

Title: *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and the Sexual Metaphysics of Soviet Utopianism  
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Abstract:

Its frank depiction of sex quickly landed its author into an obscenity trial, but D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is a novel about more than the "down and dirty," that is, the mere prosaics of sex—it is a meditation on sex in the modern era, its place in the life of the modern (wo)man, and its role in the (perfect?) future of the human race. Most curiously, the novel, written only ten years after the Bolshevik Revolution, appears to be in direct dialogue with the sexual politics of Soviet utopianism. The specter of Bolshevism looms large throughout, as Lawrence's characters identify the word with both a devotion to rationalization and progress and the neutering of the human subject. His protagonist finds herself caught in what would become the defining characteristic of the nascent socialist-realist project—the spontaneity/consciousness dialectic, but her goal becomes the inverse of that of socialist realism, as she hopes to shed her consciousness (in her view, a disease of modernity) toward spontaneity. For her, sex is "a creative act that is far more than procreative."

With this project I hope to shed some light on the reception of Soviet sexual politics and metaphysics (laid out so expertly, for example, in Eric Naiman's *Sex in Public*) abroad. I intend to demonstrate that Lawrence is arguing against the Soviet cult of the machine and the de-sexed human subject. The real holy grail of the project would be to find the direct link between Lawrence and some Soviet authors of his day (or perhaps, the turn-of-the-century philosophers that likewise influenced Soviet sexual utopianism; that quote about the creative/procreative act, for example, rings especially Berdiaevian).