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***BLUTBRÜDERSCHAFT: REPRESENTATIONS OF BISEXUALITY IN THE
CHARACTERS BIRKIN AND GERALD IN D.H. LAWRENCE'S NOVEL WOMEN
IN LOVE***

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Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso (TCC) apresentado ao curso de Licenciatura em Letras – Habilitação em Língua Inglesa da Universidade Estadual da Paraíba (UEPB), como requisito parcial à obtenção do título de Licenciado em Letras Habilitação em Língua Inglesa.

Área de concentração: Literatura Inglesa.

Orientador: Prof. Me. Thiago Rodrigo de Almeida Cunha

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*“For the probity of breeches she exchanged
the seductiveness of petticoats and enjoyed the
love of both sexes equally.”*

IV – Orlando
Virginia Wolf

RESUMO

O objetivo deste trabalho será analisar algumas representações da bissexualidade presente no romance *Women in Love* de D.H. Lawrence, sob a perspectiva da noção de *Blutbrüderschaft* explorada por Lawrence. Analisaremos o comportamento dos personagens Birkin e Gerald através da análise da linguagem sexualmente sugestiva e ambígua usada pelo escritor, visto que contribui tanto para o embelezamento erótico da obra quanto para expressar uma possível uma relação "homoerótica" entre eles. Trata-se de uma pesquisa bibliográfica e os instrumentos de investigação usados foram o romance *Women in Love* (1920) e o aporte teórico de estudiosos que abordaram o fenômeno da bissexualidade e da sexualidade humana: Butler (1999); Freud (1905); Foucault (1978), Storr (1976); Lewis (2012); Carneiro (2017); Seffner (2003); Rapoport (2009); Angelides (2001); assim como concepções do *Blutbrüderschaft* Lawrenciano (COWAN, 1992; PINTO, 1975; BRANDÃO, 1985). Como resultado de nossa análise, concluímos que o conceito de *Blutbrüderschaft* proposto por Lawrence relaciona-se ao comportamento bissexual dos personagens e que a bissexualidade parece ser uma das questões exploradas pela literatura pós-vitoriana de D. H. Lawrence.

Palavras-chave: *Blutbrüderschaft*. Bissexualidade. D.H. Lawrence. Literatura Pós-Vitoriana.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this work will be to analyse some representations of bisexuality present in D.H. Lawrence's novel *Women in Love* under the perspective of Lawrence's notion of *Blutbrüderschaft*. We shall analyse the behaviour of the characters Birkin and Gerald through the analysis of sexually suggestive and ambiguous language that contribute both to the erotic embellishment of the work as well as shows a possible 'homoerotic' bond between them. This is a bibliographical research and the instruments of investigation will be the novel *Women in love* (1920); the theoretical support of scholars who approached the phenomenon of bisexuality and human sexuality such as Butler (1999), Freud (1905), Foucault (1978), Storr (1976), Lewis (2012), Carneiro (2017), Seffner (2003), Rapoport (2009), Angelides (2001). As well as Lawrence's conceptions of *Blutbrüderschaft* (COWAN, 1992; PINTO, 1975; Brandão, 1985). As result of the analysis, we concluded that Lawrence's ideas about *Blutbrüderschaft* relates to *bisexuality*, which also seems to be one of the issues explored by D. H. Lawrence's Post-Victorian Literature.

Key-words: *Blutbrüderschaft*. Bisexuality. D.H. Lawrence. Post-Victorian Literature.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

WL (Women in Love)

CLC (Lady Chatterley's lover)

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INTRODUCTION

The beginning of the 20th century was the scenario of many events that marked the world. Imperialist disputes, the threat of a great war, and several political-economic and cultural revolutions greatly influenced intellectual and artistic production. In addition, following the ‘waves’ of revolutions, the modernist movement emerges, revealing the British poet and novelist D.H. Lawrence (1885-1930) as a great pre-modern writer (See SWARNAKAR, 1998, p.46; SALTER, 2013, p.11, p. 225). Lawrence's works proved exuberantly complexity in style, themes, and philosophies that credited him the fame of a challenging and renewing writer of his time.

Women in love, published in 1920 was shocking to English conservative society because it was considered obscene or even pornographic; his novel involves taboos that are still controversial today. The work brings out several aspects of sexuality within which bisexuality (See PINTO, 1975, p. 34; BRANDÃO, 1985, p. 12). The novel deals with complex relationships among people of different personalities and suggestive homoerotic sexual and affective behaviours.

In this article, we will use as theoretical support some ideas of the psychoanalytic philosophy of Sigmund Freud (1905) and some perspectives of the theories of cultural studies and queer theories on sexuality treated by Judith Butler (1999) and contemporaries. This research adopts an essentially qualitative and bibliographical approach. We will use as instruments of investigation the novel *Women in love* (1920) by D.H. Lawrence. And works of theorists as Butler (1990); Cowan (1992); Freud (1905); Foucault (1978 [a] ;1984 [b]); Storr (1976); Lewis (2012); Brandão (1985); Carneiro (2017); Seffner (2003); Rapoport (2009); Angelides (2001); Salter (2013); Pinto (1975); Callis (2009), Salter (2013); Swarnakar (1998) and Dantas (2019).

The purpose of this work will be to analyse the representations of bisexuality in English D. H. Lawrence’s novel *Women in love* (1920) under the perspective of Lawrence’s notion of *Blutbrüderschaft*. Our specific purposes will be (1) Discuss Lawrence’s conception of *Blutbrüderschaft* presented by his character Birkin in the novel and its relation to a possible representation of bisexual behaviour of the characters. (2) Analyse how the ambiguity of sexually suggestive language throughout the narrative (mainly in chapter XX – *Gladiatorial*) may contribute both to the erotic embellishment of the work as well as show a possible ‘homoerotic’ relationship between the male characters Birkin and Gerald. Lastly, we shall

also try to find how Lawrence euphemized homoerotic images throughout that language most likely due to the strong influence Post-Victorian English puritanism acted over him.

