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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to trace a descriptive history of woman's psyche as manifested in English and American literature by and about women during the period from 1688 through 1975. The application of archetypal theory (the description of recurrent patterns in symbolic and narrative structures within a wide and complex field of material) to the works of women authors reveals a logical schema of "matrilinear patterns" which reflects the unique nature of female behavior and experience. (KS)

Archetypal Theory and Women's Fiction: 1688-1975

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In an article entitled "It's All Dixie Cups to Me" Rita Mae Brown asserts that "Only by telling who we were and where we came from can another woman know the truth of our journey. Only then can she trust us for we've given her a roadmap. Feminism, the root self, isn't one magic moment of understanding then life becomes easy. Feminism begins a process that brings us closer and closer to you/our goal. You'll come home. Home to your root self. Home to the self before social consciousness and consciousness of self."[1] It was in quest of this root self and out of the conviction that women's fiction embodied its conflict with social consciousness that I set out five years ago to explore the roadmaps laid down by women for each other in their fiction in England and America during the past two hundred and eighty-seven years. Since volumes had been devoted to tracing the history of the male psyche in its anthropological, mythological and literary manifestations could one not, I postulated, undertake a descriptive history

of woman's psyche as it is manifested in a significant body of her literature? In order to answer such a question two critical methodologies in particular seemed appropriate: literary history, needed because we did not have a thorough, coherent history of our fiction; and archetypal theory, the description of recurrent patterns in symbolic and narrative structures appearing in a significantly wide and complex field of material.

At the time that I first proposed such an undertaking, at one of the first workshops in Feminist Criticism sponsored by the MLA Commission on the Status of Women in December, 1970, there was considerable objection to my assumption that archetypal criticism could be of use to feminism, since in its Jungian mode it seemed mired down in stereotypical assumptions about The Masculine and The Feminine.[2] It was also suggested that the history of woman's psyche was meaningless except as a manifestation of social consciousness; indeed that the two were one and the same thing, the implication being that internal patterns in psychic consciousness have no value of their own and can only be assessed as reflections of external, supra-individual phenomena. Criticism based on analysis of mythological patterns of the unconscious, in this analysis, would be useless since such a world has no intrinsic being except as a secondary response to materiality.

From the fiction that I had already considered at the time that I posed the archetypal hypothesis, however, it seemed evident that there was both an interior, psychic landscape traversed by the individual woman hero and an external, material landscape impinging upon her, and that these heroes were simultaneously pursuing journeys into their unconscious and battling those forces which, from birth, attempted to strip them of their autonomy and process them into passive zombieism according to accepted social norms for female behaviour. The result of this dual engagement was that the literature was characterized by a tension between the "root self" or authenticity of the hero and social roles proposed for her, a tension which accounted for the constant tone of irony and desperation in the entire body of material. No matter how deeply a hero might plunge into the world of her unconscious she always came up against society at the end: since the pragmatic field of literary material that I intended to study was thus characterized by both internal or psychological and external or societal forces I was willing to approach it on its own terms using both contextual or historical and archetypal methods of analysis.

I had not, at the time, reached a coherent understanding of the relationship between the world of the interior mind and the

world of social and political activity: I had forged no connection for my own personal use between my experience as an activist in the woman's movement and my previous researches into the unconscious world of Dylan Thomas. Most feminists and woman writers with whom I was acquainted were caught up either in politics or in creating art, and those like myself with involvement in both were operating as if in two disconnected universes. During the period that I immured myself in order to delve into these questions, however, feminists in the country as a whole were moving to close the gap between politics and what, for want of a better word to describe this new space, they were calling the "spiritual" dimension of feminism. Susan Rennie and Kirsten Grimstad of The New Women's Sourcebook were amazed, while travelling around the United States gathering material in 1974, to find that "Women, feminists, are becoming sensitized and receptive to the psychic potential inherent in human nature--that they are realizing that women in particular are repositories of powers and capabilities that have been surpressed. . . . It is as if feminists have recognized an even deeper source of female alienation and fragmentation than the sex role polarization which had so effectively limited women's minds."[3] The "entirely new dimension" which feminists were now exploring, I was delighted to discover, was precisely the dimension of women's literature

opened up by the archetypal method of analysis--the study of our root selves as a repository of forgotten images, energies, powers, and rituals. What we had been finding in the field of women's literature were, in this new light, encoded messages delivered covertly by women to each other since they gained power to write. I was able thus to come out of my academic closet into the light of the new feminist day, my efforts suddenly seeming less to one side of my political desires and of value to all of us in bringing us to terms with our history, perhaps even with that deepest collective past which is the memory of all women since the first lemur decided to swing along the ground with her legs to see if it was as much fun as swinging through the trees with her arms.

In spite of my primary interest in the archetypal patterns which women's fiction might yield, the actual time that I have spent in archetypal analysis is far smaller than that spent with my three co-authors--Patricia Jewell McAlexander, Barbara White, and Andrea Loewenstein--during the four years that it took us to read, describe, and analyze the materials examined. Although there were two or three excellent literary histories available (such as Hazel Mews' Frail Vessels, B.G. MacCarthy's Women Writers, and Helen Papishvily's All The Happy Endings) there was no single work which had described the field of British and American material

that I felt constituted a significant sample for archetypal analysis. Thus, with the help of colleagues in the Midwest Modern Language Association, in the MLA, and of a number of graduate and undergraduate students at the University of Wisconsin, we set out to provide an historical survey of the field, an endeavour which took from 1971 until the spring of 1975 and which produced the bulk of my forthcoming volume, Feminism and Fiction.

