Redefining Balance: An Exploration of D.H. Lawrence's Gender Roles and Polarity and a Study of Sons and Lovers and Lady Chatterley's Lover

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POLARITIES AND A STUDY OF SONS AND LOVERS AND LADY
CHATTERLEY'S LOVER

A THESIS
The Honors Program
College of St. Benedict/St. John's University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Distinction "All College Honors"
and the Degree Bachelor of Arts
In the Department of English

by
Erin Holman
March, 1993
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Is not the unicorn necessary to the very existence of the lion, is not each
opposite kept in stable equilibrium by the opposition of the other? D. H. Lawrence,

Most of D. H. Lawrence’s writings, both fiction and nonfiction, address the
theme of stable equilibrium or balance between opposites. These terms are
misleading, however. Lawrence redefines equilibrium. His is not stable in the
accepted sense of the word; instead, it depends on an active, changing, shifting
relationship between opposites, a continuous struggle for power. In truth, Lawrence
creates a new balance. For him balance is not a perpetual state; rather, it is a cycle,
with one opposite nearly assuming power as the other overthrows it, and then losing
this power as it is overthrown by the other. One of the largest, most encompassing
relationships of opposites which Lawrence writes of is the relationship between man
and woman, male and female.

Not surprisingly, Lawrence’s treatment of men and women has prompted the
responses of several feminist critics. I wish, in particular, to address Kate Millett, who
is among the most noted of Lawrence’s negative critics. I choose Millett because of
her approach to Lawrence. Millett centers her criticism on the surface structure of
Lawrence’s work: the language and the superficial action and character treatment. In
this approach, she removes the surface structure of his work from the
interconnectedness of the organic deep structure of his writing, which transcends mere
language and surface. Millett neglects the theoretical, philosophical discourse of balance which underlies the language of his work.

Perhaps part of the reason Millett responded so negatively to Lawrence’s works was that his language simply was not accessible to her. I believe that Lawrence was actually creating new theories in his works, theories which did not fit existing vocabularies. In this situation, he had to use existing words, reshaping them to fit his meanings. In example of this, H. M. Daleski, Lawrence scholar and author of the essay "The Duality of Lawrence," who compiled a listing of attributes which fit into the general opposing pair category found that "(T)he female principle comes close to typifying what (Lawrence) termed the ‘phallic consciousness’" (13). In this instance, if Daleski is correct in his interpretation, Lawrence has recreated the word phallus; its meaning has now transcended gender, although its connotation cannot help but remain quite male. Lawrence’s new language (or new use of old language) is spoken in his fiction, and functions as a part of both the surface and the deep structures of the works. He explains these new terms and philosophies in his essays. But even in these, he does not concretely, permanently define his language; in Lawrence’s prose, words are slippery, changeable things with any of a host of connotations or meanings at any given time.

After working with Lawrence’s writings for almost a year, I realize that I have been strongly affected by what I perceive to be his attempts at fashioning a new language and redefining the old. This thesis represents my efforts at redefining
Lawrence and Lawrentian balance for myself. I examine previous difficulties with his words in Kate Millett and her dichotomizing feminist viewpoint, only to become embroiled in my own struggles as I attempt to understand Lawrence's balance theories. I make this definition my own by shaping it with Elaine Showalter's wild zone construct. And as I examine Lawrence's wild zones, I discover that words are not enough to convey my ideas: I must use diagrams to safeguard my ideas against the ambiguities that words present. Next, I look to Lawrence's own life in an attempt to understand how it shaped his writings and the language (especially of gender) within them. Finally I redefine maleness and femaleness, and Lawrence's balance between these, for myself by examining the roles of men and women in Sons and Lovers, Lawrence's first significant work, and Lady Chatterley's Lover, his final novel.

Before explaining the "holy balance" Lawrence sought to incorporate in his work, I must first examine a dichotomizing/ reductive feminist viewpoint towards his work, for this perspective conflicts sharply with Lawrence's desired balance. By limiting themselves to an understanding of only part of his work and ideas, these feminist critics do not grasp Lawrence's intended balance and they often portray Lawrence as a misogynist. Kate Millett, the first to criticize him severely, is perhaps the most prominent of Lawrence's feminist critics. Today, more than twenty years later the effects of her extremely damaging criticism of Lawrence are still felt. As I believe she is the leader among the early anti-Lawrence feminist critics, I use her work as a strong representation of these critics. Millett devotes nearly half of her noted 1971 work, Sexual Politics, to examining the sexual politics in the works of four
leading male authors, Henry Miller, Norman Mailer, Jean Genet, and D. H. Lawrence. In her treatment of Lawrence, Millett criticizes Lawrence’s major novels by pulling instances and characters out of their interdependent framework.

While I strongly disagree with many of Millett’s arguments, I must first concede that she is not entirely opposed to Lawrence’s writings and that I do at least partially agree with some of her points. First, Millett says that she does see worth in *Sons and Lovers*, believing it "a great novel because it does have the ring of something written from deeply felt experience" (326). Regardless of the faults and generally poor treatment of women she finds in this novel, Millett does believe that it is a truly worthwhile work. Second, although her overall treatment of *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* indulges in rather extreme oversimplification, she does admit that there is something positive to be found in the novel. She writes, "With *Lady Chatterley*, Lawrence seems to be making his peace with the female . . . . Compared with the novels and short stories which preceded it, this last work seems almost an atonement" (316).

And I must admit that I agree— with qualification—with some of her individual criticisms, particularly of *Sons and Lovers*, although I think that in making criticisms like these Millett has blinded herself to the full reality of Lawrence’s work. She writes, "The women in the book exist in Paul’s orbit and to cater to his needs . . . ." (327). Women in the book primarily relate to and support Paul, but I believe that since much of the book is written from Paul’s perspective, it makes sense for us to see other characters only as they appear in his "orbit." Lawrence has chosen to write the
work from a perspective revealing the inner workings of only one character, for the most part, hence most of the book gives the reader insight only into Paul's mind and his perception of others. It would be incongruous for Lawrence to provide his readers with knowledge of these women's lives other than as they relate to Paul.

Disregarding the perspective in which the novel was written, Millett also writes "... Paul kills or discards the women who have been of use to him" (329). While I believe that this is an oversimplification to prove her point, I can understand Millett's view. It does appear that Paul discards Miriam and Clara; after he realizes that each cannot fulfill his full needs, he does leave her. Millett further strengthens her position by calling into question Paul's treatment of his fatally ill mother; she cites that Paul dilutes the milk that she drinks as her only nourishment, and he later gives her an overdose of morphine. Millett posits that both of these acts were attempts to rid himself of his mother, to have her out of his life forever. This is an oversimplification of Paul's action; an equally strong case can be made that Paul acted out of mercy to save his mother from the final agony of terminal illness. In all, however, I believe this novel is less about individual relationships than it is about Paul's growth; and by pulling out and concentrating only on individual or isolated occurrences in the novel, one might easily lose sight of much larger themes, such as the internal growth of the protagonist and the balance Lawrence wishes to create through him.

