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The concept of androgyny in the novels of D. H. Lawrence

by

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We are tigers, we are lambs. Yet are we also neither tigers nor lambs, nor immune sluggish sheep. We are beyond all this, this relative life of uneasy balancing. We are roses of pure and lovely being. This we are ultimately, beyond all dark and light. Yes, we are tigers, we are lambs, both in our various hour. We are both these and more. Because we are both these, because we are lambs, frail and exposed, because we are lions, furious and devouring, because we are both, and have the courage to be both, in our separate hour, therefore we transcend both, we pass into a beyond, we are roses of perfect consummation.

"The Reality of Peace"

Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D. H. Lawrence, p. 690
The dialectical nature of D. H. Lawrence's art is reflected in his view that "everything, even individuality itself, depends on relationship" and that to "remove the opposition" would mean "a collapse, a sudden crumbling into universal nothingness." Lawrence critic H. M. Daleski points out that the dialectical model that Lawrence uses as his construct for the world is based on Lawrence's interpretation of masculine and feminine elements and that "the male-female opposition is not merely an instance of a dual reality but its underlying principle." This fits neatly with the Jungian interpretation that the psyche is structured in polarities and that "these polarities--conscious/unconscious, flesh/spirit, reason/instinct, active/passive--are most often characterized in masculine/feminine terms...." Seen as archetypal structures, these masculine and feminine components of the psyche come to symbolize certain modes of behavior and ways to understanding. What Lawrence was trying to realize in his many essays and in his fiction was his need to order these opposite (though not necessarily opposing) forces of the masculine and the feminine in an urge to attain a "wholeness." For, says Lawrence, "what we suffer from today is the lack of a sense of our own wholeness, or completeness, which is peace."

The purpose of this essay is to reveal D. H. Lawrence's urge to wholeness as defined by a condition called "androgyny." Under this condition masculinity and femininity are not seen as products of anatomy or as results of cultural differentiation, but as "psychic elements" which can never be absolutely known--only understood as symbolic forms. This essay is divided into two parts. The first discusses androgyny and its implications for
literary analysis--specifically as it relates to Lawrence's quest for wholeness. I mention Jung because the archetypal structures he lays out help clarify Lawrence's view of the masculine and feminine principles, and because Jung's notion of "contrasexuality" is crucial to an understanding of the whole self. In the second part of this essay I will attempt to uncover the concept of androgyny implicit in Lawrence's novels as evident in the androgynous personalities of three of his fictional heroines: Ursula Brangwen in The Rainbow, Kate Leslie in The Plumed Serpent and Nellie March in The Fox. I have limited the major analysis to Lawrence's female characters for reasons of brevity and because the male writers' use of the feminine persona has special significance for androgyny itself.
CHAPTER 1

Androgyny implies that "the characters of the sexes and the human impulses expressed by men and women are not rigidly assigned." The androgynous personality would possess many characteristics traditionally considered "masculine" or "feminine," without regard to the actual gender of the individual; androgyny suggests individual choice "without regard to propriety or custom" and yields the possibility of an "unlimited personality." Individual men might be accepted as nurturing without being considered "weaklings"; individual women might be accepted as dominating without being considered "castraters." The authenticity of their personalities would not necessarily be related to their genders.

In a society in which many intelligent people are trying to minimize sexual differences in order to create a world whereby an individual's behavior is not prescribed or defined by his or her gender, the emergence of a condition called "androgyny" is met with favorable response. In her book, *Towards a Recognition of Androgyny*, Carolyn Heilbrun states that "our future salvation lies in a movement away from sexual polarization and the prison of gender toward a world in which individual roles and the modes of personal behavior can be freely chosen." Whether or not one agrees that the answer to salvation lies in the acceptance of such a condition, the "recognition" of androgyny offers a new interpretative basis for literary study. Most importantly, it challenges the Freudian precept to which we have clung for so long, that "anatomy is destiny." The recognition of androgyny enables us to examine the characters we read about with a far less limited perspective.

As a literature reflects the mythic ideals of a society, so it also
creates them. When we talk about androgyny as an **ideal** in literature, we
are not merely recognizing a lack of sexual stereotypes among the charac-
ters in particular novels, but are establishing a paradigm for transcending
all dualities.

Heilbrun mentions Joseph Campbell's account of the "anti-androgynous"
world in *The Masks of God*. This is characterized by the "setting apart of
all pairs of opposites--male and female, life and death, true and false,
good and evil."¹⁰ In this world the pairs are seen in conflict, warring
with each other. In contrast, the androgynous view suggests harmony and
relationship rather than discord and polarization. There is represented in
the androgynous ideal the concept of balance, a search for equilibrium, and
the recognition of the mutual enhancement of antithetical characteristics
when in harmony. So there emerges, as Alan Watts describes the Yin-Yang
pair symbolized in the *Book of Changes*, a "perpetual interplay" and a "view
of life which sees its worth and point, not as a struggle for constant
ascent but as a dance. Virtue and harmony consist not in accentuating the
positive, but in maintaining a dynamic balance."¹¹

This is, of course, a positive interpretation of the androgynous state
of being, and perhaps I should just mention here an opposing perspective.
The negative view counters that androgyny would result not in a "harmony"
but only in a bland neutralization by ultimately cancelling out all sexual
characteristics until women and men are virtually indistinguishable. We
would end up then with only boring uniformity, or--taking the negative to
the extreme--a total asexuality, a perverse "sexlessness." This view is
revealed, for example, in T. S. Eliot's depiction in *The Wasteland* of the
blind seer, Tiresias, as the "old man with wrinkled breasts" and by Anne
Sexton in *Transformations* where the fairy-tale character Rumplestiltskin is seen as an androgyne who is a "...monster of despair...all decay" and who speaks with a "tiny no-sex voice." Both of these poems connect androgyny with the author's larger themes of impotence, sterility, and despair in the modern world.

I can only offer that while this interpretation may be metaphorically lively, it presents no new beginnings for mythopoetic analysis and is finally less complex and less intriguing than the androgynous ideal of the "unlimited" personality. Since androgyny in the latter view implies following one's natural inclinations rather than societal dictums, and implies choice rather than prescription, the result would yield not uniformity and stagnation, but variety and endless possibilities for change in open-ended combinations. Androgyny in the positive view is life-enhancing and even erotic. Watts explains that

the "square" or profane interpretation of this [hermaphroditic] imagery is that holiness is sexlessness, and, similarly, that transcendence of the opposites, such as pleasure-and-pain or life-and-death, is mere detachment from physical existence. But if holiness is wholeness, the meaning of this imagery must be plus rather than minus, suggesting that innocence is not the absence of the erotic, but its fulfillment....

...Hermaphroditic imagery suggests, rather, that there is a state of consciousness in which the erotic no longer has to be sought or pursued, because it is always present in its totality. In this state all relationship and all experience is erotic....12

The androgynous ideal suggests that the relationship of opposites is more than the individual elements; the whole has an energizing power and a vitality that is absent when the elements are separate from one another and unable to connect.

