influence interpersonal interactions and social relationships. These theoretical perspectives serve as analytical tools to examine how infidelity is portrayed.

## 2. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method to explore depictions of infidelity and class dynamics in the film *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (2022). The study combines sociological and semiotic approaches to understand the social meanings and symbolism present in the film. The sociological approach analyzes how class structures and social interactions influence characters, while the semiotic approach interprets visual symbols, body language, and cinematic elements that shape meaning.

The data sources consist of scenes and dialogues selected from the film. This selection is based on specific criteria:

- 1) scenes that depict emotional interactions between characters,
- 2) scenes that illustrate class differences and social structures,
- 3) dialogues that reflect relationship dynamics and social tensions, both explicitly and implicitly. Approximately 10–15 key scenes were selected as the primary material for analysis.

The analysis was conducted using a thematic and interpretive framework. First, the selected scenes were grouped based on recurring themes such as emotional distance, interclass interactions, and individual transformation. Second, the data were coded according to these themes to identify patterns in the representation of social relationships and class structures. Finally, the analysis results were interpreted using sociological theory and semiotic analysis to describe how meaning is constructed in the film.

To ensure the reliability of the research, this study employed credibility and triangulation methods. Credibility was achieved through repeated viewings of the film and careful data analysis. Triangulation was conducted by comparing visual analysis, dialogue interpretation, and theoretical perspectives to strengthen the validity of the research findings.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. Results

This section presents an analysis of specific moments in the film *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (2022) to explore how the themes of infidelity and interclass relationships are shaped through narrative and visual elements.

#### a) Upper-Class Marriage as a Constraint

The interaction between Connie and Clifford is depicted as a relationship that appears emotionally distant and structured by social norms. Rather than functioning as an intimate

bond, their marriage reflects an institutional system shaped by social class expectations. This situation aligns with the view that modern relationships require emotional exchange, which seems absent in their interactions.

From a semiotic perspective, this distance is reinforced through visual elements such as physical separation, minimal eye contact, and rigid body postures. These elements indicate a lack of emotional connection and hierarchical differences. Clifford is often depicted in a position of power and stillness, while Connie appears passive and confined. This visual composition suggests that the marriage functions within a rigid social framework and is not a mutually beneficial relationship.

Thus, the loss of emotional intimacy is not merely a personal issue but reflects the influence of aristocratic norms that prioritize status over relationships. This condition serves as the structural foundation shaping Connie's future actions.



Picture 1, Connie and Clifford Conversation Scene

Based on the dialogue in the image above.

Connie: *“But we both know that this marriage has long been unhappy because only you make the rules and I obey, but you don't give me a share of affection or kindness. You only care about your radio, your books, and your image in front of society.”*

#### **b) Interclass Relationships as a Breach of Norms**

The bond between Connie and Mellors symbolizes a major shift from a rigid hierarchy toward more equal interaction. Unlike Clifford, Mellors communicates with Connie directly and is more emotionally attuned. This relationship reflects a different relational dynamic that challenges class boundaries.

In the context of class theory, this relationship can be seen as a violation of existing class practices. The interaction between an upper-class woman and a working-class man shakes the social structure that separates them. This bond reflects an effort toward equality that contradicts prevailing class principles.

Visually, this transgression is emphasized through natural settings such as forests and open spaces. These environments starkly contrast with the closed, formal spaces of the aristocracy, symbolizing freedom and the collapse of existing social boundaries. The use of

natural light and the physical closeness between the characters reinforce a sense of sincerity and emotional openness.



Picture 2, Connie and Mellors Walking Scene

Based on the dialogue in the image above.

Oliver Mellors: “*I, Oliver, take you, Connie, in strength and freedom, and also in future happiness.*”

### c) Adultery as a Process of Self-Transformation

Adultery in this film is not merely an ethical transgression but also a stage through which Connie revises her identity. Her relationship with Mellors offers her the opportunity to form emotional bonds and achieve independence that she did not find in her marriage.

From a sociological perspective, this reflects a shift toward modern intimacy, where relationships are sustained by shared emotional fulfillment rather than mere social obligation. In this context, the affair functions as a response to existing limitations rather than merely a personal desire.