This is going to be possible through the observation and interpretation of their dialogues and the narration discourses in some relevant sexually suggestive passages of the book associated with the reading of a large amount of works, dissertations, thesis about Lawrence's work as well as many others on the theme of bisexuality.

Regarding the division of our work, we shall begin with a general historical overview of the end of the Post-Victorian period in England that we also might call pre-modernist moment. Then, we will make a brief biographical summary of David Herbert Lawrence (1885-1930) and his novel *Women in love* (1920) that is our object of study whereby we try to approach the theme of bisexuality. For this, we will show a summary of the work to contextualize the reader about the narrative and the time in which the work was written. Soon after, we will continue the discussion through expositions of three perspectives related to bisexuality to support our research. The first will deal with an etymological view of bisexuality that takes into consideration the mythological origins of the term as well as the practices of Pederasty in Ancient Greeks; sexual subordination practices in Ancient Rome; Japanese *Shudo* Practices; and Chinese *Laotong* Sisterhoods (LEWIS, 2012; SEFFNER, 2003; FOCAULT, 1978; STORR, 1976; DANTAS, 2019). The second will present a Freudian psychoanalytic view of bisexuality (here seen under the perspective of cultural studies) as a psychical combination of the feminine and masculine personalities in individual's minds in his famous *Three essays on the theory of Sexuality* (FREUD, 1905; RAPOPORT, 2009). Lastly the perspective of Judith Butler and Foucault's cultural studies on sexuality (and the contributions of queer theories and bisexual etymologies to the comprehension of bisexuality and sexuality in Lawrence's work (BUTLER, 1999; FOCAULT, 1978a – 1985b; LEWIS, 2012; STORR, 1976; CARNEIRO, 2017; SEFFNER, 2003; SALTER, 2013).

Following, we shall begin a discussion on the concept of *Blutbrüderschaft* or male blood brotherhood presented in the novel through Lawrence's philosophies of homosocial male bond guided by Cowan (1992) discussion of *Blutbrüderschaft*, which brings up a connection to the ideas of male fear of the "Great Mother" and the preservation of the "Self". Further, we will try to relate Gerald and Birkin's erotically suggestive language and its relation to Lawrence's notion of *Blutbrüderschaft* represented by Birkin. For finishing our analysis, we are going to focus on the homoerotic suggestive language in chapter XX –

Gladiatorial in which we try to show how the characters and narrator's voice shows the reader an implicit and euphemized atmosphere of homoeroticism.

Finally, we will finish our discussion by making a reiteration of what we will have discussed throughout the author's ideas and the analysis of the work as well as making our conclusion by suggesting the importance of Lawrence's work to arise some preoccupation in Post-Victorian Literature regarding the themes of human sexuality. Moreover, we aim to observe how possible representations of bisexuality take place in Lawrence's fiction.

2. POST-VICTORIAN ERA AND D.H. LAWRENCE'S EROTIC LITERATURE

2.1. Historical Background

The transition period between the Victorian Era to Modernism began to spread in England and Europe in the late 19th to early 20th century (SALTER, 2012, p. 13). Soon after, one could see the rapid development of scientific and technological discoveries stemming from the industrial revolution. Beyond this factor, the literary production in that period was strongly associated with the ideologies that came from scientific discoveries and social, political and cultural changes of the world at war. The First World War profoundly influenced Western thought and cultural paradigms of European and world society (SALTER, 2012, p. 225).

Literary productions were motivated by the revolutionary ideals of a conflictive social, political, and intellectual scenario changing so fast. Darwinian Evolutionary ideas, the emergence of Freudian psychoanalysis, the transformations of philosophical and racial conceptions, and cultural changes within the anthropological field all contributed to the emergence of a completely new and original literature (SALTER, 2012, pp. 225-226; RAPOPORT, 2009).

Artists such as Oscar Wilde, Virginia Woolf, and D.H. Lawrence stood out as writers who broke standards and challenged cultural stigmas heavily crystallized by conservative late 19th century Victorian society, such as man's "inward wars" and issues about human sexuality. Lawrence became well known for his exposing 'sex' as a central idea of a novel instead of merely using it as a backdrop of Victorian bourgeois romanticism (PINTO, 1975). Moreover, its implications for a big revolutionary change in English literature is quite noticeable.

2.2 David Hebert Lawrence

D. H. Lawrence (1885-1930) was born on September 11, 1885 in a small house in Nottinghamshire. Son of Arthur Lawrence (1846-1924) and Lydia Beardsall (1851-1910). Lawrence was a son of a collier and most of his works are essentially autobiographical by showing detailed features of his childhood, teenager and adulthood in the Midlands. At the age of 12, he became the first boy in Eastwood's history to win a scholarship to Nottingham High School. As a grownup, he worked as a teacher and then became a writer (WORTHEN, 1997). In March 1912, Lawrence met Frieda Weekley, a married woman and wife of his professor Earnest Weekley at Nottingham University. Lawrence and Frieda ran away together and in 1914, they married after Frieda had divorced. According to Pinto (1975),

He devoted himself entirely to literature and his writings do not have any genre boundary. He wrote novels, tales, short stories, travel books, literary criticism, critical essays, poems, and even made some excursions into the area of painting. But he mastered above all the novel and in the novel, he was considered an innovative genius (PINTO, 1975, p. 1)

He has written many novels and poems, but his main works might have been *Sons and Lovers* (1913), *The Rainbow* (1915) and *Women in Love* (1920), although he was best known for his famous *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928).