Of course, it is finally impossible to discuss androgyny, even as an "ideal," without defining something called "masculine and feminine princi-
ples" (remembering that these as principles should not be confused with men and women). To Lawrence, "every single impulse is either male or female, distinct." The "complete consciousness" is of both. Lawrence's "Study of Thomas Hardy" is more an explication of these impulses than an examination of Hardy's work. Daleski has conveniently abstracted the male and female principles that Lawrence describes and, rather than quote lengthy passages from the Hardy essay, I will simply present an abbreviated portion of his list:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Movement</td>
<td>Stability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change</td>
<td>Immutability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Permanence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Eternality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiplicity and diversity</td>
<td>Oneness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Feeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing</td>
<td>Being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utterance</td>
<td>Gratification through the senses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstraction</td>
<td>Enjoyment through the senses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consciousness</td>
<td>Instinct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brain</td>
<td>Body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light</td>
<td>Dark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement toward discovery</td>
<td>Movement toward origin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For Lawrence, progress and civilization are associated with male "mental" consciousness and the movement toward discovery. Isolated from the feminine sensibility, male assertiveness tends to the misuse of power; abstract "cerebral" concerns dominate, untempered by the warmth of human feeling and emotion.

Instinct (or "blood consciousness," as Lawrence calls it, although it is, in more conventional frameworks, linked with the unconscious) is a female component which is characterized by spontaneity and sensation. It is
essentially "anti-culture." Unchecked by masculine reason and control, the feminine sensibility yields to lust and depravity.

The male essence can be more easily "seen" or concretized by conventional opinion, institutions, and organizations. The female essence is more mysterious; the feminine perception is intuitive and not often comprehensible or translatable.

Lawrence's male and female principles are similar to the symbolic concepts that Jung describes as the anima (the feminine component of the man's psyche) and the animus (the masculine component of the woman's psyche). The anima "expresses the so-called feminine qualities of tenderness, sensitivity, desirousness, seduction, indefiniteness, feeling, receptivity...." The animus "expresses qualities traditionally associated with the man's capacity to penetrate, separate, take charge...to articulate and express meaning."15

Jung notes the "projection-making factors of the anima and animus--the 'woman' who is in every man, the 'man' who is in every woman." The well-balanced human being (what Jung calls the "integrated individual") is the "contrasexual" person who is "consciously related to internal male and female elements which operate in polarity to each other...."16 For Lawrence, "wholeness" is achieved by the relation between these principles within the individual psyche. He writes:

A man [or a woman] who is well-balanced between the male and the female in his own nature, is, as a rule, happy, easy to mate, easy to satisfy, and content to exist. It is only a disproportion, or a dissatisfaction, which makes the man struggle into articulation.17

The characters which Lawrence portrays are struggling, but their urge is toward "wholeness" or "integration"--toward the androgynous ideal.
I have encountered two major problems in the writing of this essay; hopefully, I have come to terms with both. The first is that it is difficult to concretize what is essentially, on Lawrence's part, an amorphous vision, and perhaps an attempt to devise a theoretical treatise is incompatible with the nature of such a vision. While Lawrence's view of the masculine and feminine principles can easily be defined, his own understanding of the "whole" self is never actually made explicit—in either his fiction or his essays. The whole self is not fully seen, but only "glimpsed," and then only in symbolic terms: twin stars in relationship, the Holy Ghost, roses of perfect consummation. In presenting what I take to be the androgynous nature of the "whole" self, I have often used appropriate Lawrencian vocabulary to discuss the texts, qualifying what I felt was overly general or blatantly ambiguous. Still, I have tried never to see the fiction primarily as a vehicle to supply data for a theory; there remains always the respect for the ineffability of visions.¹⁸

The other difficulty demands a greater explanation. It concerns my inability to give "equal time" (or, as it turns out, "equal space") to both the male and female principles. It was assumed that the masculine and feminine essences were just different; one was not necessarily "better" than the other. Yet, in Lawrence's work, the matriarchal consciousness is usually more vivid and alive, more appealing. In the other readings—on archetypal structures, on male-female duality and on androgyny itself—there was the suggestion (however faint or disguised) that the feminine principle was indeed superior to the masculine one. The more outspoken critics defend their favoritism as a compensating factor. Heilbrun writes:
If "feminine" resounds through this essay with the echoes of lost virtue, while "masculine" thuds with the accusation of misused power, this is a reflection on our current value, not on the intrinsic virtues of either "masculine" or "feminine" impulses. Humanity requires both.  

Ann Ulanov states that attention to the feminine component of the psyche and a recognition of its worth is past due:

Because we have so neglected the feminine and its psychology, we are incompetent to deal adequately with the male personality or the male psychology that has so dominated our world, shaping our style of business practice, politics, our conceptions of value, and of civilization itself. We are unable to deal with masculine psychology unless we give vigorous and searching attention to the feminine....

We may conclude that the extra support given to the female principle comes about primarily as a reaction to society's blanket acceptance of the superiority of the masculine principles, and a recognition that the latter reign almost unchecked by feminine influences. This need to counterbalance the masculine mode of life is revealed in the history of feminist social criticism.

One of the most powerful treatises on Women and Society--Margaret Fuller's *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*--concerned itself not only with the problem of gaining status for women, but also with the problem of gaining status for the feminine perception and expression. On a metaphysical level, Fuller believed that the male and female elements were part of a transcendental organic unity which had heretofore been denied to us because of the imbalance of patriarchy. In the practical realm of politics and community, Fuller believed that the influence of the feminine on the already existing power structures would produce a higher moral law. She saw the feminine element as still undefined, since it had been both neglected and oppressed; thus, she proposed that special attention be paid to its develop-
mente. This consideration is prior to establishing a unity which can be seen as androgyny. Ultimately, corporality is a hindrance to the emergence of this unity. Fuller writes that

male and female represent the two sides of the great radical dualism. But in fact they are perpetually passing into one another. Fluid hardens to solid, solid rushes to fluid. There is no wholly masculine man, no purely feminine woman. 21

More than half a century later, writer Virginia Woolf posited "two sexes in the mind" as a kind of androgynous ideal; she thought that thinking of one sex "as distinct" from the other was an effort. Yet Woolf also maintained that the male and female elements (or "powers," as she refers to them in A Room of One's Own) were radically different. Woolf saw these opposite elements in conflict with each other in our society--both with men and women "warring" against each other, and with the masculine and feminine elements "warring" within ourselves. Essentially, Woolf saw the world as "man-made" and so much the worse for it, because in a "male-dominated society, not only are the women oppressed, but also that which is considered female is suppressed." 22

The celebration of the harmonizing influence of the feminine sensibility seen in much of Woolf's fiction (the novels Mrs. Dalloway and To the Lighthouse, for example) is shown as a reaction to male excess. What Woolf ultimately sought was some kind of reconciliation that would put the world back into harmony and help integrate the individual.

For Lawrence, the world is so bullied by industrialism, education and organized religion (seen as the product of the male qualities of will-to-motion, knowledge, and service for the public good) that integration would be met only by a return to female principle. The emergence of the feminine
consciousness and a recognition of its value is not the ultimate goal. It is a step which is necessary and prior to the emergence of the androgynous personality. About his last book (Lady Chatterley's Lover) Lawrence wrote, "Life is only bearable when the mind and the body are in harmony, and there is a natural balance between them, and each has a natural respect for the other."23

Yet another explanation for the depiction of the superior nature of the feminine element is in the connection between the feminine and literature itself.24 Jung writes that "the creative process has a feminine quality, and the creative work arises from the unconscious depths—we might say from the realm of the mothers."25 Lawrence distinguishes between "knowing in terms of apartness, which is mental, rational, scientific" and the feminine wisdom of "knowing in terms of togetherness, which is religious and poetic."26 In this view, the feminine principle is vitally connected to and indeed responsible for the creative or artistic process.