From a semiotic perspective, this transformation manifests in changes to Connie’s body language, movements, and interactions. She appears more expressive, active, and engaged with her surroundings. The camera angles shift from distant, static shots to more dynamic, close-up shots, emphasizing the emotional development she is experiencing.

## 3.2. Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the intimate relationship in the film *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* (2022) cannot be viewed solely as a personal or emotional matter but should be understood within the broader social context. The depiction of Connie’s marriage and her relationship with Mellors reflects how class hierarchies and social expectations shape individual experiences. This supports the sociological view that personal relationships are heavily influenced by their social context.

From a theoretical perspective, this study expands our understanding of modern intimacy by asserting that emotional fulfillment is not merely personal but also a response to existing constraints. Although modern intimacy emphasizes equality and mutual

satisfaction in relationships, the film demonstrates that the class system often hinders these conditions. In this context, infidelity is portrayed not merely as an act of desire but as a reaction to social inequality and emotional barriers. These findings contribute to the development of sociological theory by demonstrating how intimate relationships can serve as a space for negotiation between individuals and social structures.

Compared with previous research, this study offers a different perspective. Previous research has tended to focus on the novel version of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, emphasizing class differences and cultural duality, as well as the construction of identity through language and sexuality. However, such studies rarely address film adaptations as cultural and visual texts. This research fills that gap by explaining how cinematic elements—such as setting, body language, and visual composition—help shape meaning. Thus, this study not only complements existing findings but also expands the dialogue into the field of film studies.

Nevertheless, it is important to critically question whether an affair can always be viewed as an act of resistance. In certain contexts, an affair may actually reinforce existing power structures or reflect personal dissatisfaction without automatically challenging social structures. In the film, although Connie's relationship with Mellors can be seen as transcending class boundaries, it does not entirely dismantle the existing social hierarchy. This demonstrates that infidelity has limitations as a form of resistance and must be viewed as a context-dependent phenomenon.

Thus, this study affirms that infidelity should not be generalized as a form of social resistance applicable to all. Instead, such actions must be analyzed within specific social, cultural, and relational contexts. By employing this critical perspective, this study offers deeper insights into how individual actions are shaped and interact with broader social forces.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the emotional bonds in the film *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (2022) are shaped by a broader social framework, particularly the class system and the norms of aristocratic marriage. Rather than being viewed solely as a personal or moral issue, infidelity is portrayed as part of a complex interplay between individual actions and existing social constraints.

The primary theoretical contribution of this study lies in the argument that infidelity can function as a context-dependent means of social negotiation, with personal relationships serving as a venue for both resisting and reproducing social structures.

This study also emphasizes the importance of examining film adaptations as autonomous cultural works that actively reconstruct social meanings through narrative and visual elements. By integrating sociological and semiotic perspectives, this study offers a more comprehensive approach to understanding how films depict social issues. The implications of this study highlight that literary and film studies can benefit from a sociological approach in understanding personal relationships. By analyzing infidelity through the lens of social structure, this study offers deeper insights into how broader social conditions influence individual behavior. This approach can also enrich discussions in

cultural and social studies, particularly by helping in understanding how films depict social inequality and resistance.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. This analysis covers only one film adaptation and focuses primarily on specific scenes and dialogues. Additionally, the study employs a specific theoretical framework, which may not fully capture all possible interpretations of the film.

However, this study is limited to a single film and a specific theoretical perspective. Therefore, further research is recommended to investigate these themes across various film adaptations, genres, and cultural contexts. Further research could also involve audience understanding or interdisciplinary approaches to provide deeper insights into how infidelity and class relations are understood in modern society. Future research is encouraged to explore similar themes using different theoretical approaches or by comparing multiple film adaptations or literary works. Further research could also analyze audience reactions or cultural reception to provide a broader understanding of how infidelity is perceived within diverse social contexts. For the general public, this study contributes to a more critical perspective on film viewing, particularly in underscoring that the personal relationships depicted in the media are often shaped by existing social structures and cultural values.

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