In describing the history of women's fiction we found it useful to deal in separate chapters with sexual politics in the novel in general and with a theme that I felt to be of especial importance in the development of women, that of erotic autonomy or initiative. From the outset I had felt that the quest for love, the quest to assert Eros in an equitable and amicable relationship to men or women, was central to women's fiction not for purposes of brainwashing them into submission as Millett at that time and Ti-Grace Atkinson since has asserted as the function of Romantic Love, but as a basic human need. This need seemed as important for the growth of the woman hero and as destructive when thwarted as the need for significant employment or civil liberty. Under the broad categories of sexual politics and erotic intitiative we surveyed novels by various modes, genres, and subgenres, finding that they fell into categories consonant and analogous from century

to century under similar subheadings. We found that there was more in common, that is, between Jane Eyre and Jane Grey (hero of Drabble's The Waterfall) than between Charlotte Bronte and Thackeray, Drabble and Joyce; and that the denouements of a Doris Lessing and a George Eliot novel were more likely to be similar than those of Lessing and Burgess, Eliot and Dickens. We did not spend any time, however, in pursuing male/female comparisons, but, rather, focused entirely on women's fiction for reasons of limiting our scope to a manageable body of material. The analogues that we found between women's novels of various centuries led to a further hypothesis, namely that women's fiction comprises an organic body of material inter-related by cross-century analogues, an hypothesis which led in turn to the fact that the development of woman's psyche since 1688 had not so much evolved or progressed as remained static. Although social expectations for males might have changed drastically since Emmeline was Orphan of the Castle and Emily St. Aubert was immured in the fastness of Udolpho, the Cult of Virility still held prisoner the heroes of such recent novelists as Christina Stead and Fay Weldon. Other discoveries we made in the process of the historical survey were that women writers who had risen to an isolated token prominence were not "freaks" to one side of the women's novel but part of

an entire galaxy of similar works dealing with much the same themes in much the same way; that we should not be put off by the "drowning effect" by which so many woman novelists disguised feminist critiques of the patriarchy by feints, ploys, and punishing denouements; and, finally, that although the triple handicap of being black, poor, and female made the situation of black proletarian heroes one of especial jeopardy, there was a striking consonance in sexual deprivation and discrimination making novels by blacks, poor whites, and middle class women recognizeable products of the same caste. Similarly, within the category of Erotic initiative, we found similar horrors suffered by lesbians, heterosexual lovers, and single women.[4]

The discovery made during the historical survey of greatest importance to my conclusions is related to this organic unity and cross-class, cross-race alerity. I had thought that the most significant differences in women's novels would occur along a horizontal scale from the conservative Novel of Manners, at the right end, and reformist and radical Novels of Marital Rebellion and Novels of Erotic Assertion, at the left end. From the eighteenth to the twentieth century, however, and from some of the most purportedly Cultish woman novelists to the most recent Neo-Feminists, there were far more outcries against the patriarchy at the right

end of the scale and far more accommodations to it at the left end and than one would have imagined. This lack of progression or evolution in the novel as a whole either at any given period of its history or during its entire development matched up with the cyclical repetition of modes and genres to suggest that it was a unique literary genre standing to one side of British and American literary history because of the constant and ineradicable alerity to which its authors and the women they wrote about were subjected. The novel, that is to say, was embodying a disjunction between woman and her society that was radical and constant.

The social function of the novel, which can be traced to the classical theories of comedy and tragedy, was not performing in the same way for women as it had been set up to do for men. The purpose of classical comedy and tragedy is that of a social ritual, by which the "abnormal" or anti-social tendencies in the audience are purged through laughter or pity in order to restore them to a sense of normalcy as members of the society promulgating these norms. This process of purgation and restoration, however, assumes that those purged and restored are all members of society as known, society as defined by given norms and mores. The problem for the woman in the audience, however, is that she is not and never has been a full fledged member of a society or culture, the knowers

and members of which have in western civilization always been assumed to be men. "Woman, in the picture language of mythology," remarks Joseph Campbell, "represents the totality of what can be known. The hero is the one who comes to know . . . and if he can match her import, the two, the knower and the known, will be released from every limitation. Woman is the guide to the sublime acme of spiritual adventure."[5] This Galatea-like function is not one of authentic being, of choice-making transcendence, but one of serving as a means or auxilliary to somebody else's development. It is this state of affairs, in which women are objects of value in a system of barter and exchange, which Levi-Strauss sees as definitional of human society: although he coyly cautions feminists not to worry about being symbols in man's language because "words do not speak, while women do," he insists that no society has ever existed in which women exchange men, while on the other hand, the core of human civilization is based upon the exchange of words and women by men.[6]

But what, I found myself asking, would the anthropologists and myth critics do if they came upon Galatea alive and well and carving a statue of Pygmalion (or, for that matter, of Sappho)? Is is precisely because the mythological patterns informing the structure of so many metaphysical systems in western thought are

male that it is assumed that women never have, never will, and shouldn't ever manipulate mythological materials. If a woman were to set out to seize upon the power of word and narrative and form an account of her own growth and development from them she would in that very act be sabotaging the culture which defines her as an element of use. If she has ever described the world of her unconscious this fact must be surpressed from academic and cultural studies: it is as if in entering the world of myth history in her own right she were penetrating male lodges where for centuries men have enacted rituals of reassurance to enable each other to come to terms with what they consider the unconscious of everybody, namely their own repressed ("female") depths; it is as if entering these clubs where men have been constructing masks of power to scare women and grotesquely exaggerated goddesses to titillate each other into transcending their gynophobia, women should seize upon the tools herself to construct representations of the energies and powers not for male use but for that of herself and of her sisters.