2.3 Women in Love

Women in love, published in 1920 had been shocking to English conservative society. Considered obscene for portraying conditions of human sexuality that were not accepted by puritan Victorian society, his novel involves taboos that are still controversial today, and even more at that time. The novel is about complex love relationships among the Brangwen sisters – Ursula and Gudrun – with Rupert Birkin and Gerald Crich, respectively. It also deals with the matter of ‘possible homoerotic’ love between the two men as well. The novel deals with heterosexual relationships between the two couples; however, it implicitly depicts a homoerotic relationship between the main male characters, which characterize their affairs as bisexual. Unlike other of his works, such as *Lady Chatterley's (1928)* or *Sons and Lovers (1913)*, in which Lawrence addresses heterosexual love, *Women in Love* shows the complications experienced by bisexual lovers. The sisters met them at a

wedding party where they fell in love with them. The male characters as well as the two women are emotionally intense and often confused about love and life. Ursula is a teacher and a modern woman who does not see in marriage the lifeline to all women. Gudrun, her younger sister is an artist and quite a sort of an activist woman of her time. She tries to conquer her space as an independent woman in a conservative society. She will have an affair with Gerald. Gerald Crich is the heir of a coalmine; he is an 'industrial magnate'. He is a complex character, since he struggles with his double feelings toward Gudrun and Birkin. He always feels 'incomplete' for not understanding or accepting his love for Birkin and Gudrun at the same time. Rupert Birkin is a school inspector who works in the same place as Ursula. He seems to be the most 'sensible' among the group, but no less sentimentally complex. It seems Birkin adopts a philosophy of life based on principles of freedom of thought. Birkin seems to be one of those kinds of non-conformist men. He does not accommodate into the 'affected' lifestyle of society, but rather craves for 'spontaneity'. He said, "[he] hate standards [...] it's the hardest thing in the world to act spontaneously on one's impulses" (WL, p. 30). He is in love with Ursula and his friend Gerald. Because of this, he tries to develop his own philosophy about 'marriage' and sexuality in which he criticizes the standard model of marriage imposed by society and try to develop a way of having a 'balanced heterosexual' relationship with Ursula through 'sex marriage' additional to a different kind of 'friendship' with Gerald. He "[is] not interested in legal marriage, one way or another. It's a mere question of convenience." (WL, p.392). In order to justify his pattern of idealistic male bond, he elaborates theories about blood brotherhood (COWAN, p. 193).

Women in Love brings a strong influence of the romanticism inherited from the Victorian Era. The exploration of themes such as death, the valorisation of individuality and the criticism of the mechanized thinking and behaviour of industrial society are marks of this influence (See SALTER, 2013, p. 225). However, one can also see that there is a strong tone of challenge and a craving for rupture with the 'old patterns' of Victorian novels – usually beginning with the romantic conflicts among the characters and its later classic resolution with a wedding beyond the valorisation of blood-consciousness, (SALTER, 2013, p. 226). *Women in Love*, on the contrary already begins with a wedding party observed by the two Brangwen sisters from the church cemetery, as if this fact already foreshadowed a devaluation of the institution of marriage, as well as its relation with the idea of 'death' and 'destruction'. It seems that Lawrence's novel demarcates an intermediate boundary between two great literary moments, that is, a transition from Victorian Romanticism to Modernism (SALTER, 2013, p. 225).

3. THREE PERSPECTIVES ON BISSEXUALITY

3.1 Bisexual Etymologies

According to Foucault (1978), an “incitement to talk about sex” raised in the early 18th century (p. 23). Sexuality became a matter constantly treated by several instances, especially medical discourse. Large numbers of "analysis, stocktaking, classification, and specification, of quantitative or causal studies" (1978, p.24) was developed by theorists of different areas since mythical astrology, medicine, psychiatry and philosophy.

From the late 19th and early 20th centuries, scientific production allowed the development of new perspectives in the field of sexuality. They sought to explain issues of human sexual behaviour that had so long been concerned as 'sins' for religion (See FOUCAULT, 1978). Bisexuality entered in the list of issues linked to these investigations and from 1970s, it became more emphatically discussed.

3.1.1 Mythology and Bisexuality

Bisexuality has long been associated with the idea of immaturity, infantilism, and indecision, among many other visions that related to an ambiguous and transient sexual nature (RAPOPORT, 2009; ANGELIDES, 2001). Bisexuality was also comparable to hermaphroditism and had its origins in largely quantity of mythical narrations from different cultures. In *Vice Versa: Bisexuality and the Eroticism of Everyday Life* (1995) Garber comments that

As it happens, the transsexual, the hermaphrodite, and the homosexual have all been very much part of the history of ‘bisexuality’ as it has evolved in scientific and social discourse. The word ‘bisexual’ first had reference to the copresence of male and female sexual organs (and sometimes reproductive capacities) in the same body. Early psychoanalytic writings equated ‘bisexuality’ with hermaphroditism, regarding what we would today call bisexuality—sexual attraction to both men and women—as an aspect of homosexuality, or ‘sexual inversion’ (GARBER, 1995 *apud* STORR, 1999, p.142).

It is been seen that the notion of bisexuality was closely related to the physical characteristic of individuals possessing genitalia of both male and female sex – the

hermaphrodite (what is nowadays known as intersex people). Soon the idea of bisexuality was linked to a supposed feminine and masculine psychological disposition in a single individual (FREUD, 1905), and finally an endless stream of research in the field of cultural studies that presents different definitions for the term bisexual.

Regarding the origins of bisexuality, we realize that many mythical narratives have tried to explain this phenomenon of sexuality for so many centuries analysed by different historical-cultural perspectives and contexts. Seffner (2003, p. 46) states that "some Greek myths [...] act as founding myths of bisexuality and associated themes such as androgyny, transexualism, hermaphroditism and homosexuality."

According to Greek mythology, Hermes, emissary of the gods and Aphrodite, goddess of the beauty had a son. Hermaphroditus was a beautiful fifteen years young man. Once he went out to explore the surrounding forests where he met Salmacis, the nymph of the fountain. She suddenly fell in love with him and grabbed him up while tried to kiss him. He rejected her and went away. When he thought he was alone by a lake he took his clothes off and got into the water to bath. The nymph had beseeched the gods to unite her body to his forever. Once he entered into the lake, she enlaced him and pressed her body so tightly against his that they fused into a single being half man, half woman.