Some of the associations of the feminine characteristic include imaginings and inspiration, ecstasy and epiphany, rather than empirical or logical thought processes. Ulanov writes that in the feminine component of the psyche

ideas "seize" consciousness or "arise"...; this kind of understanding is concerned with what generally gives meaning, rather than with facts or ideas, with organic growth rather than with mechanical processes or chains of causation.27

The intuitive and inspirational quality of the female sensibility reveals itself often in symbol and image. The masculine characteristic of formulating objective criteria is more suited to documentary than to poetry.

The linear and empirical nature of the masculine element also functions
well in science, where data is observed and recorded until a conclusion is reached. There is a "building-up" process, piece by piece, until a "whole" is made. In the feminine quality of understanding, the ideas are not "thought out"; the "whole" is seen as an immediate illumination and then the perception is brought forth "into something concrete and fully realized." This feminine apprehension can perhaps be comprehended by the illustration of watching a person emerge from a fog. The whole person is seen at once—not first a foot or a knee—and then, as the figure approaches, that whole becomes clearer and clearer and more and more completely detailed.

The feminine principle perceives time as "qualitative rather than quantitative...as periodic and rhythmic, as waxing and waning, as favorable or unfavorable." Many writers and philosophers who make the distinction between "clock" time and "experienced" time are actually making a distinction, if we accept the archetypal structures laid out for us by the myth critics and myth makers, between masculine (chronological) time and feminine ("felt") time. Although each may be equally valuable, they serve decidedly different functions, and in the artistic realm, the feminine force holds sway. In Lawrence's final work, Apocalypse, he acknowledges the limitations of linear time, and laments the loss of image-making "female" time:

To appreciate the pagan manner of thought we have to drop our own manner of on-and-on-and-on, from a start to a finish, and allow the mind to move in cycles, or to flit here and there over a cluster of images. Our idea of time as a continuity in an eternal straight line has crippled our consciousness crudely. The pagan conception of time as moving in cycles is much freer; it allows movement upwards and downwards, and allows for a complete change of the state of mind, at any moment.

Lawrence's use of the feminine persona can be seen with regard to the connection between the feminine and the work of literature:
A reasonable explanation, but not the only one perhaps, is that Lawrence, like Jung or indeed like Joyce, thought the creative principle feminine. If that is so, his questing girl becomes the artist's deepest self in search of a subject and a place.33

The "questing girl" as a metaphor for the artist's own search is particularly significant with respect to the kind of woman who inhabits Lawrence's fictive world. Lawrencian women are often a good deal more interesting and more durable than the men with whom they pair; they are complex and strong-minded figures, looking for something better than is offered them by their present conditions.

Heilbrun makes a distinction between the traditional "heroine" whose circumstances are usually controlled by the actions of other characters ("she is the woman the hero pursues or loves, or both, the woman he marries or doesn't marry."34) or defined for her by conventional female role, and the "Woman as Hero" whose heroic qualities are universally significant.

Heilbrun suggests that the woman hero of modern literature is sustained by some sense of her own autonomy as she contemplates and searches for a destiny; she does not wait to be swept up by life as a girl is swept up in a waltz.35

This kind of female protagonist is an androgynous individual who must employ certain masculine aptitudes (most significantly, independence and will-to-action) to attain heroic stature.

The female characters in Lawrence's novels are "women heroes" rather than "heroines," according to the preceding definition, because they all make significant choices concerning their own destinies and because, although these choices may involve men (and they almost always do), the woman's action and consciousness is never peripheral or subordinate in the novel.
The theme of the hero in search, a common enough literary motif, is identical to that of the "questing girl." In *The Rainbow* it is focused in the character of Ursula Brangwen, who actively seeks a new world. In *The Lost Girl*, Alvina Houghton undergoes a rite de passage of sexual liberation after she rejects her middle-class values by running away to Italy. In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Lady Constance Chatterley seeks to fulfill herself by casting aside her husband, her title, and the respect of the conventional community following her affair with the game-keeper, Mellors. In these, and in other works, Lawrence imbues his women with a certain power and a sense of autonomy not associated with traditional "heroines," whose characteristic mainstays are more often quiet strength, patience, and a stoical acceptance of their fates.  

The male writer, Lawrence in particular, chose the woman as hero "not out of any urge to fight the feminist battle, but because the woman's place in the universe provided the proper metaphor for the place of the heroic in a work of literary art" and because "the peculiar tension that exists between her apparent freedom and her relegation to a constrained destiny is a tension experienced also by men in the modern world...[by] modern man striving to express himself, to be himself, within mechanical society...."  

The androgynous nature of the literary work itself is at least partially associated with the characters in the work and the masculine and feminine principles that they embody. Lawrence's notion that "there is the female apart from woman as we know, and male apart from man" is realized within the individual characters in his novels. John Middleton Murray's following criticism of Lawrencian characterization can also be understood as an unintentional recognition of androgyny:
We can discern no individuality whatever in the denizens of Mr. Lawrence's world. We should have thought that we should be able to distinguish between male and female, at least. But no! Remove the names, remove the sedulous catalogue of unnecessary clothing...and man and woman are as indistinguishable as octopods in an aquarium tank.39

Not only does Lawrence not "distinguish" between his male and female characters, but often his inclination is to affect a reversal by inculcating his men characters with predominantly "female" principles and his women characters with predominantly "male" principles. The intentional reversal of what may be considered biologically "appropriate" (especially since Lawrence himself took such pains to define what he meant by masculine and feminine elements) reveals that the male-female duality which Lawrence continually confronts is not defined by actual individual gender. I discuss this reversal later with regard to The Rainbow, but we can note that it appears even in Lawrence's earliest works. In Sons and Lovers, Mr. and Mrs. Morel are characterized by their identification with the opposite-sex elements, and, indeed, their original attraction is kindled by this "otherness":

Gertrude Coppard had watched him, fascinated.
He was so full of color and animation, his voice ran so easily into comic grotesque, he was so ready and so pleasant with everybody. Her own father had a rich fund of humor, but it was satiric. This man's was different: soft, non-intellectual, warm, a kind of gambolling.

...She herself was opposite. She loved ideas, and was considered very intellectual. What she liked most of all was an argument on religion or philosophy or politics with some educated man. (Sons and Lovers, p. 11)

Unfortunately, the "oppositeness" which first yielded the attraction is also the cause of marital failure. Mrs. Morel's rational, intellectual, ambitious nature thwarts and eventually represses her husband's spontaneous, sensual (female) self. Soon she thought him "lacking as a man" and alien-
nates the family against him. The final portrayal of Mr. Morel as a pathetic and irresponsible drunk who brutalizes his family is vindicated by later Lawrencean heroes (Mellors, in particular) who allow expression of their "feminine" selves.

So many of the love relationships which Lawrence describes in his fiction are combative and destructive. In *Sons and Lovers* the opposing natures of the Morels clash; because of the difference, the whole course of the marriage (except for the early months of sexual infatuation) is seen as a "fearful, bloody battle." In other love battles there is not so much a clash as a struggle. The lovers are contestants in a battle of wills, pitted against each other in a bid for power, possession, and control. The love relationship is seen as dangerous and precarious. There is the kind of "soul-sucking" love of Miriam for Paul (*Sons and Lovers*) or Will Bradshaw for his wife Anna (*The Rainbow*) which is characterized by an overdependence and a suffocating need of one for the other, followed by the other's need to break away. Miriam tells Paul that their love has been "one long battle...you fighting away from me." (p. 310)

Lawrence also portrays love relationships which are characterized by violence and "obliteration" of the individual--Gerald and Gudrun in *Women in Love*, Ursula and Anton Skrebensky in *The Rainbow* are examples. It is these kinds of love of which Lawrence is so wary, even fearful. Birkin's lengthy meditation in *Women in Love*, which concerns a need for individuality, expresses this fear:

On the whole, he hated sex, it was such a limitation. It was sex that turned a man into a broken half of a couple, the woman into the other broken half, and he wanted to be single in himself, the woman single in herself....