There is no question whatsoever that women have, not only since they began to write fiction in the late seventeenth century but throughout thousands of years of oral and craft traditions, performed for each other precisely this mythic function. A few

pioneering woman anthropologists and myth critics, such as Jane Harrison, Maud Bodkin, and Jessie Weston, were able during the early decades of this century to begin to look at these patterns and to try to come to terms with their relationship to male culture. Many feminist scholars and theoreticians in recent years have refused to undertake such a systematic study, however, being wary of archetypes which have historically been used to validate rather than to challenge sex roles and of an archetypal method which they suspect of reinforcing a gynophobic social mythos. A phenomenon particularly disheartening to woman scholars, moreover, is the constant encoding or swallowing of patriarchal norms by hero and author alike: woman authors seem to become addicted to "the drowning effect" because they veer unsteadily between a desire to shatter sex stereotypes and a terror of violating such deeply encoded taboos.

Thus, not only within women's literature taken as a whole but within the head of the individual woman author also, a battle goes on between male myths and a counter-myth of gender-free possibilities, a clash between two contrary mythoi which often strikes sparks in our darkness from the very impact of their meeting. "We shall have to understand the way mythic forces arise,

grow, and operate," writes Elizabeth Janeway, "I do not believe we shall ever get rid of them and, in fact, I do not believe that we could get on without them: they are the product of profound emotional drives, drives that are basic to life . . . sometimes (and particularly when they are thwarted) they substitute for action a will to believe that what they desire exists--or should exist. This is mythic thinking."[7] It is mythic thinking as the postulation of woman's desires for full humanity in this underground and thwarted sense that underlies her fiction, and it is only by understanding the mythic processes as they work themselves out in this material that we can appropriate for our own purposes the energies perennially brewing in the crucible of our desires.

Archetypal patterns are recurrent motifs made up of symbols, often patterned into narratives describing a process of the individual towards the greatest possible realization of her selfhood. As the individual quests for this goal she is met and forwarded by guides and set back by obstacles, just as in our dreaming state we come up against nightmares as well as visions of delight. The world of the myth follows the same principles of organization as that of the dream, deriving on the one hand from waking life and on the other hand from the depths of both the individual and the collective psyche of her sisters. The author bears the same

relationship to her unconscious materials as the dreaming self to the dreamer, organizing (and, frequently, censoring) them according to what she intends as the greatest enhancement of the reader. It is at this level that women's fiction provides a connection between the world of the individual consciousness and that of the history of her sex, mediated by the author's ability to make effective use of her materials and thwarted by the author's difficulties with her encoded patriarchal censor.

As I began to understand the fluid processes of mythological dynamics underlying women's fiction I applied my understanding of them to the material that we had surveyed, and I found that the emergent pattern in the material as a whole was one of a series of head on clashes between patriarchal "society as known" and the desire of woman heroes for full selfhood. Although narrative patterns in women's novels seemed set up to move the heroes towards personal development these quests rarely "got anywhere," the elements which would be progressive stages of initiation into society in the male bildungsroman being jumbled and inconclusive in the female genre. Even when woman heroes like Lillian in Anais Nin's Seduction of the Minotaur, Anna Wulf in Lessing's The Golden Notebook, and the narrator of Margaret Atwood's Fryean Surfacing undertook rebirth journeys deep into the labyrinthes of their unconscious

minds, the elixir of new selfhood that they achieved could not emerge into a society which was not constituted to receive them and their boon. The fiction of women from 1688-1975, at the risk of extreme simplification, took a pattern like this:

(See Figure 1 here)

The phenomena in the left hand column emerged from recurrent moments of epiphanic vision uniting a woman hero's consciousness with the world of nature, in a relationship that had characteristics unique from that of male heroes as they experience both nature and woman.[8] Young adolescent women, in particular, engage in fantasies of having a powerful place in the Green World and in nightmares of losing it, along with powers sometimes specifically herbal or agricultural; older women, after repeated backlashings from the patriarchy, frequently find themselves like H.D.'s Julia in Cornwall coming later in life to the same epiphanies: "This was real. She sat down on a rock. She unknotted her handkerchief and laid the stalk with the bulbous underwater leaves beside the leaves of the curled parsley-like plant. . . . She was Medea of some blessed incarnation, a witch with power. A wise-woman. She was seer, see-er. She was at home in this land of subtle psychic reverbations, as she was at home in a book."[9] Not only in self-consciously mythological novelists like H.D., Mary Webb, Naomi

Mitchison, Anais Nin, and Margaret Atwood, but in a broad range of authors including the most rational of eighteenth century proponents of classical moderation and the toughest of social realists such as Agnes Smedley and Doris Lessing, women have a unique relation with the Green World.