Millett looks at Lawrence without understanding his purpose, only making his own words fit her agenda. I believe that had she read more of Lawrence's philosophical nonfiction than his "Study of Thomas Hardy," especially had she read
his essays about balance, she might have better understood this balance and perhaps
would not have made so many over generalizations about his intentions. Millett, like
other early feminist critics of Lawrence, upon looking at Lawrence’s female characters
and the ways they interact and are treated by males, immediately sees only flaws,
which she believes stand as evidences of Lawrence’s hatred towards women. While
some proofs of their views are valid, in attempting to fit all of his work into feminist
doctrine, they are forced to discard parts of his work which don’t fit their theories. In
all readings, Lawrence doesn’t stay entirely consistent, so each work must be read as a
whole to understand his consistencies, his true beliefs. After reading a broad range of
his canon, I believe that while it is indeed possible to gain limited insight into
Lawrence by reading his individual works, I do not believe it is possible to understand
fully both the man and his continually evolving philosophies without reading a full
range of his works, both fiction and non-fiction; for the works function as a body, an
evolving development of philosophy.

While one could use evidence of his philosophies to analyze and refute most of
Millett’s entire essay, I will limit myself to a brief analysis. My main criticisms of her
work are: first, that she overgeneralizes, often taking his ideas out of context to prove
her point, and second—as I have begun to state—that she doesn’t understand
Lawrence’s main philosophies behind his writing, not the least of these, his sexual
politics. She boldly asserts in her criticism of Sons and Lovers, Paul "wishes to be rid
of the whole pack of his female supporters so that he may venture forth and inherit the
great masculine world which awaits him" (334). As I will address later, as Paul
moves towards a new life at the end of the novel, he is not free of the women in his life; on the contrary, he takes part of each of them with him. Paul could not survive without women. Thus, he does not go in search of masculinity, but rather he begins his search for balance in all relationships, a balance he couldn’t possibly know by living only in what Millett describes as "the great masculine world."

In an effort to insure that Lawrence’s work will fit her narrow feminist perceptions, Millett extracts instances from it, then blows these grossly out of proportion to support her theses. In one striking example, she begins her essay criticizing Lawrence in a caustic first sentence. "Lady Chatterley’s Lover is a quasi-religious tract," she writes, "recounting the salvation of one modern woman (the rest are irredeemably ‘plastic’ and ‘celluloid’) through the offices of the author’s personal cult, ‘the mystery of the phallus’" (316). In this interpretation, Millett has barred the door to much of the richness of Lawrence’s philosophy. First, she has missed Lawrence’s idea of balance altogether; in his philosophy not only is woman saved, but man, as well. Also, in beginning her essay with treatment of Lady Chatterley’s Lover, she is breaking Lawrence’s philosophic succession by disrupting chronology. Lady Chatterley’s Lover was written at the end of Lawrence’s life; she places it at the beginning of her critical study, implicitly stating that it is the beginning of Lawrence’s writing, when in reality he arrived here only after moving through a cycle of philosophical phases. He has sought for balance in sexual and familial relationships and then in power mythology before returning to balance in interpersonal relationships at the end of his writing career. In the very structure, Millett misses or
at the very least discounts the chronological context of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.

I strongly question Millett's basic approach in her criticism of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. She believes that all of the action in the novel, the sexual action especially, is male. She writes,

> The scenes of sexual intercourse in the novel are written according to the "female is passive, male is active" directions laid down by Sigmund Freud. The Phallus is all; Connie is "cunt," the thing acted upon gratefully accepting each manifestation of the will of her master. (318)

Although Connie Chatterley is passive in many of the novel's sexual encounters, to say that "the Phallus is all" is an overstatement, an over generalization of a writer who is done a large disservice by such treatment. Connie is not passive when she takes the initiative to enter the gamekeeper's cottage. She is not passive when she runs naked in the rain, dancing and enjoying her nakedness. She is not passive when she joins Mellors, the gamekeeper in decorating their naked bodies with flowers. While these scenes do not specifically depict sexual intercourse, they do illustrate that Connie is not entirely passive.

Millett is, of course, aware that there are many pro-Lawrentian critics who disagree significantly with her. She addresses one of their main ideas and contradicts it:

> Critics are often misled to fancy that he recommends both sexes cease to be hard struggling little wills and egoists. Such is by no means the case. Mellors and other Lawrentian heroes incessantly exert their wills over women and the
lesser men it is their mission to rule. It is unthinkable to Lawrence that males should ever cease to be domineering individualists. Only women must desist to be selves (323).

The very philosophy that Lawrence, the self-proclaimed Priest of Love, espouses in his many essays diametrically opposes nearly all of what Millett suggests in her argument. And since these beliefs are central to Lawrence’s essays, I am presuming that they hold true in his novels, as well. In Lawrence’s essays, and thus, as I have stated, in his novels, it is thinkable to Lawrence that males should cease to be domineering individualists; in fact, individualism appears synonymous with egoism, a concept directly opposed to his true philosophy, which is explicit many of his essays. Among these essays are "The Crown" and "A Propos to Lady Chatterley’s Lover," which I will use specifically to explain this philosophy.

Fundamentally, Lawrence wrote balance. In order to understand the existence of this balance in his novels, I needed to find it in his essays, for in these he sets forth his belief’s quite clearly. Much of the potential for ambiguity and misunderstanding found in the characters, symbolism, and imagery of his novels is absent in his essays, for Lawrence’s essay style is a relatively direct one; while some of his key terms are not clearly defined, he does rather clearly state his philosophies. In Lawrence’s essay "The Crown," he explains the structure of his harmony of opposites, building upon an allegory of a Lion and a Unicorn fighting below the Crown. The Lion, in its power and darkness, seeks to destroy the Unicorn and have the crown for itself. The innocent, light Unicorn in turn paradoxically seeks to devour the Lion and attain the
Crown. However, if either were to win the fight, vanquishing the enemy, the crown would tumble down, crushing the victor. Similarly, if the Lion and the Unicorn were to seek peace with each other, the crown would crush them both. It is the holy "fight of opposites" (374) which keeps the crown balanced above the two poles, in its rightful position. This fight is the cornerstone to Lawrence's philosophy of living.

In many of his works, both of fiction and nonfiction, Lawrence examines the holy fight specifically between the mind and the body and between males and females. H. M. Daleski explains that male and female are the basic elements in any opposite pair: "The two wills (in the holy fight) are embodied in man and woman and serve as a pair of attributes in Lawrence's formulation of the male and female principles" (7). In addition to this relationship, on another level these two sets of opposites are tied tightly together; for the state of the first pair determines, at least in part, the state of the second. There can be harmony between woman and man only if there is harmony between each individual's body and mind. Thus, in theory, Lawrence is a champion of neither of the opponents in either pair because he sees that holiness, the sanctification and unity of all life, only exists in balance between the two opposites. Before proceeding further, I must explain that this balance is not a static, unmoving state; rather, Lawrence's balance perpetually changes and shifts. At any given moment, either half of the pair may be in power over the other. Daleski explains balance as "a recurring polar movement of forces within the individual" (6). This image of moving forces can be extended to the those between individuals, as well.

Lawrence explains his doctrine of balance by citing several pairs of opposites
as examples; among these are light and dark, civilization and wilderness, passivity and activity. A study of the relationship between the body and mind pair is central to my work because it ties strongly to what is perhaps Lawrence’s most encompassing pair of opposites, the male and female. Holiness only exists when there is balance between the body and the mind, when neither side is triumphant. In his essay "A Propos of Lady Chatterley’s Lover," Lawrence writes, "Life is only bearable when the mind and body are in harmony, and there is a natural balance between them, and each has a natural respect for the other." (492).