He wanted so much to be free, not under the compulsion of any
need for unification, or tortured by unsatisfied desire....
And he wanted to be with Ursula as free as with himself, single and clear and cool, yet balanced, polarised with her. The merging, the clutching, the mingling of love was become madly abhorrent to him....

It was intolerable, this possession at the hands of a woman. Always a man must be considered as the broken-off fragment of a woman, and the sex was the still-aching scar of the laceration. Man must be added on to a woman, before he had any real place or wholeness.

And why? Why should we consider ourselves, men and women, as broken fragments of one whole? Rather we are singling away into purity and clear being, of things that were mixed ...two single beings constellated together like two stars.

(Women in Love, pp. 186-88)

Birkin rejects the Platonic notion because it presents a view of the individual man or woman as only a severed "half" of a completed being. The suggestion that only in the union of the two halves (in a love relationship) would "wholeness" emerge is anathema to Birkin because he associates the process with "horrible merging" and a "contamination of the other." Out of this fear, Birkin proposes a relation where "each has a single, separate being, each with its own laws" where the male is "pure man," the female is "pure woman," and they are "perfectly polarised." (p. 188)

If we think of the anti-androgynous view expressed in these musings as Lawrence's own, we must make some qualifying observations. First, this philosophy is hastily formulated following Birkin's difficulties in his relationship with Ursula and during an illness in which he "lay sick and unmoved, in pure opposition to everything" (p. 186); and that immediately following Birkin's philosophical meanderings is Gerald's observation that "Birkin was delightful, a wonderful spirit, but, after all, not to be taken seriously...." (p. 189). Ursula acknowledges that Birkin is indeed a very earnest man, but that "earnestness was always rather ridiculous." (p. 136)
She questions the legitimacy of his "star equilibrium" philosophy and taunts him by catching his contradictions and re-interpreting his theory. What Birkin really wants, Ursula justifiably concludes, is not an "equal" separate star, but a satellite to revolve around his own star, in orbit around him.

We can conclude that Lawrence's mockery of Birkin is a healthy exposure of his own tendency to pontificate, his own apparent wont for contradiction, and his own fear of predatory, "usurping" love. What Lawrence comes to realize (which Birkin never does) is that primacy of the "purely manly" and "purely womanly" individual will not halt love's raging battles nor create a fully integrated human being. It is seen in all his fiction that the "Lawrencian characters who allow either male or female qualities to claim their whole personalities are shown, regardless of their sex, to be less than whole human beings." The ideal of "star equilibrium" can only be achieved when men attain selfhood by recognizing the "courage to be tender" and women attain selfhood by having a sense of their own destiny—not by absorbing the will of a son or a lover and living through him. The androgynous individual has the "completing" characteristics within his or her psyche.
CHAPTER 2

The Rainbow

The Rainbow is the book in which Lawrence "prophesied a world in which the lost 'feminine' impulse would be spontaneously reborn...the myth of the new female creation born into a world the male spirit has despoiled." The novel, a family chronicle about three generations of Brangwens, is dominated by the myth of the eternal earth-mother, as procreator and nourisher, so that even the arch of the cathedral or the "natural" arch of the rainbow is seen as a female, a "womb" symbol. These are also symbols of aspiration--of hope. What lies under the arch is the "mechanical" world of educational and technological "systems." The schools are "labs for the factory." The colliery pits are shown engulfing the farms; coal dust settles on the crops.

The Biblical tone of the novel ("...and the Rainbow stood on the earth...the world built up in a living fabric of Truth, fitting to the over-arching heaven." [p. 495]) reflects Lawrence's seriousness in the prophecy. The story of the Brangwens and their alienation from their land (as they move from farm to village and eventually settle in a more "urban" life) symbolizes Lawrence's view of The Fall for all men: the Edenic natural landscape is ravished by ugly menacing industrialization; the knowledge offered by civilization is received at the expense of the vital "natural" self. Ursula Brangwen, the best and the brightest of all Lawrencian heroines, searches for a place in the universe not already defined for her, and her genesis depends upon her ability to reconcile the good elements in both worlds.

There is, in The Rainbow, the suggestion that we must "go back"--to our
roots, to our essential selves, to the natural landscape of our uncivilized psyche—which runs parallel to the idea of "newness" and "becoming." The consanguineous themes of "returning" (associated with the feminine principle of being—"the woman grows downwards like a root, toward the centre and origin") and "becoming" (associated with the masculine principle of doing—"the man grows upwards like the stalk, towards discovery and light and utterance") are focused in the androgynous character of Ursula Brangwen and symbolized by her quest.

Carolyn Heilbrun, in a specific attempt to define a genre which might be called "the androgynous novel," states that "it is in those works where the roles of the male and female protagonist can be reversed without appearing ludicrous, that the androgynous ideal is presented."\(^\text{44}\) That certain principles are "masculine" or "feminine" (the division of which, Lawrence recognizes, are "arbitrary, for the purpose of thought\(^\text{45}\)) and not confined to the actual gender of the individual is most clearly seen in the opening passages of The Rainbow, for it is the women who embody what Lawrence describes as the "masculine" element.

In his psychological essay, Fantasia of the Unconscious, Lawrence presumes that "Man is always the pioneer of life, adventuring onward into the unknown, alone with his own temerarious, dauntless soul. Woman for him exists only in the twilight, by the campfires, when day has departed."\(^\text{46}\) However, in the beginning of The Rainbow, we see that "...the women looked out from the heated, blind intercourse of farm-life, to the spoken world beyond. They were aware of the lips and the mind of the world speaking and giving utterance....She stood to see the far-off world of cities and governments and the active scope of man....She faces outwards...." For the
Brangwen men, the farm and home "was enough." They had their "senses full-fed, their faces always turned to the heat of the blood, staring into the sun, dazed with looking towards the source of generation, unable to turn round." (pp. 2, 3)

The reversal of masculine and feminine essences is revealed in many of the love relationships portrayed in The Rainbow, particularly in the tempestuous union of Will and Anna Brangwen, which is recorded for almost one-third of the novel.

Will is a sensitive artist and, as Lawrence calls him, an "unmanly man." He is given to "black" or "dark" moods and has "something subterranean about him." He is also tormented by his almost total dependence on his young wife:

And the shame was a bitter fire in him, that she was everything to him, that he had nothing but her. She was everything to him, she was his life and his derivation....If she were taken away, he would collapse as a house from which the central pillar is removed....Why was she the all, the everything, why must he live only through her, why must he sink if he were detached from her? (p. 183)

Will's love for the cathedral shows his longing for a vision of eternity. The religious experience remains mysterious and ineffable; he "did not want things to be intelligible." Anna (perhaps in a reaction against her husband, perhaps because she herself was threatened by his religious yearnings) "above all clung to the worship of human knowledge....she believed in the omnipotence of the human mind." (p. 169) Anna, in her mocking pragmatism, scorns her husband's religion and his art. Will feels strangled by his need for her and his inability to define himself apart from his wife. Anna sometimes "hated him, because he depended on her so utterly." She complains when he is "hanging on to her" that he "needs some work to do."
Anna pleads, "Can't you do something?" while Will follows her about the house. He is content to be home with Anna ("the great mass of activity" in the man's world "meant nothing to him. By nature, he had no part in it." [p. 190]). Will wants "to be able to leave her," but realizes that "the only tangible secure thing was the woman. He could leave her only for another woman." (p. 183)

Following Heilbrun's proposal, if we reverse the "roles" of Will and Anna Brangwen, we recognize that the result, far from "appearing ludicrous," fits even more neatly with accepted patterns of behavior associated with traditional sexual roles. How many women, in fiction and in life, could leave their husbands without the "tangible, secure thing"—another man?