From the myth one can see that there is an essentially binary and essentialist view in its narratives, since somehow an attempt is made to explain the attraction of more than one sex legitimized by the physical union of the male and feminine – the hermaphrodite. Centuries later there would be a transition from the exclusively biological point of view to a conception of psychic bisexuality supported by Freudian theories and then as a culturally sexual practice present among different societies and times.

3.1.2 The Greek Pederasty

Pederasty practice in the Greek world during the Ancient period was so commonplace that, basically, it was considered the 'norm' in that society. The love among men including sexual love was very much valued in Ancient Greece. According to Lewis (2012), pederasty consisted in a process of learning, intellectual development of the young boy named "*paidika*" (pp. 28-29) with an older man. That latter, in turn, served as a 'tutor' or teacher who in addition to initiating the young man in his first sexual practices, he also served as a moral and philosophical mirror so that the boy became a citizen with erudition and respectability.

Lewis (2012) quotes Mengel (2009) by pointing out that bisexual practices in Ancient Greece were, besides one of the expressions of human desires, a useful military strategy. According to the author, the bonds of love between these men and their *paidika* made them more courageous and did not abandon themselves in difficult times in the wars. In this way, bisexuality in Greek society supported its dual mainly purposes: love between man and woman served primarily for reproduction; while the love between man and his *paidika* served to strengthen military ties.

However, it is interesting to note that when thinking about bisexual practices among the Greeks, one cannot associate this way of expressing sexuality with the notion of bisexuality that one has nowadays. Bisexual practices at that time were not seen as an intermediary orientation or identity between homosexuality and heterosexuality (LEWIS, 2012, p.29). It is fundamental to understand this conception of bisexuality from the perspective presented by Michael Foucault in his *History of Sexuality: The use of pleasure* (1984), where he states that

We can talk about their "bisexuality," thinking of the free choice they allowed themselves between the two sexes, but for them this option was not referred to a dual, ambivalent, and "bisexual" structure of desire. To their way of thinking, what made it possible to desire a man or a woman was simply the appetite that nature had implanted in man's heart for "beautiful" human beings, whatever their sex might be (FOUCAULT, [1984] – v. 2. translated by Robert Hurley [1985]:188-203).

In this way, one can perceive that sexuality is treated in a different way: there are, however, taboos and prejudices, in their case what mattered was not the sex choice of the beloved one, but their age. One respectful man was supposed to be in love with both a woman and his *padika*, but never with another man of his age or older that he was.

3.1.3 Ancient Rome bisexuality

Bisexuality in Ancient Rome was also socially accepted and even considered the standard model of sexuality. However, not to say that this sexual freedom was "so free" there were social rules that should be maintained: what mattered in this society was only the symbolic social order of domination. Thus, as in almost all societies in the West and East, the masculine has always had its hegemonic prestige.

Sexuality, as Foucault (1985, p. 14) states, is a clear way of imposing domination of certain individuals on others. In ancient Rome, it was no different: The power relations

established by the male social order through bisexual relations were given not by the homosexual or heterosexual duality but by the dualities of active/passive; dominator/dominate; man /woman; free man/ slave (LEWIS, 2012, p. 31).

3.1.4 *Shudo* in Ancient Japan

According to Lewis (2012), the aristocracy of Japanese society during the feudal period allowed bisexual practices among men. According to the same author, these practices were called *Shudo*.

Shudo was a form of affectionate and sexual relationship between a young samurai and his master (p. 30). Like the Greek pederasts, the latter guided the first to follow the rules of conduct and morals of Japanese society and to give them their first sexual experiences. The oldest samurai were supposed to be married and have children.

The author further points out that there was a quasi-religious belief that a samurai should have sex with both people of their biological sex and the opposite. They justified such practices in the belief that they represented the idea of balance between *yin* and *yang*, that is, the masculine and the feminine in nature. A good warrior should therefore adopt bisexual practices so that he could find an inner balance through sex.

From that angle, one realizes that once again, in ancient societies they did not care so much about categorizing sexual differences. In this way, the relations of power instituted by sexuality were ensured through other mechanisms were they of social or religious order: the age of the partner among the Greeks; the order of phallic penetration among the Romans or the balance between the divine and the mortal sought by the ancient Eastern societies.

3.1.5 *Laotong* and women bounding in Japanese society

According to Dantas (2016), the Chinese woman during that period felt very lonely after the marriage, as she did not yet know anyone in her husband's family. *Laotong* ties helped, in a way, to alleviate this loneliness. During her childhood, usually a kind of 'bond' was made between girls who normally lived apart from one another.

This bond of friendship, however, would unite them all their lives. The homosocial ties were an aspect of the Chinese tradition of great cultural value (DANTAS, 2016, 61) According to the author, the families trusted women called "matchmakers" to make the right choice to their daughters. These women met the future husband of their daughters as well as

their *Laotong* sister, that is, another girl of her own age, characteristics, social conditions, among other attributes. Her *Laotong* sister would be a friend with whom she would establish a sisterly bond throughout her life. Since in a patriarchal and sexist society the woman was despised by man, they found in another woman, their *laotong* sister, a form of consolation, friendship and deep love. It was said that such sisterhood pledge represented

Much more than the marriage, the *laotong* aimed at companionship, sharing life's problems, afflictions, anguish, and the dreams of these girls who were consecrated to one another.¹

The fact a 'matchmaker' be the responsible for finding both marital and fraternal ties by which the girl was destined to carry throughout her life, in a way, gives us an indication of the importance of these relationships between the wife and her husband and the woman and her *Laotong* sister. In this perspective, just as in other societies, the homosocial ties between men gave rise to 'brotherhoods', *Laotong* practice in Ancient China promoted the emergence of 'sisterhoods'.

From this point of view, if we consider that among some ancient societies the practices of blood brotherhood (such as *blutbrüderschaft* ties among German warriors) admitted forms of homoerotic intimacy, why would we not also consider the possibility of some lesbianism or bisexuality between the *Laotong* sisters?