A special kind of lover emerges for such women, non-"civilizational" but hardly an overbearing Laurentian gamekeeper and in no way a figure before whom heroes are abject. The Corn God who appears in Cather and Mitchison, the "magnanimous hero" fantasized by Katharine Hilberry in Night and Day, the Whileawyain lovers in Joanna Russ' The Female/Man and Three in June Arnold's The Cook and the Carpenter, all represent a special kind of lover in opposition to what is available from the patriarchy. The hero's relationship to these is one of free choice, of a Diannic questing for the exercise of freely initiated Eros rather than of submission to rape and trauma. The propotypical example of such an a-patriarchal lover is Catherine's Heathcliff, whom Maud Bodkin rightly sees as the equivalent to Dante's Beatrice. Like all such lovers he is the deadly enemy of the Edgar Lintons whom one must marry, of the Edgar Lintons one must conceive by, the Edgar Lintons whose child will kill one so that one can merge in an erotic immortal epiphany with the Heath and Heathcliff, Green World and Green World lover become interchangeable.

Should a woman hero survive forced immurement in a marriage and the loss of power over the Green World and of Erotic initiative that it entails, she has one more choice in her quest for selfhood, and that is to turn back into herself, into her psyche, to undertake the journey inwards. But where the "night sea journey" described by Frobenius and adapted by Jung for the male hero at middle life takes him to the bottom of his psyche, through reconciliation with his anima, and back to rebirth into society as an integrated personality; the very spectre of the integrated or androgynous woman hero is considered placeless or a-cultural by definition, abnormal in Freud's view and "viriloid" or "masculinate" by Jung and his followers.[10] Thus the denouements of even the profoundest inward journey novels involve the return of the woman hero, having achieved the androgynous elixir beyond male and female, to a social world which has no place for her and which initiates at the mere sight of her a backlash in direct proportion to the degree of selfhood which she has achieved.

This unresolved or unsynthesized dialectic between feminism and the patriarchy is a fictional reflection of the fact that in spite of various political reforms (and perhaps because of the rising expectations engendered by them) the desire of women for human liberty has met at its every rising the downward, stultifying

backlash of gynophobia. The clash or deadlock in novelistic structures derives from a head on collision of male mythoi and a counter-mythos is woman's unconscious surging up to combat it. Every culture enslaved by an alien and dominant superculture dreams of a Golden World, a Jerusalem or West Africa of lost collective liberty, and the recent wave of activity described by Rennie and Grimstad includes renewed speculation concerning the existence of those ancient repositories of women's hopes and desires, stories of a Golden World of Women, of Green World Collectives, and of Amazons which have been passed down through the centuries. It was especially because I had not ever lent much credence to the historical existence of a Matriarchy that I was startled to discover that three traditions fuse in a series of inter-related analogues to the archetypal patterns we had uncovered in women's fiction: the matrilinear cultures described by such anthropological scholars as Evelyn Reed; the Grail legends sponsored originally by Eleanor of Acquitaine and researched by Jessie Weston and (of all people) Emma Jung in this century; and recent discoveries following Margaret Alice Murray concerning the survival to the present day of the Crafte of the Wise, or of the Wiccan.

It is extremely difficult for the woman scholar whose training is wholly in western patriarchal thought patterns to penetrate the glittering mirror of "civilization's" view of women to find her own face in the zinc beneath. It is fascinating to note that the

the early woman researchers to penetrate what Mary Daly calls the "Male Maya" and to discover mythological materials concerning women quite often did so in spite of a predisposition to sit at the feet of male myth critics who came to radically different conclusions. The findings of several such scholars are all too briefly summarized on the accompanying table:

(See Figure 2 here)

The ramifications of the analogues between the anthropological, archetypal, and occult materials concerning the history of women are extraordinarily exciting and complex, and should form the basis for further research and critical study. I intend, for example, to use the patterns rendered by the analogues as a hypothetical structure to describe the history of women's poetry in England and America, a history that has its roots in women's folklore, folk music, and art. There are several points which it seems valuable to isolate in summarizing the significance of archetypal theory to feminist criticism at this time:

1) Firstly, it seems important to take note of the centricity of Rape narratives to the material as a whole and to a traumatic recounting of such an event to the history of western literature. Joseph Campbell who, as we have seen, set out with a phallocentric view of cultural history, came to the conclusion after reading

Jane Harrison on the subject that the Goddesses of myth history were more likely to represent real, historically powerful women than images in the minds of men, and that the cultures governed by such mythoi of women might even be superior to those which superceded them. Campbell thus comes to describe the existence of a matrilinear culture on a world wide basis and considers the political equity and artistic civilization achieved by pre-Aryan Crete, Greece, and Ireland as models far superior to the "phallic moral order" which overthrew them.[11] This overthrowing, moreover, he sees as a core event underlying the rape narratives of such legends as the rape of Leda, Europa, and Persephone by Zeus and Plato. Evelyn Reed, similarly, notes that the tragic stories of Cleopatra and Medea rise from the situation of a matrilinear-culture leader falling in love with a member of a patriarchy, and sacrificing her own life and her own relatives for him. Much of male literature, in Reed's and Campbell's understanding, thus derives from the recurrent horror of raping or being raped by the other half of the human race.

2) Secondly, we find that the memory of the Rape Trauma is a perennial one, recurring at adolescence in the mind of each individual girl as she grows up only to be snuffed out, a situation reflected in the jumbled stages of the female

bildungsroman (consider Martha Quest backing like a zombie into the wringer of a "proper marriage") and in the preoccupation of so many novelists of female adolescence with grotesques, freaks, and madness.