Although we may accept that as principles, "masculine" and "feminine" elements may not be reflected in the "appropriate" gender, we must realize that it is finally impossible to discuss these principles apart from "men" and "women." The first half of The Rainbow is about men and women in relationship and some curious conclusions may be drawn. While Lawrence laments the loss of the "feminine" impulse (the loss of "blood-consciousness" and identification with the land) because the Brangwen women primarily embody the "masculine" elements, it seems that the women themselves are somehow responsible for Eden's loss. However, Lawrence was not wont to simply place the blame on the female and an interpretation of him as a misogynist will not suffice. The novel depicts men and women inexorably linked in an exhaustive, combative union which is ultimately destructive to their individual selves. What Lawrence decries is a lack of balance within the individual personality which results in this unsatisfying, possessive, and debilitating love. Although Tom and Will Brangwen make some kind of peace in their mar-
riage, "neither, in the end, is 'quite defined' as an individual...[for] the achievement of true individuality is regarded as being dependent on the reconciliation of male and female elements within the individual and on their maximum expression in a coherent personality."47

Ursula Brangwen is the first major character in The Rainbow who is able to seek "maximum expression" of her personality unentangled by the complications of marriage. This freedom makes her task of reconciliation somewhat easier.

Ursula is the first child of Will and Anna Brangwen. When she is born, Anna is disappointed that this first child is not a boy. The father, sensing a spiritual kinship between himself and his rejected daughter, immediately "claims the child." Anna, who loved to be the "source of children," has many babies in the coming years, but the special relationship between father and daughter remains unchanged.

The life of unending domesticity limits Anna. Lawrence describes the "long trance of complacent child-bearing" which had "kept her young and undeveloped." Ursula, who grows up bright and curious, senses her mother's limitations and rejects this life. Soon, "her mother was accidental to her...only her father occupied any permanent position in the childish consciousness." (p. 216)

Following her rejection of her mother's stifling domestic life, the grown Ursula is depicted by Lawrence in many misguided attempts to conquer the "man's world" and define herself by it. Although she views her studies as tedious "dreary work," she stubbornly persists in hopes that academic success would give her a sort of autonomy:
She knew that soon she would want to become a self-responsible person, and her dread was that it would be prevented. An all-containing will in her for complete independence, complete social independence, complete independence from any personal authority, kept her dullishly at her studies. (p. 333)

Ursula recognizes that she always had "the price of ransom--her femaleness" (one could always marry), but this she views as a "last resort." (p. 333)

During Ursula's last term at school, she falls in love with Winifred Inger, her schoolmistress, who, with her "fine, upright, athletic bearing, and her indomitably proud nature...was proud and free as any man, yet exquisite as any woman." (p. 336) Winifred introduces her young lover to educated people, to a world of ideas into which Ursula was "swept, like a chaos."

And Ursula, growing, "finding herself," examines again the life she knows--the cloistered domesticity of her home, the provincialism of her village--and must reject.

Ursula's urge to independence and a new life following the affair with Winifred is associated with the masculine principle:

Her God was not mild and gentle, neither Lamb nor Dove.... She was weary to death of mild, passive lambs and monotonous doves....She did not see how lambs could love....They could only be afraid, and tremulously submit to fear, and become sacrificial; or they could submit to love, and become beloveds.

In both they were passive....She stretched her own limbs like a lion or a wild horse.... (p. 341)

Ursula's identification with the lion and wild horse, closely followed by the depiction of her lover as one who "was interested in the Women's Movement," reflects Lawrence's concern and distaste for the "modern" women, who, because they were aggressive and strove for independence, embodied more of the traditionally "masculine" principles. These are conservative, but not necessarily chauvinistic views. Because Lawrence thought that soci-
ety was over-civilized, its people lacking in tenderness, their instincts thwarted and corrupted, because he saw a return to the feminine principle was necessary before wholeness could be attained, women who became "more like men" would be particularly anathema to him. 48 Lawrence's statement in the Hardy essay that "emancipated" women, given the vote, would only "make more laws" shows his disdain for civilized society—not for women. This is made quite clear in his description of Ursula as she confronts the "man's world" (the title of the chapter in which Ursula is working and self-supporting).

When Ursula passes her matriculation exams, she comes home to Cossethay "to face that empty period between school and possible marriage," but her "desire to do something" is reinforced by the "commonness, triviality, and immediate meaninglessness" that the life of "herded domesticity" imposes. She decides to get a job. The mistress of the high school encourages Ursula to "keep up your studies always with the intention of taking a degree," because "that will give you a qualification and a position in the world, and will give you more scope to chose your own way." (p. 351) But for Ursula, the slum school to which she is assigned is a prison, "it made her feel she could not breathe; she must suffocate, it was so inhuman." (p. 376) The "successful" teachers bully and mistreat the students and relate to them, not as "individual children," but as a "collective, inhuman thing." Ursula's attempts to personalize the educative process is met with failure. The students are insolent and uncontrollable; the other faculty see Ursula as a naive incompetent.

By Lawrence's standards, however, her failure is actually a success, for competence in such an environment can only be obtained by the teacher's
"abnegation of his personal self, and an application of a system of laws, for the purpose of achieving a certain calculable result." (p. 383) Kate Millet's observation that Ursula as a "new woman" poses a threat to Lawrence and that there is some resentment on his part "at the thought of one of her sex achieving this much" is clearly misguided. Ursula's depicted failings in the "man's world" should not be interpreted as a perverse jibe at the independent woman, but only as a blanket condemnation of a repressive system. Having taught in such a school, Lawrence's sympathies are clearly with Ursula. There is an "I-told-you-so" tone in this particular chapter, but the lesson is not that "women have no business working in the man's world," but that no human (humane) being should work in a system that encourages coercion and brutalization to achieve "calculable results."

The unleashed excesses of civilization also pervert the character of the common working-man, and nowhere is Lawrence's loathing more keenly felt than in his depiction of the industrialists who, he feels, are responsible for the perversion. Ursula visits her Uncle Tom's colliery at Wiggiston and she is repulsed by the cold, "clayeyness" of the man. ("He, too, had something marshy about him--the succulent moistness and turgidity, and the same brackish, nauseating effect of a marsh, where life and decaying are one." [p. 350]) In Winifred, her masculine lover (who also "worshipped the impure abstraction, the mechanism of matter") Ursula sees "clayey, inert, unquickened flesh." As for the great colliery itself, "hatred sprang up in Ursula's heart. If she could she would smash the machine. Her soul's action should be the smashing of the great machine. If she could destroy the colliery, and make all the men of Wiggiston out of work, she would do it. Let them starve and grub in the earth for roots, rather than serve such a
So, while Ursula wants something more than her mother's female role, she rejects the cold authoritarian "male" world symbolized by the school and industrialized society. She continues to cast off the fixed identities associated with the old world which are polarized and stagnant. The one-celled animal seen under her microscope at the university showed her that "self was a oneness with the infinite...to be oneself was a supreme, gleaming triumph of infinity." (p. 441) Ursula was fascinated with the "unicellular shadow" which was a "conjunction of forces" and "able to reproduce itself." Ursula must continue this sloughing off process before she herself is reborn "free and naked and striving to take new root" at the very end of the novel.