On first glance, much of Lawrence’s literature (Lady Chatterley’s Lover especially) appears to be supporting the triumph of the body. Lawrence, in fact, does not profess the superiority of the body. He only states that the mind and the body have become separate, functioning without unity, without natural respect for each other. He believes that in the twentieth century, the mind has taken a disproportionately powerful place in its relationship with the body, disregarding the body’s natural power; and his writing is a quest to return the body to prominence. Even so, over the evolution of his works—particularly, again, in Lady Chatterley’s Lover—Lawrence does eventually create a balance; the ideal situation is one in which the body and mind remain in an active struggle for power.

Lawrence felt that in his modern world the body was becoming the mind’s "trained dog," slave to the rational command of the mind, having no importance or strength outside of the mind’s power. He seeks, as I have said, to return the body to its rightful balance with the mind, but since the body’s position has been degraded so
extensively, he must work on the body's behalf in order to restore it to its proper place. Just as the mind must not triumph over the body, neither should the body reign over the mind; for in this triumph, there is nullity. In the case of the lion and the unicorn, Lawrence asks, if the lion were to kill the unicorn "Would not the lion at once expire, as if he had created a vacuum around himself?" (366). If the lion were to kill the unicorn, degeneration and reduction would reign.

In "A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover," Lawrence writes that if the mind were to kill the body, the individual would lose touch with the genuine "life of sensations and emotions" (392-393). Instead, the mind will begin to control and manufacture its own sensations and emotions. These feelings are counterfeits; Lawrence declares, "All the emotions belong to the body, and are only recognized by the mind" (492-493). The mind's only true function in relation to emotions is to register them, not create them itself.

In the mind's present state of power over the body, when a person loses contact with genuine emotion, degeneration and reduction exist in the form of egoism. When the mind subjugates the body, its power reaches dangerous proportions, and there is no real existence; only egoism. In "The Crown," Lawrence writes:

This I, which I am, has no being save in timelessness. In my consummation, when that which came from the Beginning and that which came from the End are transfused into oneness, then I come into being, I have existence. Till then I am only a part of nature; I am not. (383-384)

If one part of the being has unnatural dominance over the rest of it, there can be no I.
If the mind dominates the body, the individual is not open to the consummation which will bring forth the I, for the mind will control the body too much to allow the "transfusion into oneness" (384), the harmonic consummation, to take place. Further, that "that which came from the Beginning" and "that which came from the End" are not specific properties in themselves, but represent all opposites. There can be no I if the mind and body aren't transfused. On first glance, this "transfusion into oneness" appears to contradict the "holy balance" of opposites which Lawrence teaches.

However, if this transfusion is understood not to be fusion (Daleski 16), but instead compatible with, even synonymous with the "holy balance," there is no contradiction. By this I infer that there need not be a total loss of individuality in order to prevent egoism. In order for one to achieve true individuality, egoism cannot exist.

To become a true I, all parts of the being are transfused, and the "self-conscious ego," which initially exists in all individuals, is transcended. If the mind and body are not transfused, in the place of a true I, there can only exist a reducing, fragmenting egoism, an individual's clinging to the artificial, incomplete self. The "accidental cohesion" of the soulless individual will break down upon her death if she continues to exist in her present conception of self and individuality. If instead she allows the transfusion of the Beginning and the End and of the mind and the body, the blossom of fire will baptize her, and she shall become a true I, capable of reacting as an opposite with an other (384).

If there is no transfusion, corrupt egoism triumphs, and not only can there be no consummation of union within the self, but consummation of union is also
impossible within any other relationships. Lawrence depicts both the dangers and extent of this egoism and its process of reduction:

From top to bottom, in the whole nation, we are engaged, fundamentally engaged in the process of reduction and dissolution. Our reward is sensational gratification in the flesh or... within the mind, the utter gratification we experience when we can pull apart the whole into its factors. (393)

Since egoism is itself unbalanced, it cannot appreciate anything as a whole, but is only satisfied when it has torn the whole into unequal, separate sensations and experiences. Once an individual—insofar as a soulless being can truly be an individual--succeeds to egoism, he or she turns away from union, plunging deeper into an endless cycle of reduction.

If the continuing spiral of egoism does not allow the communion of the individual, it cannot allow communion between the self and the other. In the same way, egoism does not allow communion between the female and the male. In "The Crown" Lawrence explains his view of the healthy relation between the sexes, "When a man seeks a woman in love, or in positive desire, he seeks a union, he seeks a consummation of himself with that which is not himself, light with dark, dark with light"(394). He (or she) seeks a union, not the sensual gratification which comes from splitting the other into separate experiential units. In "A Propos..." Lawrence states this union in an even more forceful manner, when he says that, "Sex is the balance of the male and female in the universe... always different, always new" (504). In sex, true individuals come together in a holy unity, a holy balance, the
unified fight of the Lion and the Unicorn beneath the crown.

While all criticism can tend to fragment Lawrence's balance, reducing it to a dichotomy, I am using a construct of feminist criticism to explain this balance in an attempt to move past the dichotomy. Many critics only examine Lawrence's works in so far as they support their own critical notions of misogyny or dichotomy; my intent is to acknowledge their positions, as I have done, and move past them into a critical realm which effectively affirms Lawrence's intent, his balance. While authorial intent is a thorny, controversial issue, I believe it is one with relevance here for two reasons. First, I believe that Lawrence's severest critics (i.e., Millett and possibly Simone de Beauvoir) deliberately call Lawrence's intent into question; they think he intends to attack and subjugate women. Second, I emphasize intent because I include biographic information in my argument; I believe these two facets of my theory are closely related.

Lawrence's balance evokes an image of two equal opposites. This balance, however, can be transformed into a relationship wherein one appears to dominate the other. Elaine Showalter examines this relationship in her essay "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness," in which she studies cultural anthropologists Edwin and Shirley Ardener's "wild zone" concept, illustrated below. The Ardeners have constructed a model of two intersecting circles, one being the social world of the man, the other the social world of the woman. The section of convergence between these two worlds is the part of any given culture which both men and women can understand. However, in each circle or sphere, there is a significant crescent which lies outside the section of
universal knowledge. I include a diagram similar to the Ardeners' original one depicting the relationship between the two spheres because the visual representation may represent the theory more clearly than the words. As I have stated, pictures are less likely to be misrepresented than words are.

Showalter asserts that "in terms of cultural anthropology" since most world cultures have been male dominated, women are familiar with the male crescent, even though they have not actually lived the male experience (30). Showalter also claims that the women's crescent has historically been muted. Men are not only unfamiliar with this cultural section, but they are also quite likely unaware of its very existence. The Ardeners have termed the women's muted crescent the "wild zone," because it is untamed by and apart from the entire experience of the male culture.

Elaine Showalter invokes the wild zone in order to discuss the concept of a complete women's text, even an independent female culture within the wild zone. She believes that "the concept of a woman's text in the wild zone is a playful abstraction": no matter how aware women are of their identities as women, their writing will always
contain not only their own muted experiences, but also those of the

dominant--male--culture (31).