This pledged sisterhood, then, allowed a very deep degree of intimacy among the *Laotong* girls. However, unlike other forms of 'pledged sisterhood', the *Laotong* sisterhood would not have an end after marriage. On the contrary, the two women would maintain this almost mystical union throughout their lives. Often they had more regard for this relationship with their sister *Laotong* than with her own husband. (DANTAS, 2016, p.56). Although we must take into account all the complexity that exists when talking about female sexuality, we realize that the fact that the *Laotong* sisters have a strong intimacy reveals to us the possibility of such an intimate friendship forms of homoerotic sensuality between them. The author says

"This solidarity [among the *Laotong* sisters] was something that allowed them a degree of intimacy, that they came to know each other better than even their husbands knew them" [emphasis added].²

If we observe this fact from the perspective of homoeroticism, we might believe that the *Laotong* sisters could sometimes develop homoerotic ties beyond their fraternal

¹ Muito mais do que o sistema de casamento o *laotong* visava o companheirismo, o dividir a vida, as aflições, as angústias e os sonhos dessas meninas que eram consagradas uma a outra. (DANTAS, 2016, p. 56)

² "Essa solidariedade algo que possibilitava a elas um grau de intimidade, que elas chegavam a se conhecer melhor uma a outra do que até mesmo seus maridos as conheciam" (DANTAS, 2016, p. 56).

friendship. In this way, they lived other forms of sexuality different from those they had with their husbands. There was probably no social opening for homosexual ties between *Laotong* women. However, according to Dantas (2016), the *Laotong* practice, as a bond of homosocial and deep friendship between women, provided the Chinese women of that period with “a special friendship with social support” (p.28).³ The author also argues that *Laotong* sisterhood firmed “a bond "of deep love and eternal commitment among them" (DANTAS, 2016, 56).

Thus, we might suggest that female bisexuality in Ancient Chinese society, although not socially acceptable as between the Japanese *Shudo* or the Greek’s pederasty, seems to be a possibility to be discussed through these ties between the *Laotong* sisterhoods.

3.2. Freud and Bisexuality

Already in the early twentieth century, with advances in the field of psychology arises psychoanalysis, a branch of psychiatry that was used as a form of treatment of psychological problems that had been developed by the psychiatrist Sigmund Freud. This new technique "utilizes transference analysis to bring awareness to the unconscious aspects of the personality" (RAPOPORT, 2009, p.280). It was for a long time one of the instruments most used by psychiatrists and psychologists to understand sexual behaviour, especially psychosexual behaviours that were far removed from the heteronormative patterns of society – bisexuality was one of these behaviours.

Inspired by the scientific discoveries of the biological sciences, particularly Darwin's evolutionary ideas, Freud develops hypotheses about the existence and functioning of human bisexuality. The term bisexual then goes on to designate, not only in the theories of sexuality proposed by Freud but also by many scientists in the biological areas, the supposed ability of organisms to develop sexually feminine and masculine characteristics concomitantly, however, this capacity was considered possible only in stages much earlier than the mature psychosexual development of the human being. Scientific findings showed that human embryos exhibited “a male and a female potentiality. Thereof the idea of that bisexuality was no longer just a myth, but rather a natural reality” (ROUDINESCO, 1998, p.72 *apud* SEFFNER, 2003, p.46). This period, then, is an ambiguous sexual phase associated with a form of hermaphroditism present in earlier stages of the human evolutionary scale. (See RAPOPORT, 2009)

³ “Uma amizade especial com aval social” (DANTAS, 2016, p. 28).

Freud, adapting the biological conceptions on bisexuality to the scope of psychology, proposes that all human beings are born with an unconscious bisexual predisposition.

[...] it appears that a certain degree of anatomical hermaphroditism occurs normally. In every normal male or female individual, traces are found of the apparatus of the opposite sex. These either persist without function as rudimentary organs or become modified and take on other functions. These long-familiar facts of anatomy lead us to suppose that an originally bisexual physical disposition has, in the course of evolution, become modified into a unisexual one, leaving behind only a *few* traces of the sex that has become atrophied (FREUD, 1905, p.141 [emphasis added])

However, this characteristic is, naturally, modified when the child becomes familiar with other individuals and adapts to them, thus having a 'normal' child development. From that moment, the child would automatically abandon their 'bisexual personality' and assume their heterosexual identity by nature, and thereby achieve full sexual maturity. To explain this process Freud applies his Oedipus complex theory (See FREUD, 1905). In addition, he argues that sexually mature individuals would abandon their bisexual predisposition during childhood and would accept their new monosexual condition naturally, as they gradually developed their 'normal' sexual behaviour (See STEKEL 1920 *apud* STORR, 1999, p. 29).

Throughout the 19th century, this conception added the idea that bisexuality would be an earlier and provisional stage to human sexual maturation. Freud, throughout his studies on sexuality, starts to treat bisexuality from the biological to the psychological point of view. From his discussions with Fliess, Freud introduced studies on bisexuality as a psychic phenomenon (See CARNEIRO, 2017). According to Carneiro (2017),

Although taken up by those of Freud's successors and generally mentioned in the psychoanalytic debate, the phenomenon of psychic bisexuality seems to have failed to reproduce in Freud's contemporary clinical thinking, with some notable exceptions (CARNEIRO, 2017, p.1)⁴

It was believed that the concept of gender was directly linked to the biological sex of the individual, so the general idea was that a biologically male individual would identify himself psychologically with the masculine identity and his object of desire would be the opposite sex and vice versa. These were the patterns recognized as 'normal' and psychically demonstrated through the Oedipus complex. Although there would be the cases of the inverted⁵ in which Freud himself recognizes the potentiality of individuals to feel attraction to both sexes. Carneiro (2017) reveals that

⁴ Translation by this author. From the original – embora retomado pelos dos sucessores de Freud e geralmente mencionado no debate psicanalítico, o fenômeno da bissexualidade psíquica parece não ter conseguido reproduzir no pensamento clínico contemporâneo – com algumas notáveis exceções – a enorme importância que lhe foi dada por Freud (CARNEIRO, 2017, p.1)

⁵ See more about the Freudian phenomenon of inversions in FREUD (1905) and SEFFNER (2003).