3) Our inheritance from the prehistoric and historical past of women is not one-sidedly negative, however: the sense of loss which engenders the Rape Trauma implies something that is lost, and the recurrent images of a Diannic self-dependency, Erotic initiative, significant role in the Green World, and naturistic power in women's literature attest to the depth and continuity of women's desires. It does not particularly matter whether a world actually ever existed in which these desires were fulfilled, it seems to me: the important thing is the psychological patterning encoded in women's minds and literature suggesting the need for full exercise of these human powers. This positive inheritance of symbols, rituals, and stories of energy and power is not totally lost, then, but hieroglyphically encoded in the materials which were salvaged from the gynocide of the early modern period. It can hardly be a coincidence that it was precisely at the moment in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries when the witch burnings ceased that women emerged as prolific writers of the novels. Or, as Monique Wittig has put it, "There

was a time when you were not a slave, remember that. You walked alone, full of laughter, you bathed bare-bellied. You say you have lost all recollection of it, remember.... You say there are no words to describe this time, you say it does not exist. But remember. Make an effort to remember. Or, failing that, invent."[12]

4) Finally, it cannot be a coincidence that the entire tradition--anthropological, mythical, and literary--comes together in the figure of Eleanor of Acquitaine, the very woman who attempted to build up a code of anti-marital love in the hostile world of the crusades. Surely, in her sponsorship of the translation and continuation of the Grail material, she must have been aware of the woman-centered elements encoded in it, and perhaps even of the matrilinear cultures from which it derived.

The Grail's secret must be concealed
And never by any man revealed
For as soon as this tale is told,
It could happen to one so bold,
If the teller should have a wife,
Evil will follow him all his life

goes one warning, and no wonder! "Radical feminism," Mary Daly has remarked, "means saying 'Yes' to our original birth, the original movement-surge toward life. This is both a remembering and a rediscovering."[13]

At the end of the Grail quest and at the turning point of the Rebirth or Inward journey lies the "secret" of human life, and that "secret" is the achievement of androgyny matched with the ability to enhance the social collective through it. At a Modern Language Association Forum on androgyny in December, 1973, however, woman scholars raised severe questions as to the value of the concept of androgyny. What is the point, several asked, of talking about the splendid energies released in the androgynous personality when there is no way that such personalities can be incorporated into society as we know it? To Barbara Gelpi, for example, the term "androgyne" "conjures up the image of a person devoid of social context, or more likely the image of a man and woman, perfectly balanced, but devoid of context. In contrast, an Amazon, or a Witch, is a woman, a member of a group like herself, who in addition to private identities have collective power in the public realm."[14] In the modern novel, precisely as Gelpi suggests, it is the women who dwell in

a new space who are likely to be Amazons or Witches rather than coupled, extra-societal or eccentric beings in the root sense.

Only a few human beings in any given society can escape interaction with the collective, however, and the novel being an ineradicably social genre many women novelists find themselves wrestling with this question of how their heroes can relate to their social contexts. Doris Lessing sees the relationship between the individual and s/his culture as intricately balanced but organically essential to the life of both, a continual juggling act between the responsible individual and s/his society. Lessing also postulates a "Four-Gated City" as the ideal collective, one to which the individual can will submission without loss of liberty, an archetypal city which is at one and the same time a social possibility and a figure from the world of the unconscious. In Lessing's vision of the journey of various heroes to such an ideal city, Jean Pickering notes, "the outer life is parallel to the inner life; in the last analysis, Martha's experience seems to tell us, they are the same thing, for the further one goes into one's own rooms, the more one discovers that they are inhabited by all humanity."[15] The journey of the hero into her unconscious is thus primary in enabling her to comprehend what an ideal collective would be like: only the

self-collected person who has come to terms with the warfare within her mind may achieve the archetypal city. But over and against every ideal city that she postulates, Lessing places its opposite, in a dialectic reflected frequently in other such novels as in the opposition of the Arkansas town and the women's collective in The Cook and the Carpenter, between the present day village and historical women's collective in Sarton's Kinds of Love, between the utopian view of the May of Tec club and its reality in The Girls of Slender Means, between the heterosexual hell of Phil and Jackson's pad and the women's house in Small Changes, etc., etc. It is this same thematic interplay, moreover, between images of authentic companionship and social disintegration that determines the structure of Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway, The Waves, The Years, To The Lighthouse, and Between the Acts.

The archetype of the ideal collective, then, just as the archetype of the androgynous personality who inhabits it, seems to appear in women's fiction only as embodying its opposite, the tension between the two an inexorable presence as if every golden vision of a better world had to come trailing its shadow, the two locked in conflict. Where, the weary reader may well come to wonder, dwells the synthesis of these contraries? Are

the woman writer and her audience stuck forever in the unenviable posture of Chaucer's Crock striving with the wall, with nothing to show for their energies but the shards of shattered psyches? It is all very well for Northrop Frye to take note of the alteration in western visionary literature of "apocalyptic" and "demonic" symbologies, and for Lukacs to call upon us to examine the dialectics of history as embodied in literary structure; but if the dialectic never moves towards synthesis, if for every rock candy mountain there are a heap of drunks in a gutter and for every dream of a Martin Luther King a Memphis, the new "formalist anti-formalism" is nothing more than a literary critic's version of detente.

It seems possible, fortunately, to postulate a more hopeful way of looking at the relationship between novel and society, of comprehending the function of the novel for its reading audience that gives us an understanding of the landscape of women's fiction as more than a mirror of Chinese water torture. If we understand the final synthesis of the fictional dialectic as taking place not within the work itself but in the relationship between the work and society, then it can be seen as moving towards a synthesis of the contraries of which it is composed. Such a relationship between fiction and its audience, or between the

novel and the individual reader, is comparable to that between the dream and its dreamer. In waking life, that is to say, we derive benefits from those long hours of the night spent in the world of the inner mind, where we flex our muscles in the experience of utopia and nightmare alike. Fiction, in my definition, can be comprehended as a construction of the imagination by which psychic strengths are exercised both in relation to the negative aspects of the patriarchy and to the positive aspects of our true capabilities.