I invoke the wild zone because it offers a bridge between Lawrence's original
theories of balance and polarity and contemporary theoretical perspectives. Using the
framework the Ardeners and Elaine Showalter have set up, I will expand on this
concept and apply it to D. H. Lawrence's writings. Although the wild zone was
originally constructed as a woman's domain, a woman's issue, I am interested in
describing its presence in the fiction and theories of Lawrence, a male author. In my
study of Lawrence's work, I use the wild zone to examine other situations besides the
gender concern of the feminist construct because I believe that it fits not only the
male-female relationship, but many relationships between elements which appear to be
in opposition in which one participant is dominant and the other is muted. I know that
in using this construct I may lose the full meaning of Lawrence's work, just as early
feminists lost meaning by taking Lawrence out of context--because perhaps this
construct keeps me from seeing every nuance of his work. If, however, I can keep
Lawrence's work central, and within the context he originally created while I apply
this theory, I may gain a new understanding of a meaning new to me.

Imagining the interlocking spheres of gender experience, I place onto them the
societal stereotype that the male sphere is intellectual, and the female emotional,
intuitive. This stereotype, prevalent throughout the nineteenth century, was still widely
held at the time Lawrence wrote both Sons and Lovers and Lady Chatterley's Lover;
H. M. Daleski gives an extensive list of the traits Lawrence believes to fit into his
male or female categories. Lawrence considers the male attribute of knowledge the opposite of the female feeling, male consciousness opposite female feelings, and male mind opposite female senses. Especially central to proving the logic of this replacement of body for emotion, I cite the pairing of the male idea opposite female body (9). Using this listing, and this final pair in particular, I can superimpose my own "wild zone" construct over the Ardeners'. This repositioning, I believe, fits Lawrence's view of the modern world. The intellect has muted the emotions, forcing them into a wild zone. Again, I turn to the diagram to better illustrate my own superimposed construct.

![Diagram](image)

Next, exchanging the word body for emotions, I can create another relationship which works with Lawrence's philosophy of life. As Lawrence writes in "A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover," "All the emotions belong to the body, and are only recognized by the mind" (492-493). If the emotions do belong to the body, then it makes sense to create a new wild zone construct and put the body in the emotions' place. This also fits into Lawrence's view of the present state of the world. The mind has subjugated the body, pushed it into a realm where it is powerless, all but
imaginary, echoing the traditional male domination of the female. A final time, I return to a revised version of the Ardener’s diagram, now to reinforce the mind and body relationship.

\[\text{MIND} \quad \text{Body}\]

As I bring Lawrence to the wild zone, I am led to wonder, given the importance he places on balance, if he would agree to the idea of a muted opposite. I partially believe that his ideal balance lies in the common area of the two circles, but I also believe that in addition to an emphasis on the common area, the wild zone and the "separate" or "other" crescent of the dominant culture must both be known by both halves of the construct. Also, Lawrence seeks a balance of opposites of equal strengths; so in this light, I believe Lawrence would be against the existence of an unknown wild zone. Instead, he would call for the freedom of the wild zone. He would want us, as human beings, to become fully and equally aware of all facets of our existence. He would call for equal importance of the male and female spheres, equal importance of the mind and emotions, equal importance of the mind and body.
And a Lawrentian understanding of these wild zones does not mean conquering or exploiting them; it means accepting them as equals. This structure, however, mustn’t be understood as a static entity. Its boundaries and its overlapping common area are in an active state of redefinition. There exists a constant struggle within this construct—the muted area struggles to keep its own autonomous voice, struggles to be heard, while the dominant area works to stay dominant. The process of the dominant coming to a point of familiarity with the muted wild zone adds a new dimension to the wild zone; for in this familiarity, the zone is redefined. While some understanding and familiarity is possible, even desired, it must be understood that physiologically, men can’t understand the wild zone, though they can at least have the knowledge of it that women have of the men’s crescent outside the society common.

Although Lawrence died nearly fifty years before the Ardeners postulated the wild zone theory, I believe that his works in essence are a male attempt to understand and reconcile himself to the wild zone. A fragile child with a strong maternal influence, Lawrence dwelled on the periphery of one wild zone, the woman’s world, long before he started edging closer to it in his writings. From the time of his birth in Eastwood (a Nottinghamshire mining village), Lawrence was rather sickly. Harry T. Moore, one of the foremost Lawrence biographers, writes in *The Priest of Love* that Lawrence’s frail constitution and his strong bond with his mother were at least somewhat related: "Bert Lawrence was a frail child whom from the first drew much of his mother’s attention and love . . ." (12). Lydia Lawrence herself told a friend, while Lawrence was yet a newborn "I’m afraid I s’Il never rear him" (12). Although the
infant did reach adulthood, he was always in somewhat ill health, subject to many colds. Lawrence wrote of himself, much later in life, that as a child he was "a delicate pale brat with a stuffy nose, whom most people treated quite gently as just an ordinary delicate lad" (13).

As a result of his physical weakness, young Lawrence was not able to take part fully in play with other boys. According to George Lawrence, his older brother, "It was a source of grief to him that he wasn't able to enter the boys' games--he used to gather the girls together to go blackberrying" (13). Not only does this show how Lawrence's health affected his activities, but it also suggests that rather than take part in the play of young boys, Lawrence joined the girls in a more typically feminine pastime. Thus, one might conclude that Lawrence was exposed to more of the typically female world than most males are. As a result of his association with girls and his small, weak physical stature, Lawrence was an easy target for schoolyard bullies. William Hopkin, an Eastwood native who provided Moore with much information for his biography, recalled passing the schoolyard one day where Bert was being taunted by other boys because he was walking between two girls. "Dicky Dicky Denches/Plays with the wenches" they called, thus branding him as effeminate (26).

This further exemplifies his connection with the wild zone from a very young age.

At sixteen, right after Lawrence's brother Ernest (the family's golden boy) died, D. H. became seriously ill with pneumonia. While his mother nursed him back to life, this illness had at least the psychological effect of weakening him even further; for although doctors believed it did not have anything to do with his later tuberculosis,
he felt that the pneumonia "damaged (his) health for life" (42). At this point in his life, Lawrence believed himself, by reason of his illness, to be definitely physically weaker than most males. Because of this physical weakness, Lawrence knew he could not perform many of the manual tasks which constitute society's standard male rôle. Since his health kept him from being a "complete" male in the eyes of society, he turned to stereotypically female occupations for fulfillment.

Within Sons and Lovers and Lady Chatterley's Lover, there does exist a set of behaviors which, in a broad sense, are considered "feminine." "Femininity" implies, first of all, domesticity. Lawrence creates multiple images of women cooking, cleaning, sewing, caring for children. Many of Lawrence's own behaviors fit into the model of domestic femininity present in his novels. In Sons and Lovers, Lawrence presents Mrs. Morel, a woman who functions almost entirely as housewife and mother, and who thus cooks, sews, cleans, and cares for children. In Lady Chatterley's Lover, he presents Connie Chatterley, who, although not an orthodox "housewife," enjoys sewing and decorates her own apartment--creating a woman's area where once only stone coldness reigned. As an example of this "feminine" behavior in his own life, an acquaintance remembered him, during the years of the first world war, "designing and making an evening dress for his sister" (Edward Nehls, D. H. Lawrence: A Composite Biography, qtd. in Smith, 12).