The inventor of psychoanalysis would radicalize his conception of the importance of the psychological factor to the detriment of the biological, maintaining that it would be useless to replace the psychological problem with the anatomical one to explain bisexuality (CANEIRO, 2017, p. 10)

Freud (1905) understood bisexuality as a mixture of masculine and feminine elements in a single individual, although he did not properly managed to establish precise definitions of what would be 'masculine' and 'feminine', he usually talked about characteristics of activity or passivity as features related to the male and female genders. According to Storr (1999), "the concept of bisexuality is, in many ways, the mysterious heart of Freudian psychoanalysis" (p.21). In his theories on bisexuality, Freud sought to explain the phenomenon as an innate bisexual predisposition through which civilized and sexually evolved individuals would later develop monosexual behaviours - heterosexual or homosexual⁶. By following this bias, we can see there is a strong presence of ideological factors that contributed to the crystallization of the monosexual principles established by society. It is interesting to note that the growth of anthropological studies influenced by Darwin's evolutionary conceptions since the late 19th century brought profound changes in Western thought and intellectual production.

According to Brikman (2003, pp. 47-48 *apud* RAPOPORT, 2009, p. 7) these changes caused a socio-cultural evolutionism in which

Human life was seen as evolving through time [. . .] toward its evolutionary telos, the European, masculine subject; the implication, so important for developments in anthropological and social theory, was that deviations from this normative end were represented as *prior in evolutionary time*. Thus savages, children, criminals, peasants, and the urban poor, as well as mentally ill and, of course, women of any social and cultural provenance, were "more primitive," stuck somewhere midway on the evolutionary path. [Emphasis added]

Thus, knowing that the pattern of sexual behaviour and lifestyle adopted by the members of heteronormative hegemonic groups were the models to be followed and also knowing that bisexuality challenged this pattern

It is worth noting that this characterization of bisexuality as the original form of sexuality found in both children and 'primitive' societies tacitly reprises some evolutionary and heavily racialized themes from Victorian sexology and anthropology: that the differences between the sexes increase as evolution advances, so that bisexuality, in the sense of co-existing male and female characteristics, is a feature of 'primitive' humans; and that the adults of 'primitive races' resemble the children of 'civilized races' and vice versa (RUSSETT, 1989; STORR 1997 *apud* STORR, 1999)

Angelides (2001, p. 69 *apud* RAPPORT 2009, p.6) shows that

⁶ One should be aware that for the psychoanalytic theory of the time homosexuality was considered an inversion, that is, a psychosexual behavior considered as pathology, although at other times Freud himself explained it as the "variation of the sexual function" caused by an arrest in sexual development (FREUD, 1905, p. 140 [emphasis added]).

Recently [...] Freud's placement of bisexuality in the past (of individual and the species) as an example of a pervasive cultural phenomenon [was] called erasure of bisexuality in the present tense [emphasis added]

Even though Freud himself considered bisexuality to be a psychological phenomenon, it would be unlikely to accept the idea of its existence as a socially recognized gender identity.

First, as it is well known, there was a strong influence of the anthropologically defined cultural patterns of dogmatically monosexist and heteronormative Western European society on intellectual production about sexuality and the issues of gender divisions - Freudian psychoanalytic studies were no exception to these sociocultural standards. Second because Freud throughout his career on the subject has never managed to uncover a theory that could somehow connect the question of bisexuality (for himself, the essence of human sexuality) and, his thesis on the naturalization of heterosexuality explained by the Oedipus complex.

In this line of thought, the bisexual individual would therefore present psychological traits of both sexes. In this situation, the Oedipus complex seemed not to be sufficient to explain the phenomenon, since

Freud's theory of object choice was based on the idea of identification – one identifies with one parent and feels attracted to the other – bisexuality implied both bigenderism and dual attraction (RAPOPORT, 2009, p.282).

It is possible to perceive a divergence of ideas about the conception of the existence of bisexuality and the explanation of the naturalization of the heterosexual behaviour through Oedipus complex. We also perceive that Freud's psychoanalytic theories were largely influenced by the heteronormative discourse of the time, notably in Victorian England.

In most of Freud's writing (with *An Outline of Psychoanalysis* [1940/1955b], one of his latest works, being a notable exception), bisexuality is construed as the deeper truth of human sexuality that is, however, impossible in practice —at least not for a modern human person. Human nature is bisexual because the human physique is so, but a human progress (in line with the Victorian idea of linear progress) from a natural being to a cultured one, his or her bisexuality becomes somewhat of an omnipresent atavism (RAPPORT, 2009, p.282)

Knowing this, we can link the denial of the existence of “abnormal” possibilities of sexual behaviours, besides their treatment as pathologies – a meaning admittedly accepted by medical discourse during the 19th and mid-20th centuries – to the influence of heteronormative social thinking on Freudian approach. This approach sought to justify clinically the heterosexual conduct, relegating to bisexuality the condition of neurosis and to the individuals who presented signs of this phenomenon the designation of inverted. Seffner (2003) points out that

According to common sense regarding the sexual instinct is differentiated in the idea that man and woman are two halves, which are sought to complete, through love. The discovery that "there are men whose sexual object is another man, and not a

woman, and women whose sexual object is another woman, and not a man." The designation chosen for these individuals is that of inverted, calling itself the phenomenon of inversion (SEFFNER, 2003, pp.46-47 [emphasis added])⁷

It is noteworthy that Freud sought to understand how the inverted mind worked to explain the psychic differences between homosexuals and heterosexuals through a deep analysis of the innate bisexuality that according to him would be present in the unconscious of all human beings. For the Viennese psychoanalyst the problems of inversions did not come from a biological basis, but rather had a psychic origin. According to Carneiro (2017),

Freud (1901/1986, 1905/1987f, 1908/2015, 1919 / 1987g) was convinced of the need to appeal to bisexuality to understand sexual manifestations in men and women and their choice of object, which would explain the opposition between heterosexuality and homosexuality. For this purpose, it initially established a correlation between the concepts of masculine and active and of feminine and passive (CARNEIRO, 2017, p. 13)⁸

Discussions of the concepts of masculinity and femininity became a key issue in the discussions of sexuality within the psychoanalytic field. In the course of the 20th century it entered, along with many other questions of sexuality and sexual identities, in the field of cultural studies and enables the emergence of many theories of human sexuality, including the Queer Theory.