Women novelists have, in this definition, been gathering us around a two-hundred-and eighty-seven year campfire in order both to stir us by "spooking" and to provide us with adventures for emulation. We have been provided maps of the sexual battle-field and of the landscape of our encoded alerity, as well as visions of individual and collective possibilities which transcend battles and landscapes alike. We have been strengthened by moments of epiphany when we feel, in experiencing what woman heroes experience, a quality rising from the depths of our being which altogether transcends the polarity of male and female, individual and collective polarities imposed upon us by modes of thinking alien to us. What women's fiction has provided for us, as Carolyn Heilbrun notes for both male and female genres, are

"undreamed of complexities" by which it "becomes symbolic in a universe unknown to its author and his [sic] intentions."[16]

What may be unclear or hieroglyphic to the individual author can be made comprehensible by the feminist critic when she places the symbols and narrative structures of one literary work next to others. When archetypal patterns in women's fiction are considered side by side with the findings of such scholars as Millett, Reed, Elaine Morgan, Jessie Weston, Maud Bodkin, and Emma Jung we are able to emerge from the dark forest where we have barely been able to discern the outline of each other's faces into the full sunlight of mutual recognition. This is what scholarship is about, and this is the heady and delightful task to which, I feel, archetypal theory can contribute. Not only in the field of feminist literary criticism, but also in the interdisciplinary exchange of the women's studies classroom, we have seen, as Robin Morgan recently noted, the "welcome end of anti-intellectual trends.... We are daring to demand and explore the delights of hard intellectual work, both as personal challenge and as shared necessity....we are daring to research our own cleverly buried herstorical past."[17]

Although scholarly objectivity and the inductive method to which I have adhered throughout my career can be frightening in

their results, I have been grateful to them for jogging me out of preconceptions which do not hold true to women's history. I have come full circle, for example, from a disbelief in the significance of Amazon legends and Matriarchal materials to a realization of the centricity of these stories to the desire of women for full human development. Although concepts of women as special rather than equitable with men have been perverted in the doctrines of the Courtly, Renaissance, and Victorian Cult of True Womanhood, I have had to reject my initial distaste for the concept of a special nature of women because of the results of my research. The fact that such perversions of an originally woman-enhancing world view have occurred must not turn us aside from the consideration of those elements encoded upon our psyches as the residue of thousands of years of trauma, submission, and resistance. The fact that men mythologize us as earth mothers to play out childish fantasies upon or as landscapes to wander over should not turn us aside, similarly, from the examination of our long tradition of stories of power shared with animals, plants, the sky and the universe itself, which are all part of what Morgan "lovingly name(s) metaphysical feminism," ready for ecstatic reclamation. Seeking these things,

suspending our prejudgements, we will find ourselves engaged in scholarly inquiries that become one among other pathways to the root self, to the healing waters of our innermost being.

Footnotes

1. Rita Mae Brown, "It's All Dixie Cups to Me," Quest vol. 1 no. 3, p. 49.

2. See Lillian Robinson, "Dwelling in Decencies," College English (May 1971) and Annis Pratt, "Archetypal Approaches to the New Feminist Criticism," Bucknell Review (Spring 1973).

3. Susan Rennie and Kirsten Grimstad, "Spiritual Explorations Cross-Country," Quest vol. 1 no. 4, pp. 49-50.

4. This thesis is posited by Barbara White in "Growing up Female: Adolescent Girlhood in American Literature," University of Wisconsin-Madison dissertation, 1974.

5. Joseph Campbell, The Hero With a Thousand Faces (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949), p. 116.

6. Claude Levi-Strauss, Structural Anthropology, trans. Claire Jacobson and Brooke Gundfest Schoepf, (London: the Penguin Press, 1968), pp. 61-2 as quoted by Juliet Mitchell, Psychoanalysis and Feminism (New York: Vintage, 1974), p. 371.

7. Elizabeth Janeway, Man's World, Woman's Place (New York: Delta, 1971), p. 27.

8. See Annis Pratt, "Women and Nature in Fiction," Contemporary Literature (Fall 1972).

9. Hilda Doolittle, Bid Me To Live (New York: Grove Press, 1960), p. 146.

10. Annis Pratt, "Archetypal Approaches to the New Feminist Criticism."

11. Joseph Campbell, Creative Mythology (New York: The Viking Press, 1968), p. 62.

12. Monique Wittig, Les Guerilleures as quoted by Morgan McFarland, "Witchcraft: The Art of Remembering," Quest vol. 1 no. 4, p. 41.

13. Jessie Weston, quoted from Elucidation in From Ritual to Romance (Garden City: Doubleday, 1957), p. 136 and Mary Daly, "The Qualitative Leap Beyond Patriarchal Religion," Quest vol. 1 no. 4, p. 26.