In addition to domesticity, Lawrence also depicts emotion as a feminine characteristic. He implies, with exceptions. For, in Lawrence's own life, his mother was intellectual while his father was more physical, instinctual) that, in general,
women are more emotional and less inclined towards the intellect than men are. In his own life, Lawrence knew both women who fit this pattern and women who fought it; Alice Dax, one of the women Lawrence drew upon to create Clara Dawes in *Sons and Lovers* exemplifies the former and Jessie Chambers, the real-life Miriam of the same work typifies the latter. Lawrence’s female characters are often women who seek to become more intellectual (Miriam in *Sons and Lovers*, for example), women who delight in their physicality (Clara, from the same work), and women who seek to become more physical (Connie Chatterley, in *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*).

As a result of Lawrence’s experience with the feminine world which he describes in his novels, his works examine many wild zones, at the very least, from the perspective of a male peering over the border of his own experiences, and at the very most, as a male crossing over this border and stepping into the heart of the unexplored territory. As previously stated, Lawrence’s own life experiences are in keeping with the theory of knowing the other, the "wild zone," especially the wild zone of the female experience. While it would be presumptuous to say that Lawrence understood the complete female existence as if he himself were a female, it would not be too much to say that certain factors in his life made him more a part of the wild zone than the average male.

Lawrence’s experience with the typically female world interests me because it helps me establish a strong tie between *Sons and Lovers* and Lady Chatterley’s Lover, prominent novels which mark the beginning and end of Lawrence’s writing career. These two novels have significantly similar plots. In *Sons and Lovers*, Paul Morel is
given the romantic choice between two different women, one embodying the intellect, and the other the body. Twenty years after Paul directs his gaze from these women to the promise of the city, Lawrence creates a new protagonist in Paul’s image. Connie Chatterley is placed in a position to make a choice very similar to Paul’s; she, too, must choose between two relationships, one entirely intellectual and one which seems entirely physical. However, in reality hers is a healthier choice; she need not choose between absolutes; one of her choices offers a Lawrentian balance. The tie between these two novels appears to be more than circumstantial. I believe that Connie Chatterley is actually a maturation of Paul, even if a subconscious one, and if so, perhaps Lawrence has transcended gender by writing her. In his final novel, Lawrence returns to the concerns of one of his first, and in so doing, he finds an active resolution to the conflict of the earlier work; Lawrence has written his way to allowing this protagonist the choice of balance.

In the semi-autobiographic *Sons and Lovers*, D. H. Lawrence’s third novel, he presents readers with living examples of his concept of struggle between the mind and the body and very interrelatedly, between man and woman. He creates Paul Morel, the young man poised between innocent, pure Miriam who represents thought, and sensual, experienced Clara, representative of the body. Lawrence places Paul in a middle position, causing him to struggle for a choice between Miriam and Clara; and, largely because of his close ties to his mother, he eventually ends up choosing neither. Along the way, however, Lawrence ponders the issues of the mind/soul and body balance, also giving insight into his perceptions of the gender harmony, both between
woman and man and within the individual.

Paul is peering over the edge of the wild zone because his poor health and his mother have put him in a position to see it. Poor health makes Paul, like his creator, stereotypically feminine in his physical weakness. Paul, similar to Lawrence, was physically weak at birth and had pneumonia as a teen, which prevented him from fully taking part in traditional male activities.

Paul's close ties to his mother are due at least partially to his poor health. Since he was seriously ill immediately after his birth, Gertrude Morel had to take care of him, thus starting a strong bond between them. After the first three months of marriage, Gertrude's relationship with her husband begins to sour, so her ties to her son(s) are strengthened. After her first son dies, this relationship becomes even stronger. Many critics have examined this obviously Oedipal connection; in fact, it is well-known that Lawrence himself went back and reworked Sons and Lovers after he read Freud's theories. In many scenes, this Oedipal connection is blatantly obvious. For example, Paul's relationship with his mother was similar to that of two lovers, with Paul in the traditional male role, taking his mother for excursions and reminding her that he is "a fellow taking his girl for an outing" (235).

My chief interest in Paul's relationship with his mother is not in the Oedipal side, however. Rather, I concern myself with her part in his gender behavior. Because of how extremely close Paul's relationship to his mother is, she has brought him very close to the female wild zone, encouraging him in pursuits commonly associated only with women. While Paul convalesces after his bout with pneumonia,
he spends much time with his mother. As Lawrence writes "the two knitted together in perfect intimacy" (141). Not only did Paul take part in this feminine needlework, but he does it in "perfect intimacy," meaning obviously that knitting is not the least bit alien to him. In addition to knitting, Paul also bakes bread for his mother, designs lace patterns to make extra money for the household, and, with his mother's encouragement, eventually earns his living by painting, not an overly masculine occupation.

At the age of 16, Paul meets Miriam Leivers, another woman who will have much influence on his life. In their relationship, he has renewed exposure to the gender-based wild zone of interpersonal relationships because their relationship is completely mental, characteristic of the stereotypically male realm. She sees him as a beautiful, higher life form and wants to learn from him, wants to own his soul, wants him for his poetry and creativity, what she perceives to be the true Paul, the "Higher" being. From the beginning, Miriam seeks to bring herself up to Paul's intellectual level. "I want to learn," she states. "Why should it be I know nothing? . . . Why shouldn't I know mathematics? Yes.' She cried, her eyes expanding in a kind of defiance." Paul agrees to satisfy her hunger, answering "...I'll teach you, if you like"(154), and this sets the standard for the rest of their relationship. At this point, Paul leads

Miriam farther into the masculine world, for she seeks to learn, to take part in this male world of intellect, especially in her wish to study mathematics, long a stereotypically male field.
Miriam, who, in fact, claims that she hates being a woman, does enter into the male world. At some points in their relationship, the border between logical intellect and sensual physicality become blurred, and at the same time, often so do the borders between masculinity and femininity. When Miriam visits Paul while he bakes bread, the structure of their discussion parallels sexual intercourse:

There was for him the most intense pleasure in talking about his work to Miriam. All his passion, all his wild blood, went into this intercourse with her, when he talked and conceived his work. She brought forth to him his imaginations. She did not understand, any more than a woman understands when she conceives a child in her womb. But this was life for her and for him. (199)

The "wild blood" and the "passion" of this passage show that even in this "pure" relationship, the physical world of sexuality hovers in the distance. In addition to thriving on this (albeit intellectual) intercourse with Miriam, Paul renders boundaries even more cloudy as he conceives his work by talking (having intercourse) with her. "She brought forth to him his imaginations," allowing him to conceive his ideas from her seed. Paul, at this instant of conception, is living in what society accepts as the women’s zone, taking from Miriam as women take from men.

Paul enters even further into the world of the female in his relationship with Miriam. Further emphasizing Miriam’s maleness, at the end of the novel, when Paul is broken, he considers going to Miriam because she is "better and bigger than he. He would depend on her" (399), much like many women traditionally look to men for
safety, protection. Also, Miriam wants to rule over Paul at other points, make him the most of what she truly believes he is. She tries to develop the poet, the artist, the creator, the intellect in him. Although these traits are stereotypically male, it is Miriam's wish to dominate which makes her "more male" than Paul at this instance.