Ursula fails her examination for her university degree and is comforted by her lover: "If you are Mrs. Skrebensky, the B. A. is meaningless." She sees going back to teaching as "bondage" and so she romanticizes her relationship with Anton Skrebensky, a young soldier and "man of the world." She deludes herself, knowing in her deepest consciousness that she is marrying him out of fear, and that "if she were his social wife, if she were part of that complication of dead reality..." she would be untrue to her real nature. ("One's social wife was almost a material symbol." [p. 453]) In the final love scene, where Skrebensky and Ursula walk together by the dunes and the sea, Ursula's "female" self (associated with the moon) surfaces uncontrolled and "obliterates" Skrebensky:

And she seized hold of his arm, held him fast, as if captive... his heart melted in fear from the fierce, beaked, harpy's kiss....He led her to a dark hollow. "No, here," she said, going out to the slope full under the moonshine....She held him pinned down at the chest, awful.
The fight, the struggle for consummation was terrible....
...He drew gradually away as if afraid....
Could he break away?
...He was white and oblitered. (pp. 478-80)

This is the female in its most negative expression: ensnaring, devouring, holding fast. The symbol of the female, the womb, is seen here not as a cradle of hope and possibility, but as an abyss. Skrebensky, so threatened by Ursula's sensuality, starts to "dread the darkness," and their relationship is quickly ended. Within two weeks, Skrebensky sails to India on a military assignment with a "new wife" (his colonel's daughter) and Ursula learns she is pregnant with his child.

In the last pages of the novel, Ursula is almost trampled by a group of wild horses as she walks through a rain-soaked common (she is no longer identified with the male symbol--she runs from the horses, climbs over a hedge, and frees herself from them), and following her escape, miscarries and lay "very ill for a fortnight, delirious, shaken and racked." When she finally recuperates from the fever, her new self is born ("When she woke at last it seemed as if a new day had come on the earth." [p. 492]).

The Rainbow concludes on a note of hope, and we know that hope for the new world is not to be found either in civilization and its institutions, or in mindless mating and a propagation of the species. What (or who) Ursula Brangwen has become at the end of the novel is not exactly clear. As the new Eve, who has cast off the world of a "bygone winter," she is still becoming.
The Plumed Serpent

The Plumed Serpent is a difficult book to defend in any context: aesthetic, political, or "moral." From its proto-fascist tone ("what is illegal in Mexico is all that is weak...") to its Lawrencean heroes, Don Ramon and Cipriano, the "lords of life" who kill traitors and destroy those who are "not good enough for the light of the sun," the overt message, laboriously and monotonously delivered by way of hymn, sermon, and ritual, is one of authoritarian, masculine dominance imbued with and justified by a cult of primitivism. Kate Millet, so unfairly hard on Lawrence for what she considers his chauvinist "counterrevolutionary" views, quite rightly (in this novel, at least) accuses him of "inventing a religion, even a liturgy, of male supremacy." However, the conclusion of the novel reveals that not even Lawrence himself can be counted among the sympathizers of this religion.

The story concerns Kate Leslie, a refined widow of Irish descent who comes with her American cousin and his friend to Mexico for a holiday. She is at first repulsed by a country in which only the sensuous "uncivilized" values prevail, and the degeneracy of Mexico is capsulized in the novel's opening scene of the bullfight. Lawrence's use of animal and insect imagery (the "gutter-lout" who collects the tickets, the amphitheatre as a "beetle-trap," the dark Mexicans as "lost mongrels," the children as "pale mites") emphasizes the depravity in contrast with Kate's European genteeelness. Unlike her companions, who view the bullfight with a kind of uneasy gusto ("this is life"), Kate reacts "almost hysterically" to the event and is disgusted by the audience ("I really hate common people." [p. 6]). She even feels a certain foulness about the culture ("Aztec things oppress me."),
Although she is totally repelled by the citified Mexicans, she is both frightened of and attracted to the "pure" Indian native. She views the peons as "big handsome men under their big hats...[but] they aren't really there. They have no centre, no real I." (p. 40) Kate is attracted to the natives because they "had blood in their veins," in contrast to a "bloodless" midwest couple that Kate meets in Mexico who had a "nasty whiteness" because they "weren't baked." (p. 48) The primitive Indian women are seen as "images of wild submissiveness" (p. 82) who "crouch" (while the men "stand erect") during the religious rites, "...succumbing...in perfect proneness." The ritual of Quetzalcoatl involves the women kissing the feet of the men. Kate, sensible, middle-aged lady though she is, is attracted (albeit ambivalently) to the whole scene--but mostly to the charismatic leader, Don Ramon.

It is easy to see this novel only insofar as it extols the virtue of Latin machismo while promulgating the idea of "woman's place" (apparently, "prone"); certainly, a good case can be made for it (Kate Millet makes it in Sexual Politics). With respect to androgyny, nowhere does Lawrence appear to be less androgynous than in this novel, where, in fact, he seems to deify sexual polarity and gender role as part of the basis for the Quetzalcoatl ritual.

However, if we recognize Lawrence's description of the male and female principle as he describes it in the Hardy essay, we see the ritual as a celebration of a return to the female elements--to instinct, to the blood, to the consciousness of the body. Kate's recoil from Mexico and its people reveals her reluctance to accept her own sensuous (female) nature and her
drive to keep her more "individual" mind (male) consciousness, so that "the fierce male assertion which characterizes Lawrence's amplification of the religion is an attempt to camouflage an exposed position."51

Lawrence often associates the feminine essence with primitive (or lower-class) males to affect and make plausible a kind of sexual reversal, while women of the lower class are often revealed as slatterns--an intensification of their already sensuous nature (this is seen in The Plumed Serpent in the character of the "untidy Juana," Kate's serpent, and her "barbaric" daughter; it is more clearly brought out in Lady Chatterley's Lover in the description of Bertha Coutts). Lawrence's habit of linking respectable middle and upper-class women with primitive Mexicans, Italian peasants, and game-keepers, shows his desire to free the repressed female sensibility. The "noble savage" is essentially an androgynous figure. In the Hardy essay Lawrence writes that in the "lazy, contented peoples" there is a "fairly equable balance of sex. There is sufficient of the female in the body of such a man as to leave him fairly free."52

Most significant, with respect to androgyny, is the woman as the imaginative consciousness of the novel and Lawrence's identification not with the male heroes (who are far less interesting and less complete), but with the middle-aged female protagonist. If Kate, at forty, longs for a sensual vitality she feels was lost to her (white) race, Lawrence, who was forty when he wrote The Plumed Serpent, longs for a personal sensual vitality lost to him through his increasingly frequent bouts with tuberculosis. Critics who record the parallels between Lawrence's life and his fiction accept the validity of the comparison:
Evidently, the details of the fiction are the symbolic facts of a psychological adjustment that Lawrence made in his own life. His subsequent writings suggest that after this winter in Mexico he no longer experienced feelings of sexual desire for either women or men, but that his libido was latent and narcissistic. The representation of sexual experience in his late works is sentimental and regressive, such as a man might conjure out of wishful memory. His worsened physical condition also probably precluded further sexual activity. His health broke under the long and immensely strained effort of writing *The Plumed Serpent*. When he finished it, he fell critically ill.  