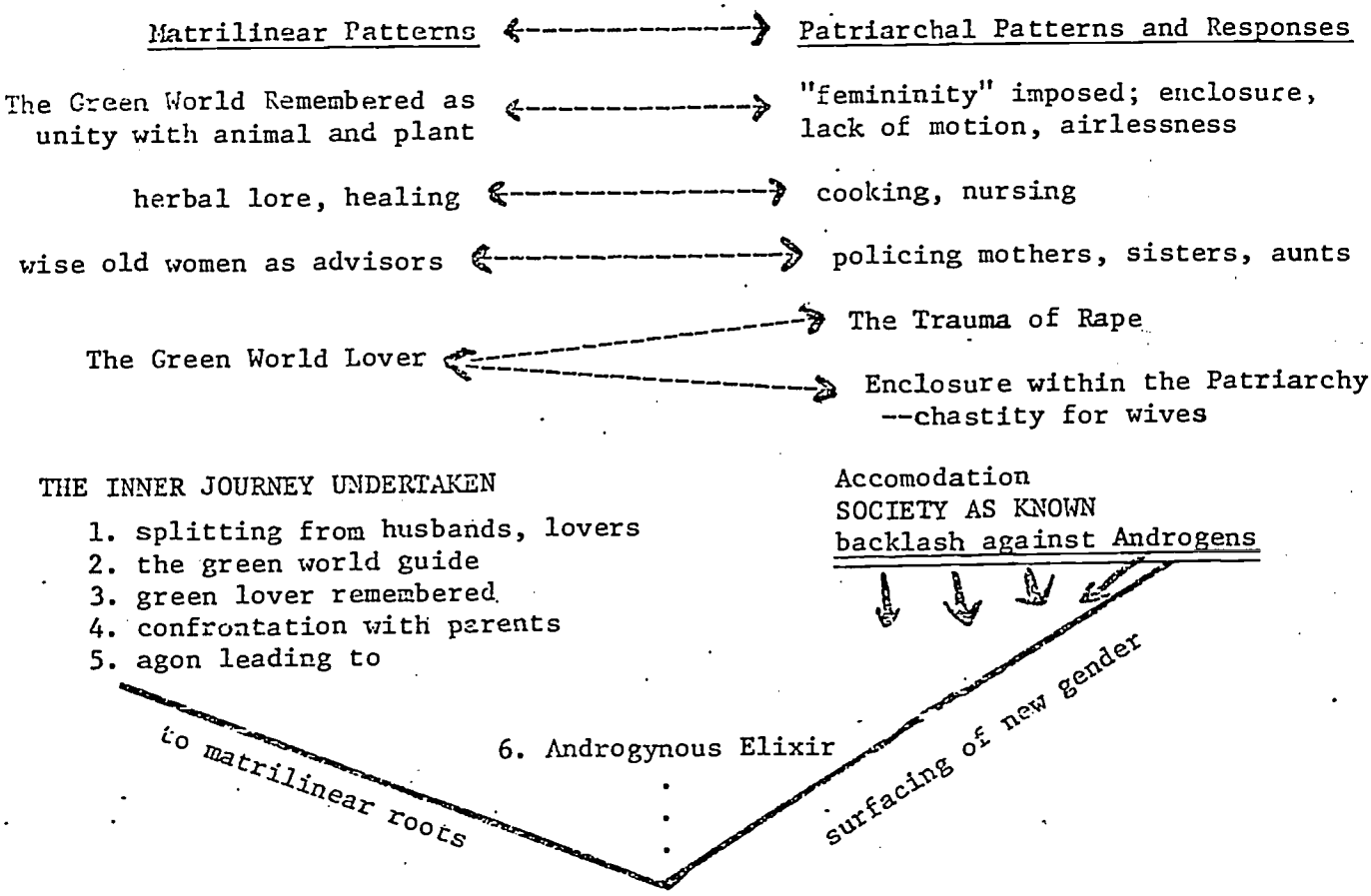
14. Cynthia Secor, "Androgyny: An Early Reappraisal," Women's Studies vol. 2, no. 2 (1974), p. 163.

15. Jean Pickering, "The Connection Between the 'Politics of the Left' and 'The Politics of Madness' in the Work of Doris Lessing," MLA Doris Lessing Seminar Paper, 1973, pp. 13-14.

16. Carolyn Heilbrun, Toward a Recognition of Androgyny (New York: Knopf, 1973), p. 51.

17. Robin Morgan, "Rights of Passage," Ms (September 1975), pp. 78, 101.

ARCHETYPAL PATTERNS IN WOMEN'S FICTION



EXPLANATION
(for examples and further analysis, see Chapter VII, Feminism and Fiction)

This schema differs from similar schema for male heroes in a drastic fashion, most importantly in the fact that its elements cannot be given numbers or chronological placement within a sequence of phases. This occurs because woman is not being initiated into society as a whole, society as a whole considering her as a non-member. Her deepest images and symbols are "pre-civilizational," a-cultural, precisely because she is defined (by Levi-Strauss, inter alia) by male culture as a token or subpart of it. For every aspect there is an immediate and strong counteraspect, thus the arrows with double ends suggesting continual deadlock, a deadlock that is reflected in the structure of women's fiction. Most pointedly, the deep plunge into the Inner Journey is almost invariably concluded with a return to society as known resulting in an even stronger downward thrust or backlash than usual, the elixir of androgyny being the direst of threats to "civilization."

Correspondingly, such traditional genres as comedy and tragedy are swollen and burst within women's fiction, male and female characteristics puffed up and exploded without social alternatives suggested, although characters with androgynous qualities are indeed the heroes.