Eventually, however, intellectual intercourse is not enough to satisfy Paul, and he convinces Miriam to have sexual intercourse with him. Miriam's egoism causes her to fail Paul's sexual test, for she tries to give him her body and fails because she keeps her mind entirely free and removed from the sexual experience; she fragments herself, and even after their first encounter, Paul is completely aware of this; Lawrence writes "His heart was down, very heavy. Now he realized that she had not been with him all the time, that her soul had stood apart, in a sort of horror. He was physically at rest, but no more"(275). Miriam's intellect dominates her body, so she holds it back, protects it from the sexual experience. She cannot surrender herself to Paul. In Lawrence's sexual politics, there must be balance within individual--acceptance of all parts of the Ardener's connecting circles--for holy sex to occur, and Miriam has given power to her intellectual side. Thus, there can be no real sex; Paul and Miriam as opposites do not completely meet.

After Paul tires of Miriam, after he realizes that his relationship with her cannot possibly lead him to the Lawrentian holy balance which comes of embracing both mind and body (thus male and female), he turns to Clara Dawes, a married woman, five years his senior, who is estranged from her husband. Despite Clara's "modern woman," feminist concerns, she is more "female" than Miriam. She gives
Paul her body, the stereotypically "female" part of being, allowing him to partake of the dominating "male" experience. Paul’s desire is the overriding force in their relationship. Clara is body, thus female—so in this relationship, Paul is *male*. He leaves the position of relative femininity he experienced in his relationship with Miriam. In his new relationship, he places himself in control. Paul is *maleness* with and to Clara’s female body. This relationship, however, is equally unbalanced, for it is purely physical; Paul holds his soul back, gives Clara only his body. With her, he enjoys a passionate physical relationship; although both enjoy the physical aspect of this connection, there is something profoundly missing from their relationship. Paul does not love Clara; he loves a woman. Lawrence writes that he loved "something that happened because of her, but it was not her" (343). It matters little to him whether her spirit is involved with their lovemaking or not.

But then Clara was not there for him, only a woman, warm, something he loved and almost worshipped, there in the dark. But it was not Clara, and she submitted to him... (A)nd she took him simply because his need was bigger either than her or him, and her soul was still within her. She did this for him in his need, even if he left her, for she loved him. (342)

Paul’s relationship eventually fails because in this relationship it is he, not she, who keeps a part of himself from the full experience of sexual unity. Since Paul considers this relationship physical, he doesn’t care about any mental or spiritual side of Clara, so he keeps her spirit apart from the encounter as well. Clara realizes that "She... never fully had him. Some part, big and vital in him, she had no hold over" (349). In
this relationship, too, there is imbalance. Paul has allowed his physical side to
overtake completely his mental side, stopping it from entering the sexual experience.

Clara realizes that much of Paul, his mental, spiritual self, is absent from their
relationship. She also knows that he is deliberately discounting this same part of her.
She asks Paul, point blank:

"But is it me you want, or is it It?" He again felt guilty. Did he leave

Clara out of count, and take simply woman? But he thought that was splitting

hairs. (351)

Finally, she tells him, "...(Y)ou’ve never given me yourself." (352), and from this
point, their relationship becomes completely physical, unbalanced, and he seeks Clara
only for the fragmenting, reducing sensations she can offer him.

Although each of the three women in Paul’s life helps him towards fulfilling
himself as a person, he cannot be completely fulfilled with any of them, so he must
strike out on his own at the end. Miriam and Clara each offer him only part of what
he needs for complete existence. In the same light, his mother’s wild zone is not
enough, either: for she exposes him only to the wild zone, not the world around it.

At the very end of the novel, after Paul breaks with Miriam, he makes peace
with his mother. His mother has just died of cancer, a long, painful death which hurt
Paul greatly to watch. In fact, it hurt so much that Paul starved her and dragged her
in an effort to stop her suffering. As he meditates on her death, he realizes his mother
still lives; "She had been in one place, and was in another; that was all. And his soul
could not leave her, wherever she was. Now she was gone abroad into the night, and he was with her still" (405). Paul knows that because of their close bond, Gertrude will always spiritually live within him. Paul will always be in some part feminine, knowing the wild zone in a way most men never can. And this knowledge instills in Paul, at the end of the novel, the potential for a balance that Lawrence believed the world in danger of losing. With this promise, Paul turns from the darkness of his past into the bright city lights of his future.

Nearly twenty-five years after Paul Morel gazes off into the lamp-lit city night and the potential for a future of holy balance, Lawrence revisits Paul's position in a novel paralleling his situation between Miriam and Clara. In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Connie Chatterley must choose between her intellectual, physically paralyzed husband Clifford Chatterley, and Oliver Mellors, the sensual gamekeeper. The road to Connie Chatterley, however, is by no means a straight one. Lawrence only arrives back at this point after thinking and writing through several intermediate phases.

Lawrence was a prolific writer and artist, painting, writing poetry, short stories, plays, as well as novels. However, I will address only his major novels as landmarks to navigate his literary and philosophical development. After *Sons and Lovers*, expanding on some of its central themes, Lawrence wrote *The Rainbow*, the story of a family spanning four generations and examining family and love relationships. *Women in Love* presents two sisters from *The Rainbow*, developing them and their relationships with men. Soon after *The Rainbow*, Lawrence turned away from writing about relationships between the sexes. In *Aaron's Rod*, the protagonist emancipates
himself from his wife and turns towards men and the stereotypically masculine world. This work forms a bridge to his next novels, Kangaroo and The Plumed Serpent which present male politico-religious power fantasies. Given this cursory understanding of Lawrence’s development, it is obvious Lawrence matured much before returning to a familiar theme in Lady Chatterley’s Lover. Within this novel, too, there is significant evolution; Lawrence wrote three versions of the tale (The First Lady Chatterley and John Thomas and Lady Jane were the first two) to reach his final state of balance.

Although the structure of Lady Chatterley’s Lover strongly parallels that of Sons and Lovers, within this similarity there is important difference. First, the similarity is strong. Put basically, choice between opposites ties together these two works which stand on either end of the timeline span of Lawrence’s writing. Paul must choose between two women, and Connie must choose between two men. Because of this structural parallel, the difference between these works becomes especially evident. Paul Morel cannot pick between Miriam and Clara. But when Connie must choose between her husband and her lover, she is able to make the choice. And this difference marks Lawrence’s development of thought as well as his development as a writer. After twenty years of writing towards a balance, he can give Connie a choice that is well rounded in a way that Paul’s could not be.

While it is widely known that Sons and Lovers is semi-autobiographical, very few such specific claims have been made about Lady Chatterley’s Lover. In his essay "A Propos to Lady Chatterley’s Lover, Lawrence claims that he had no specific plan in mind when he created the Chatterleys. He states, "When I created Clifford and
Connie, I had no idea what they were, or why they were. They just came, pretty much as they are" (514). While not directly stating the connection between Paul and Connie, this quotation, recalling the unconscious effort of creativity, does not contradict its possibility. It is possible that in discovering the "equilibrium" of his self, Lawrence has subconsciously placed himself in the woman’s role in this succession of novels, using his past familiarity with the wild zone of stereotypical femininity to once again live the struggle for balance that he has experienced as Paul Morel. And in the chronology of these novels, the audience sees how Lawrence struggled to achieve this balance within the work itself.