Few critics associate Kate's marriage to Cipriano and her promise of obedience solely with her fear of growing old (and consequently, less desirable), but the text justifies such an association. In Kate's eyes, the sometimes brutal Cipriano is "sensitive as a boy" and possesses "boyish flame." When he comes to her she is "a young girl again"; at his touch "her body flowered." Her dread of becoming a lonely "grimalkin" woman, like her friends who, "at the age of forty, forty-five, fifty..., lost all their charm and allure," explains her decision to relinquish her own individuality and become Cipriano's bride, "Malentzi." Relinquishing her individuality means suppressing--for the time she is with Cipriano, at least--the "masculine" or "civilized" aspects of her nature and yielding to the "feminine" principles of spontaneity, passivity, dependence, sensation, and "blood-consciousness." Kate is unlike Ramon's Mexican wife, Teresa, who says of her husband, "He is my life." Kate knows of herself that "her life was her own," but rather than be alone in this life, she conceals a part of her true nature. It was that "she was aware of a duality in herself, and she suffered from it. She could not definitely commit herself, either to the old way of life, or to the new." (p. 470)

For Kate Leslie, the "old way of life" is associated with England, her
family, her past--the "new way" with her "sensitive, desirous self." The split may also be seen as the "masculine" world of "knowledge"--over-civilized, over-industrialized, dying because of its disconnection with the flesh--versus the "feminine" world of sensuousness and lust, dangerous in its predation and domination. Neither is quite satisfactory. If Lawrence appears to support the feminine principle, it is only because the balance has been so skewed in favor of the masculine essence. When Lawrence decries the lack of manhood in the modern world, in men like Walter Morel who "denied the God" in them, he is really despairing of the lost feminine principles of sensation, instinct, being ("oneness"), the components of Lawrence's "blood consciousness."

Kate Leslie chooses the "new" life, to stay in Mexico, to make her submission to Cipriano, but only "as far as I need, and no further." By no means is this a blind obeisance. Those who view the heroine as somehow "violated" must recognize that at no time is she forced into submission, nor even drawn irresistibly toward it. She chooses submission. The ultimate decision reflects not "feminine" obedience and passivity, but "masculine" rational thought and independent action. For all the apparent allegiance to masculine domination, Kate, the true hero of The Plumed Serpent, is steering the course of her own destiny. Because the persona is a woman like Kate Leslie, the ironic view (that this "living Huitzilopochtli" stuff, is after all, a bit silly, is "high flown bunk"), never totally absent, finally predominates. Even when Kate ponders the attraction of "submission absolute, like the earth under the sky," the view that prevails is the one she concludes with:
What a fraud I am! I know all the time it is I who don't altogether want them. I want myself to myself. But I can fool them so they shan't find out. (p. 486)

Just as Lawrence approves of Kate's decision to stay in Mexico (thus acknowledging the need for her "feminine" sensuous self to surface), so he also approves--for this novel, at least--of Kate's final duplicity toward Cipriano. Kate maintains that "one must keep a certain balance" and that of the "old" world and the new, of "male" knowledge and "female" blood-consciousness, she says, "I must have both." The realization that in order for her to "keep the balance" she must "fool" Cipriano should not be interpreted as stereotypic female coyness and manipulation. Lawrence sees that neither world is accepting of the individual who chooses both--hence the conflict of androgynous personality.

The Fox

The conflict that Kate Leslie feels also plagues March, the androgynous figure in Lawrence's novella, The Fox. March is struggling to maintain her independent spirit against two wills: the suffocating feminine will of her lesbian lover, Jill Banford, and the dominating masculine will of the intruder, Henry Grenfel.

Living with Banford on an isolated farm, March, who is "robust" and "knows carpentry," naturally assumes her place as "the man about the place." Banford, who has a "nervous" disposition, is described as "small, thin... delicate." She tends to the domestic duties inside the house while March is busy with the more demanding outside chores. Like any other couple, they frequently irritate each other, but they appear to have achieved some kind of stability, a "kind of peace." The farm, however, (like their
relationship) remains unproductive. They sell a heifer who was about to calve because they were "afraid of the coming event." Their chickens stubbornly refuse to lay eggs.

Henry, "who was a huntsman in spirit," comes back from the Army to what was (years before) his grandfather's farm and stays to woo, not the "feminine" Banford, but March. March, in her man's role, is dressed in coarse "workman's tunic," but Henry's instincts discern the disguise, for he is able to tell who is the more complete woman:

> It seemed to him like some perilous secret, that her soft woman's breasts must be buttoned up in that uniform. It seemed to him moreover that they were so much softer, tenderer, more lovely and lovable, shut up in that tunic, than were the Banford's breasts, under her soft blouses and chiffon dresses. The Banford would have little iron breasts, he said to himself. For all her frailty and fretfulness and delicacy, she would have tiny, iron breasts.

(The Portable Lawrence, p. 274)

During Henry's extended stay, March undergoes a transformation. First, she sheds her "man's" clothing and shows up one afternoon in a green silk crepe dress and blushingly pours tea. (Lawrence uses the humorously appropriate metaphor to record Henry's delighted amazement as he views his androgynous beauty: "If she had suddenly grown a moustache he could not have been more surprised.") Next, the once commanding March, who made all the responsible decisions concerning the farm, assumes a passive role as she watches the conflict between Banford and Henry as they make their claims:

> March seemed to flourish in this atmosphere. She seemed to sit between the two antagonists with a little wicked smile on her face, enjoying herself. There was even a sort of complacency in the way she laboriously crocheted this evening.

(The Portable Lawrence, p. 258)

Yet eventually March is pained by the decision she must make, as she feels
a "strange vulnerability" overcome her. Soon, "it was agony to have to go with Jill and sleep with her. She wanted the boy to save her." The union of March and Henry is consummated only after Banford's "accidental" death.

John Vickery, in an otherwise excellent article connecting The Fox with totemic myth and ritual, wrongly concludes that March is "won over completely" and that "Henry has acquired her soul and so can sway her to his will." This is a fairly common interpretation of The Fox, but a careful analysis of the last few pages does not justify it. The obvious moral—that lesbianism is sterile, unnatural, and doomed, that Henry does somehow "save" March and reaffirms her womanhood by marrying her and taking her away—is rejected upon closer examination of the story's conclusion and ultimate lack of resolve.

March feels that "though she belonged to him, though she lived in his shadow, as if she could not be away from him, she was not happy" (p. 299) and that "something was missing." The final image is that March is struggling "underwater" ("and she, being a woman, must be like that") or "asleep" ("he wanted her to commit herself to him and put her independent spirit to sleep" [p. 304]). In spite of Henry's desire for her surrender, March concludes that "she would keep awake."

In an article discussing the masculine and feminine principles of The Fox, the author astutely concludes that, in the end, March's inner conflict has not been resolved, nor her resistance removed to Henry's demands that only the female element of her personality be recognized....In March, the "male" and "female" qualities are both strongly defined, and if she is to find happiness, neither can be denied. 56

Living with Henry as "just his woman" is just as unfulfilling as living with Banford and "being the man about the place." For March to find
fulfillment, she must reconcile the "male" and "female" qualities within her own psyche and recognize her androgynous nature.

The lesson to be learned from The Fox and The Plumed Serpent is that, at this time, at least, duplicity is necessary for the survival of the androgynous ("balanced") personality, and the conflict between "masculine mental consciousness" and "female blood consciousness" is not to be openly reconciled within the individual.
CONCLUSION

In Lawrence's last novel, the androgynous personality reveals itself not by a woman whose desire for independence is thwarted by a repressive society, but by a "womanly man" who has intentionally alienated himself from that society. Mellors, the game-keeper in Lady Chatterley's Lover, is the exemplar of the balanced individual who brings the antithetical characteristics of the masculine and feminine elements into a harmonious relationship and subsequently discovers his own salvation in a sexual relationship with a woman.