3.3 Queer Theory and Bisexuality

Callis (2009) affirms that queer theory integrate a group of theories on sexuality that emphasises the scholarly study about gender and identities categorizations as homosexual and heterosexual as well as stand against either naturalization or normativization of any forms of standard sexualities. According to those scholars, homosexuality and heterosexuality are binary social constructs produced in specific "social-historical-cultural" moments and contexts rather than essentialist sexual categories (CALLIS, 2009, p. 215; LEWIS, 2012, p. 58).

⁷ Segundo o senso comum com relação ao instinto sexual está diferenciado na ideia de que homem e mulher são duas metades, que se procuram para se completar, através do amor. Causa espanto, portanto, a descoberta de que *"há homens cujo objeto sexual é outro homem, e não uma mulher, e mulheres cujo objeto sexual é outra mulher, e não um homem"*. A designação escolhida para esses indivíduos é a de invertidos, chamando-se ao fenômeno de inversão.

⁸ Freud (1901/1986, 1905/1987f, 1908/2015, 1919/1987g) estava convencido da necessidade de recorrer à bissexualidade para compreender as manifestações sexuais em homens e mulheres e suas escolhas de objeto, que explicaria a oposição entre heterossexualidade e a homossexualidade. Com essa finalidade, estabeleceu inicialmente uma correlação entre os conceitos de masculino e ativo e de feminino e passivo.

According to Rapoport (2009), Queer theory derived from feminist criticism of heteronormative gender relations, which have been largely diffused through psychoanalysis. The same author by citing Kassof (2004) argues that psychoanalysis contributed to the establishment of a large embracing of the heteronormative discourse and concomitant restraint of the non-heterosexual lifestyle.

The main aims of Queer theorists are to subvert crystallized notions of sexuality and show that "all sexual identities are constructed in reference to each other and are therefore neither monolithic nor permanent." (KASSOF, 2004 *apud* RAPOPORT, 2009, p. 290). In this way it is perceived that the essential purpose of those queer theorists is to "demysti[fy] the shifting and relational construction of identity categories, and of exposing the rhetorical and ideological functions that these categories serve." (ANGELIDES, 2001, p. 8 [emphasis added]).

According to Callis (2009, p. 219) by citing Angelides (2001), queer theory seems to have relegated bisexuality to a marginalized and erased category, though some scholars argues in favour of an epistemic view of bisexuality as one of the most compelling way of deconstructing the binary hetero-homosexual. Notwithstanding bisexuality contemporary studies inside queer theories has already been discussing not only the bisexual behaviour, but also, the existence of bisexuality as an identity itself. (CALLIS, 2009, p. 218-219).

Because the bisexual was not placed into a "species" or written about as such by the medical community in the 19th and early/mid-20th centuries, there was also no "truth" in bisexuality (CALLIS, 2009, p. 225).

In the general sense, the concept of bisexuality is used to designate people attracted both for individuals of the same sex and opposite sex. Callis (2009, p. 23) says before the early 19th century, bisexuality was a term used to describe what we know nowadays as intersex people. Only after Freud and psychoanalytic studies had dominated scientific opinion and spread categorizations of sexualities until the early 20th century, the concept of bisexuality became used to mean sexual acts or attraction for men and women.

According to Lewis (2012, p. 25), bisexuality is a social, historical and cultural construction. Bisexuality in the present days is mostly understood as an identity category, however there might be said that a significant difference should be made in relation to *bisexual practices* throughout history of humanity. While the former refers to the political-identity achievements of activists for sexual freedom, the latter refer to the various forms of sexual expression between people of the same sex or the opposite sex concomitantly.

Bisexuality can refer to a series of acts, and/or a behaviour. To be behaviourally bisexual is to be sexually active with men and women, regardless of sexual identity [...] Bisexuality canal so be used to describe any individual who falls on the continuum between the polar oppositionals of heterosexual and homosexual. Any

individual with unacted-on desires or fantasies for the same sex can be labelled as mentally or emotionally bisexual (CALLIS, 2009. p. 217; KLEIN, 1978 *apud* CALLIS, 2009 [emphasis added]).

In this work, we of course take into consideration the fact that the conceptualization of bisexuality as people see it nowadays, under the perspective of policies of gender and identity, did not actually exist in Lawrence's time. Therefore, our analysis must extend the notion of bisexuality as one of the possible human forms of sexuality. Although we believe bisexuality concerns in a complex continuum (See STORR, 1999, pp. 31-33; Klein, 1958 *apud* Callis, 2009, p. 217), we take into consideration the fact that a large amount of scholars, most likely consider it as an intermediate point between the binary hetero and homosexual identities.

According to Butler (1999), sexuality is so long shaped to dress cultural patterns that only admit the existence of "identities" originated from heteronormative conceptions of sex or gender. That means other practices of desires that does not fit into the norm are supposed to be banned or having its existence denied so that normative gender identities become intelligible.

The heterosexualization of desire requires and institutes the production of discrete and asymmetrical oppositions between "feminine" and "masculine," where these are understood as expressive attributes of "male" and "female" (BUTLER, 1999, p. 23).

It implies that these cultural patterns do not allow other forms of identities that cannot fit either one or other side of the binary polarities: male/female; man/women; heterosexual/homosexual and so forth. Being so bisexual identity should be denied and labelled phase or repressed homosexuality.