Paul has made the trip from mind to body and away from them both. Now Connie begins the journey, not from where Paul left, but starting anew from the intellect, the dominant sector of the Ardeners’ construct. In all of her youthful romances, "The arguments, the discussions were the great thing; the lovemaking were only a sort of primitive reversion and a bit of an anti-climax" (Lady Chatterley’s Lover 7). For much of her life, at least by the third version of the novel, Connie continually subjugates her body, giving it only very minor consideration. Connie epitomizes the male side of the Ardeners’ societal diagram, and to her this is progress. To admit to her body, her femininity, would be to step backwards, for modern women were free of such ancient ties (7).

In the first two versions of the novel, however, Lawrence does not portray Connie’s life as entirely intellectual. In each of these novels, the youthful romances are absent. In the first version, at the beginning of the novel, we, the reader,s know
nothing of the romantic or sexual experiences of the young Connie. In the second version, Lawrence writes that Connie was "at once cosmopolitan and provincial"(10), but he doesn't place heavy importance on intellectual connection in her romances.

In marriage, Constance Reid strengthens her ties to the intellect when during the first world war she weds Clifford Chatterley, an aristocratic man who fully embraces the mental life. This marriage is perfect for Connie, for in it she can live a completely mental life, not being bothered in the least with the general messiness of sex. Lawrence writes of Clifford and of his marriage with Connie:

He had been a virgin when they married, and the sex part did not mean much to him. They were so close, he and she, apart from that. And Connie exulted a little in this intimacy which was beyond sex, and beyond a man's "satisfaction" (12).

Their marriage becomes even farther removed from the "sex part" when Clifford becomes paralyzed from the waist down during battle. After this, it appears that the mental side of life has triumphed, and the physical wild zone will remain but a dim memory in Connie's consciousness.

Clifford's intellectual existence is not so stark in the first two versions of the novel. In both of these versions, especially during the first halves, the Chatterleys are physically affectionate, kissing and touching each other in a completely natural manner. In the first version especially, his marriage with Connie is not entirely the celibate one it later becomes. In stark contrast to the third version, Clifford
understands physical desire, for "he'd had a month of real marriage, and . . . knew that in her nature was a heavy, craving, physical desire." (6). In the second version of the novel, Connie's physical existence is also important to Clifford although perhaps not as strikingly as in the first version. In this story, Clifford is originally attracted to Connie "first, because of her modest-maiden, ruddy appearance, then for the daring that underlay her softness and her stillness" (11).

In all three versions, after Clifford's injuries heal, the Chatterleys move to Wragby, the Chatterley family home sternly overlooking a sooty, dirty mining village. In its grey rigidity Wragby itself symbolizes Clifford, industrial life, the ordered intellect, what Lawrence perceived to be the dominating force of the modern world. There is no balance here. Within Wragby's walls, the body, the suppressed wild zone, is silent.

The zone of the intellect, however, reigns throughout Wragby. During the first years of their marriage, Clifford writes short stories, in which Connie takes an active part. As Lawrence writes of this connection, one can hear a passionate undercurrent: "Their interests had never ceased to flow together over his work. They talked and wrestled in the throes of composition, and felt as if something were happening . . ." (18). This mental intercourse and its "throes of composition" which replace throes of passion distinctly echo the excitement of the similar mental interaction gave Paul twenty-five years earlier. Connie embraces the intellect, the societally accepted male side of Lawrence's balance.

As Clifford immerses himself in writing, taking Connie with him, he also
surrounds himself with like-minded men, "the young intellectuals of the day"(30).
These men come to Wragby to flatter Clifford and to indulge in the pleasures of the
intellectual life. Like Clifford, They "all believed in the life of the mind. What you
did apart from that was your own private affair, and didn’t much matter"(30). Connie
plays hostess to their intellectual discussions, providing a silent audience for their
discussions. While remaining a bastion of feminine passivity, she becomes further
enmeshed in the sterile, stereotypical male world.

Eventually, this purely intellectual life isn’t enough for Connie Chatterley, and
her body begins to rebel; her heart "beat(s) violently for no reason . . . (a)nd she
(gets) thinner," her body withering under the strain of disuse (19). In the third
version, when she realizes that she cannot subjugate her body to her mind any longer,
she turns to Michaelis--an Irish playwright who dwells on the outskirts of the Wragby
circle--for salvation. Her relationship with Michaelis is a transitional one. While she
turns to him for sexual excitement, and he rouses in her a passion long dormant,
Michaelis is not strong enough to satisfy her passion; for his sexual energy is not
strong enough to fulfill her. Since he satisfies himself long before she feels sexually
complete, she turns to her own power, her own will, for sexual arousal, "learn(ing) to
hold him, to keep him there inside her when his crisis was over"(28). While
Michaelis is a necessary component for Connie’s sexual fulfillment, Connie’s will, her
mind, is the principal player in this intercourse. Eventually their relationship ends
because of its artificiality; for while the action itself is a part of the physical world,
her intellect keeps their sex from entering the wild zone.
In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, the body is most definitely the wild zone, the muted zone, the crescent of the Ardener’s diagram that Lawrence believes is becoming even more muted in the modern world. After Connie’s relationship with Michaelis, her body diminishes further when her mind is completely in control, when she does not allow herself to truly experience her body. As Connie becomes more and more disconnected from her physical side, her intellectual life shrinks in its importance; Lawrence writes "Clifford’s mental life and hers gradually (begin) to feel like nothingness" (47). She has grown completely numb to the intellectual pomp of Clifford’s life.

For solace from the nothingness, Connie runs to the wilds of the woods on the Wragby property. The woods stand as a last refuge of the wild zone in the encroaching intellectual world. They symbolize the fertile, feminine body and all that is subjugated to the modern maleness of intellect. Connie sees these woods as "a very power of silence, and yet a vital presence... giving off a potency of silence"(61).

Into the woods, Connie brings her emptiness, seeking fulfillment.

Within the "power of silence" she finds Wragby’s gamekeeper, the steward of the wild zone. The gamekeeper character presents some of the more marked examples of the changes Lawrence made between the versions of *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* as he essayed to create a relationship of true balance. In the first two versions of the work, the gamekeeper, Oliver Parkin, is very strongly representative of the body. In the first novel, especially, he speaks in the broad Derby accent, with no intellectual leanings (his only intellectual endeavors are brief, stiff formal letters sent to Connie at the end
of the novel), thus embodying only the stereotypically female. In this novel, as
Connie goes to Clifford, she changes from one extreme to the other, and there is no
balance.

In the second novel, Lawrence presents Parkin in much the same manner, but
softens him quite a bit, lightening his accent and making him somewhat literate. This
literacy is strongly evident in the letter Parkin writes at the end of the novel, after he
and Connie are temporarily separated. He writes, "I can make my living, and I care
about nothing in the world, except I ache for the wood and the cottage these last few
months, as if something was drawn out of me. I get a bursting sometimes inside me,
till I feel I can’t breathe easy with other folks" (John Thomas 368). In both of these
versions, there finally appears to be no chance for balance; Connie, starved of the
body’s beauty for so long, chooses the body over the mind.