ANTHROPOLOGICAL PATTERNS Evelyn Reed, Woman's Evolution: From Matriarchal Clan to Patriarchal Family (1975)	MYTH CRITICISM: GRAIL PATTERNS Jessie Weston, From Ritual to Romance (1919); Emma Jung and Von Franz, The Grail Legend (70)	THE WICCE: Margaret Murray, The God of the Witches (1931) Morgan McFarland, material from "Quest"	ARCHETYPAL PATTERNS IN WOMEN'S FICTION, 1668-1975, Annis Pratt
I. The Green World Culture (my term)--Cross-cultural analysis of primitive cultures reveals matrilinear societies in which women have developed a culture in balance with but quite different from that of men. Women are primarily occupied with cooperative activities (agriculture, pottery, etc.) males with hunting and fighting.[1]	I. Stories of a lost culture with women in a prominent position in the Matière de Bretagne, which suddenly became popular at the Courts of Eleanor of Acquitaine and Marie de France in the 12th century. In both stories and Mithraic rituals which Weston sees as their source women are crucial.	I. Stories of powerful groups of women, linked to the "fairy" and elf people of Arthurian legend (e.g. the Witches of Glouchester, Morgan la Fée) who are versed in green world lore, the healing arts and propitiatory methods of "bringing prosperity to the land and people." Their lore transmitted in "sacred colleges" on "women's islands."[5]	I. The Green World Remembered as unity with and power to utilize animals and plants, e.g. Indian women in Mary Austin; Julia in H.D.'s Bid Me to Live (60) feeling herself to be "Medea of some blessed incarnation, a witch with power"; green world lore of regionalist women, Cather, etc.
II. Erotic Freedom for Women --Living patterns are separate as are eating habits (women vegetarian, men eat meat) and sex takes place in between. Freedom to come and go for women; biological paternity not being understood however, she conceives her children, they remain with her or her male relatives.[2]	II. In Mithraic rituals of the green (vegetable) world underlying the Grail material the lament of the death of Adonis is central, with women tearing their hair over his death and a woman always the key to his rebirth. Pratt: the lament for lost erotic freedom seems implicit.[4]	II. Rites centering around Old Hornie, or Cernunnos or "Pan," corresponding to the Minotaur of Crete. This figure is not worshipped for his phallic maleness but as an activator of the Erotic power of the followers of the Virgin Huntress Diana.[4]	II. The Green World Lover. Cather's Corn God in O Pioneers! Woolf's green world orgasm/epiphany in Voyage Out and Katherine's "magnanimous hero" in Night and Day; Brontë's Heathcliff as one with the heath; sexuality as visionary between Lessing's Martha and Thomas, Jack.
III. Mother's Brother--This relative helps the family or group in times of warfare, descent being reckoned in mother's line. Women share governance, female elders help elect leaders.	III. According to Wolfram von Eschenbach's Parzival version of the grail legends the Fisher King was Perceval's Mother's Brother	III. Query: is there brother material in witch cults, related to the Egyptian pattern of having a ruling woman in partnership with her own brother?	III. Abandonment by one's uncles and brothers to the mill of the patriarchy: e.g. Maggie and Tom in Mill on the Floss,
IV. The Rape Trauma--Gradual seizure of women's powers over agriculture, etc., by men, primarily involving the supplanting of rights over women and offspring by husband's family. Trauma of shift leads to bloody propitiation rites, including child sacrifice (partitioning and dramatic enactments (e.g. Medea) eventually mitigated by private property and lump sum rather than lifetime offerings.[3]	IV. The Rape of the Pays de Logres. A land of beneficent women, who could give a traveler anything he wanted from a golden bowl, was laid waste after one of the maidens was raped by a king named Amangon and her bowl stolen. Logres parallels women's islands "to the west" such as Avalon; Ireland under the matrilinear Danaans.	IV. The Loss of the Lore in the Gynocide of 1300-1900. Estimated 30 million women and girls drawn, burned, quartered, hung, tortured, with the result that "those who were herbalists let their gardens go to seed....Those who kept the ancient matrifocal law did so within the confines of their homes."[5]	IV. The rape trauma embodied in women's fiction: Dianic heroes subdued (Eliot's Maggie, Bronte's Shirley, Schreiner's Lyndall, Phelps' Avis, etc.); actual rapes in Small Changes, Webb's Gone to Earth, etc. followed by ENCLOSURE IN THE PATRIARCHY which leads to a splitting from husbands and lovers and the -- INNER JOURNEY UNDERTAKEN
V. Drama, Rites, and eventually, Literature and the Arts enact the trauma, propitiate the mother's brother's ghost, purge both men and women's guilt over the transactions.	V. The Quest of the Grail as a search for true personhood or maturity via Androgyny. According to Emma Jung Perceval must reconcile his silly excessive masculinity to his anima.	V. The centricity of the "mother pot" or Cauldron, which in some grail stories is a stone (such as primitive women grind corn in) ought to be parelleled to the Grail or Golden Bowl figure.	1. The green world remembered through a guide or token. 2. The Green World Lover recalled or met. 3. Confrontation with parents within the mind. 4. Final agon leading to 5. Elixir of androgyny and 6. Return to patriarchy, backlash

1,2,3. For parallels in primate and prehistorical social patterns see Jane Goodall, In the Shadow of Man (71) and Elaine Morgan, The Descent of Woman (72). 4. Esther Harding, in Woman's Mysteries (71), defines Virginity in the ancient world as the quality of a woman who belonged to herself, either giving of herself where she pleases or practicing celibacy out of choice.
5. "Witchcraft: The Art of Remembering," Quest (Spring, 1975) pp. 41-48.