The recent interpretations of Lady Chatterley's Lover by feminist critics viewing Mellors as some kind of sexual commando ignore the feminine components so evident in his make-up. The physical description of the game-keeper is far from the stereotype of the "manly" hero. Lawrence uses the word "delicate" several times in describing Mellor's physique: Mellors with his small hand and thin white body had "a certain look of frailty" (p. 164). Mellors tells Connie that he was thought to have "too much of the woman" in him because he didn't want to shoot birds or make a lot of money, or because he didn't like the Army. During the scene with Clifford Chatterley in his motorized wheelchair, Mellors reveals that he knows "nothing at all about mechanical things." (p. 196) Mellors is a competent homemaker: his rustic cottage is more than comfortable; it is "homey."

There are numerous references to Mellors' offering food to guests, making breakfasts for Connie and himself, and pouring tea. Mellors is most clearly identified with the feminine essence by Lawrence's portrayal of his vital, warm sensuousness--the characteristic which dominates the novel and
gives it the reputation of being a "sexy" book.

Mellors is, however, unlike the unrefined and unintellectual men of the lower peasant class whose sensuous selves predominate, unchecked by the "cerebral" consciousness. Lawrence carefully depicts Mellors as a man who has chosen certain political and ideological commitments after a process of reason and discrimination (this he explains to Connie in some of the most talkative post-coital scenes in all of literature—it is these polemic harangues which mar the novel more than any aesthetic blemish). The game-keeper is actively involved in the masculine world of ideas and his modest rural home has an impressive library—"books about bolshevist Russia, books of travel, a volume about the atom and the electron...." ("So," Connie concludes, "he was a reader after all." [p. 218]). Mellors' comfortable and interchanging use of the broad country dialect and the well-bred Englishman's speech shows him to be at home in both the peasants' world and that of educated, "civilized" society.

Although Mellors was supposedly unhappy with Army life, Lawrence makes careful note that Mellors was an officer in the military and could have easily made a successful career there ("a lieutenant with a very fair chance of being a captain." [p. 143]).

_Lady Chatterley's Lover_ begins with the observation that "ours is essentially a tragic age...." The tragedy is that civilization with its emphasis on the rational, scientific "cerebral consciousness" has alienated human beings from their instinctual and sensuous selves, from their bodies. The result is that even sex has become "mechanized," a product of mental deliberation rather than a consequence of passion. Lawrence urges a return to the female principle, but not at the expense of the destruction of the
masculine mode of being. If we recall the negative expressions of the feminine element seen in Lawrence's previous works (Ursula's destructive moon in *The Rainbow*, the "beetle" depravity in *The Plumed Serpent*, Nellie March's "sleeping self" in *The Fox*), we see that Lawrence's ultimate aim was to attain a balance between the masculine and feminine principles, between the mind and the body, between the "cerebral" and the "blood" consciousness.

Of his final novel, Lawrence wrote:

As I say, it is a novel of the phallic consciousness: or the phallic consciousness versus the mental-spiritual consciousness: and of course you know which side I take. The versus is not my fault; there should be no versus. The two things must be reconciled in us.
FOOTNOTES


6. Ulanov, p. 162.


12. Watts, p. 204.


15. Ulanov, pp. 38-42.

The reason that Lawrence's genius is so often qualified is that frequently his attempts to focus his vision are heavy-handed; he seems to be writing polemical tracts rather than fiction. This discursive (rather than "artistic") quality is most revealed in the characterizations of his later works, where he is accused of presenting "ideas dressed up as people."

Heilbrun, p. xvii.

Ulanov, p. 162.

Margaret Fuller, Woman in the Nineteenth Century (New York: Greenpress, 1968), p. 274.


This, of course, is not a universally held view. American Transcendentalists, for example, maintained creative power was "impersonal" and not associated with either sex.


Ulanov, p. 170.

Ulanov, p. 171.

Ulanov, p. 175.

In a literary context, the two kinds of time are presented symbolically in Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway by the clocks Big Ben and St. Margaret's. Big Ben is "clock-time" and has a masculine personification; it is vigorous, precise, and absolute—but also insensitive ("as if a young man, strong, indifferent, inconsiderate, were swinging dumb-bells this way and that."). The sound of St. Margaret's "glides into recesses of the heart and buries itself in ring after ring of sound...."

32. The male writers' successful use of the feminine persona raises a question to which many writers--Coleridge, Woolf and Rilke, to name a few--addressed themselves: that is, the androgynous nature of the artist himself. These writers claim that the creative mind, the great mind, is androgynous or "bisexual." Some feminist critics, raising the issue of the "feminine sensibility" (as yet, still undefined), object to what they feel is the exploitation and perversion of the female character at the pens of male writers. Katherine Anne Porter discusses what she considers the supreme male arrogance--Lawrence's description of the female orgasm in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. (See Katherine Anne Porter, "A Wreath for the Gamekeeper," *Encounter*, Feb. 1960, p. 16.)


34. Heilbrun, p. 51.

35. Heilbrun, p. 92.

36. In an afterward to *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Harry Moore discusses this as a "Sleeping Beauty" motif and suggests that the heroine is an "unawakened woman whose rescuer breaks through the tangle of thorns to release her." This view, however, depicts the women in the novels as entirely passive creatures, when, in fact, they are not. The women in these novels are self-reflective people who articulate their yearnings and make positive decisions about their own lives.

37. Heilbrun, pp. 92, 94.


41. Heilbrun, p. 102.
"Mechanical" is one of Lawrence's favorite words and he uses it with reference to anything "industrial" or "sterile" or "unnatural," and sometimes with regard to "cerebral" concerns as opposed to the instinct.

"A Study of Thomas Hardy," p. 515.

Heilbrun, p. 10.

"A Study of Thomas Hardy," p. 448.

D. H. Lawrence, Psychoanalysis of the Unconscious and Fantasia of the Unconscious (New York: The Viking Press, 1960), p. 98. I must note here that the "Fantasia" essay also presents a blatant contradiction to what Lawrence says in most of his other works and is greatly inconsistent with his idea of a coherent personality. In "Fantasia" he writes, "A child is either male or female; in the whole of its psyche and physique is either male or female" (p. 86). This view is not found in any of the other essays, nor can it be recognized in any of his fiction--particularly in the later works where the hero is actually a "womanly man." Daleski explains that Lawrence's insistence of an "absolute degree" of masculinity (or femininity) is "evidence of an extreme reaction, a refusal to acknowledge the existence of feminine components in his make-up" (The Forked Flame, p. 33). Apparently this was just a phase.

Daleski, p. 165.

On the contrary, Lawrence is sympathetic with his male characters, like Mellors (he "had a bit of the woman in him"), who exhibit "feminine" traits. This, Lawrence felt, should be encouraged.


Millet, p. 283.

Daleski, p. 226.


It is significant to at least mention here the Cipriano is decidedly "second-string" in the husband-lover competition. Kate Millet comments that "Cipriano and Kate appear to be in love with Ramon, who appears to be
in love with himself" (Sexual Politics, p. 284). Don Ramon is the prototype of the self-sufficient male hero who really needs no woman at all.


56. Brayfield, p. 49.

57. The reader is directed specifically to Kate Millet's treatment of Lady Chatterley's Lover in Sexual Politics, which was heralded by other feminist critics. Millet states that the "magnificent Mellors is the very personification of phallic divinity," but fails to note that the components of "phallic divinity" (touch, spontaneity, vital physical and sensual awareness) are the very elements Lawrence associates with the female essence.

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