In the final, and most famous of the three works, Lawrence brings the
gamekeeper from living a purely physical life, understanding that this extreme is just
as detrimental as the intellectual one. In this version, Oliver Parkin becomes Oliver
Mellors, a much more multi-faceted man. He has been well-educated, worked as a
clerk, and served in the army in India as a low ranking officer, and alternates "proper"
English with the broad Derby dialect of Tevershall. In further testament to his
intellectual side, on his bookshelf stand "books about bolshevist Russia, books of
travel, a volume about the atom and the electron, another about the composition of the
earth’s core, and the causes of earthquakes, . . .three books on India" (Lady Chatterley
199).
Many critics have posited Mellors as Connie’s savior. They believe that by the "cult of the phallus" (Millett 316), he leads her back to her true position as a woman. In part, this statement can be validated. Mellors accepts the body in a way that no other man before in Connie’s sexual life has. Also, Mellors, living alone, does his own household chores; he cooks and cleans, performing stereotypically female tasks. These traits mark Mellors as one who knows the wild zone. Thus, he is capable of revealing to Connie a fuller reality of her femininity.

In the third version of the novel, Mellors is not only Connie’s savior; she is his as well. Mellors’ history of sexual relationships is quite similar to Connie’s. As a young man, his first relationship was with a schoolmaster’s intellectual daughter. He relates their relationship to Connie, “The first girl I had... egged me on to poetry and reading: in a way, she made a man of me. I read and I thought like a house on fire, for her... The serpent in the grass was sex. She somehow didn’t have any” (187). Mellors and his first love eventually split because of the absence of sex in their connection. After her, he goes to a woman who "loved everything about love, except the sex" (188). Because this second woman, also, was repulsed by the body, Mellors breaks with her, too. Mellors does differ from Connie at one crucial point; while they both were involved in intellectual romances, Mellors wants what is missing while Connie is, at least consciously, glad it is gone. These two failed romances lead Mellors away from the intellectual world entirely; he becomes a blacksmith.

After Mellors leaves the intellectual side of his life behind, he finds Bertha Coutts, who "wanted (him) and made no bones about it" (188). At last, Mellors has
found what he wants in a woman, or so he thinks. He soon realizes that this kind of imbalance is just as deadly as the other, especially when coupled with a domineering will. Soon, Bertha begins holding herself back in sex, wanting to be in control of her own physical passion. Eventually, their relationship parallels the one Connie had had with Michaelis. As a result of all three of these relationships, Mellors needs rescuing from the unholy imbalance just as badly as Connie does. Together, then, they will be able to rescue each other.

Much has been made of the issue of Connie's passivity. In many of their sexual encounters, "The activity, the orgasm was his, all his; she could strive for herself no more" (109). However, one key issue must be addressed; nearly every time Connie enters the wild zone of the woods, she does so willingly. While Mellors is responsible for much of the original sexual activity, Connie herself takes the first steps towards the promise of sex by crossing the borders of the wild zone that Mellors reigns over.

Once she enters Mellors' kingdom, however, she surrenders herself entirely to him. In an early encounter, the first that Connie and Mellors "come off together," Connie comes to the realization that"... she could no longer force her own conclusion with her own activity. This was different, different. She could do nothing" (125). She learns the surrender that Lawrence wrote about in his "A Propos to Lady Chatterley's Lover." It is worthwhile to note that during this same encounter, in the second draft of the work, Mellors comes to the same epiphany at this point: "Suddenly his resistance left him, and he folded round her, wrapped her with his body. He had
ceased to resist or to remember, letting his body live of itself" (John Thomas 127).

However, this is missing in the final draft.

Connie’s decision to surrender allows her to cleanse herself of her artificial ego-will and finally take an active part in their lovemaking. Eventually, the lovers create their own Garden of Eden, and it is Connie who is the first to discover this. She strips off her clothing and runs out into a rainstorm, performing a dance of creation. Mellors soon joins her, overtaking her. After a sexual encounter in the rain, the two bring wildflowers from the woods into the relative civilization of Mellors’ cottage, and they decorate each other with these. While Mellors begins the adorning, Connie too joins in blessing the birth of the new civilization. This new society transcends the boundaries of the wild zone, for its participants have a full knowledge of the relationship between mind and body, male and female.

At the close of Lady Chatterley’s Lover, Constance Chatterley has moved beyond the lessons learned by Paul Morel. Where her earlier brother experiences both extremes of Lawrence’s mind and body polarity, and learns that he cannot survive solely in either half of the pair, the novel Sons and Lovers ends before he can use this precious knowledge. Connie’s experiences, when held up to Paul’s final lamp-lit epiphany, function as a realization of, a completion of, and an answer to Paul’s journey towards balance. She has found this mutual, active balance in the body and soul of an other.

In the evolution from Paul to Connie, Lawrence has, on an obvious level, moved from one side of his most encompassing polar pair to the other; he has moved
from male to female. As I have already suggested, in this shift Lawrence can be seen to transcend gender. He crosses the boundaries from male to female, and journeys towards his holy balance by writing of life on both sides of this boundary. Over the course of his writing, Lawrence shifts from the male to the female realm of his experience and back again multiple times and in varying degrees. In the end, however, it is only after he completely enters the female zone, the wild zone, that he writes a full realization of balance in his fiction.

When I began my study of Lawrence nearly a year ago, I was first intrigued by the way he wrote Lady Chatterley’s Lover largely from a woman’s perspective. Connie Chatterley appeared to me, and still does, as a living, breathing, rounded person, not merely a limited, fictional character. I wondered how a male could understand, or appear to at least partially understand the perspective of a woman. Soon after I began my study, I read Sons and Lovers, and the similarities between the two works further drew me into Lawrence. I began to ponder gender, to wonder about Lawrence’s definitions of gender. I wondered, what are the ties I see between Paul and Connie? Are they actually important? These questions led me down several paths. I realized that in order to understand the relationship, or the balance between Lawrence’s genders, I needed to understand more fully both Lawrence as a human being (as opposed to Lawrence simply as a writer) and his perception and theories of balance which resulted from his life experiences. At the same time, I knew that in order to address gender in Lawrence’s works, I needed to do further investigating into gender studies in general.
After much reading, thinking, writing, I have come to understand an interconnectedness between Lawrence’s characters and his holy balance of opposites. Paul, standing as male at the beginning of Lawrence’s writing, and Connie as woman at the end function, for me, as Lawrence’s fullest pair of opposites, and all of his works in between represent a dynamic development of and shifting between this pair. This relationship, however, must be clarified, for at the same time as being the female, on another level, Connie exists outside of a strict, separate femaleness, for she has discovered a balance.

Perhaps what the business of pairing opposites in Lawrence has taught me, both as a scholar and as a woman, is that there are no absolutes, no cut and dried "answers." As a scholar and a woman, I consider myself a feminist. Through examining Lawrence, I have come to believe that I must include in my feminism an active relationship between males and females and qualities stereotypically attributed to each. In Lawrence’s work to redefine balance between male and female related opposites, he has left very little that is black and white, and many gray areas which are open for interpretation. Further, the dynamic relationship Lawrence envisions defies absolutism; boundaries are blurred, and, as I have said, at any given moment, either member of the polar pair may be in power over the opposite. Lawrence, I believe, envisioned no ending to this redefinition; rather, his work functions as a starting point for active, continual growth of relations and redefinitions of the relationships between genders and the common attributes of both.
Works Consulted


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