Butler (1999) argues that the polarization of sexual identities as a structuring element of male / female binary should not be assumed as a phenomenon determined by universal divine laws. The author argues that this same polarization is incapable of inhibiting the 'repressed' manifestations of a sexuality constructed through the coercion of what it has called the 'Paternity Law'. In other words, the whole heteronormative conjuncture by which human sexuality was constructed by many civilizations.

In this perspective, like Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* (1949), where she affirms, "One is not born, but rather becomes a woman" (BEAUVOIR, 1949 translated by Borde & Malovany-Chevallier 2009); Butler assumes the position that sexual identity is a cultural product and social construct from the 'prohibitions' of paternal law (See Butler, 1999, pp. 37-38)

Callis (2009), points out that in monogamous societies, bisexuality is most likely to be erased. In this way, queer theory research seems to not consider 'bisexual identity' as a

legitimized sexual identity. It seems to be one of the hardest things to most queer theory scholars to comprehend the notions of bisexual behaviour as an identity for it defies the notion of "identity" itself.

According to Butler's conception of performativity in her discussion in *Gender Troubles* (1990), bisexuality does not fit into an intelligible identity due to the restrictions imposed by bodily norms culturally constructed from the feminine/masculine binary. In the preface of her book, Butler comments that

Performativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalization in the context of a body, understood, in part, as a culturally sustained temporal duration (BUTLER, 1990, p. XV)

These restrictions are most likely to be extended to regulatory sexual practices usually categorized as either homosexual or heterosexual (BUTLER, 1990, pp. 42-43). Under this perspective, Callis (2009) calls into question what would a bisexual identity be like. Being aware of the constructed heteronormative and homonormative patterns of sexual and gender performativity, the author even suggests the possibility of an association between a bisexual perform as an androgynous one (CALLIS, 2009, p. 229).

It should be made clear that our interest in this discussion of a possible bisexual relationship in the novel rests solely on the possible latent homoerotic feelings of Birkin and Gerald along with their affair and engagement with the women. That is, we are interested in make a connection between Birkin's philosophy of the 'Self' – the *Blutbrüderschaft* – and its similarities with some culturally accepted bisexual assumptions (practices, desires, and feelings – of individuals by the opposite sex and the same sex) though these notions in a way are said to be opposite. In this work, more precisely, we are interested in the phenomenon of bisexuality as a sexual and/or emotional bond of individuals by both sexes – their own and the opposite sex. Therefore, we are not interested here on dealing with the theme of 'bisexuality' with the only purpose of defending it as political category of gender. Our main aim is to show its representation in literature for we believe this is a powerful vehicle of portraying this form of sexual behaviour as one more possible category of sexual identity.

Our emphasis falls down in searching for possible representations of bisexual behaviour among the analysed characters Birkin and Gerald in D.H. Lawrence novel *Women in Love*. In this sense, we understand the concept of the term "bisexuality" in that specific

context as a form of human sexuality characterized by existence of erotic practices/desires of individuals by other individuals of the same sex and of the opposite sex simultaneously.⁹

From this perspective, the conception of bisexuality by which we say exists in the novel only concerns possible bisexual desire involving the love triangles 'Ursula-Birkin-Gerald' and 'Gudrun-Gerald-Birkin'. Moreover, we shall analyse specifically the relationships between the first triangle in which we try to discuss the relationship between Birkin and Ursula. We also want to find possible marks of homoerotic feelings between Birkin and Gerlad. Thus, we seek to demonstrate some form of bisexual link between Birkin and Gerald throughout the association of Birkin's notion of *Blutbrüderschaft* and its possible implications to our assertion of the representation of bisexuality in the novel.

4. LAWRENCE'S *BLUTBRÜDERSCHAFT* OR BLOOD BROTHERHOOD

One of the most important issues dealt in Lawrence's fiction was the idea of the '*Self*'. According to the novelist, there was a binary division of the being. The '*Self*' should reconcile two fundamental elements: The sensuality and the spirituality (COWAN, 1992).

An interesting point is that this dichotomy constitutes the basis for other important binaries constantly present along Lawrence's work: The first of the binary concerns to the 'unconscious'; the 'body' or the 'dark' by which are related the Lawrentian idea of 'Female'. The latter is associated with the conscious; the 'mind' or 'light' that brings up to his ideal of 'Male' (BECKET, 2015; BRANDÃO, 1985). Being so, we can make the dichotomous associations: "spiritual, light, male, conscious" ideal in opposition to the "sensual, dark, female, unconscious" ideal in his work.

The individual's self was supposed to balance its two elements in order to reach a state of "pure individuality". In *Women in Love*, Rupert Birkin - a nearly autobiographic representation of Lawrence himself - exposes his concepts of *Blutbrüderschaft* and *Star Polarity* in order to handle those issues. According to him, it would be necessary man and woman reached a state of "Perfect polarization". Here "man had being and woman had being, two pure beings, each constituting the freedom of the other, balancing each other like two

⁹ By using the adverb 'simultaneously', we only want to emphasize the fact of the interest in the individual called 'bisexual' by both sexes. We do not want in any way make any reference to the complex process of sexual discontinuity and categorizations of identity regarding the matter of phases of interest, preferences or frequencies of desire or sexual practices of the bisexual individual by either one or other sex. Such as those dealt with by Kinsey's works *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Male* in (1948) and its sequel *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Female* (1953) in which he measured the degree of human sexuality as well as other authors' sexual measurement's scales.

poles of one force, like two angels, or two demons" (WL, p. 219) so that they could get a completely fulfilled heterosexual relationship.

We realize that Birkin seems to be a contradictory character. In one hand, he argues in favour of a pure and unique attachment between man and woman through "sex marriage", as we can see in *Man to Man*: "True, he hated promiscuity even worse than marriage [...], he believed in sex marriage. But beyond this, he wanted a further conjunction" (WL, p. 219). By the other hand he "saw himself confronted with another problem of love and conjunction between two men"(WL, p. 226). He says he had always felt the need of loving "a man purely and fully" (WL, 226) also defends the idea of a relationship between men additional to marriage, though he does not actually make it clear whether that bond between men means they might get romantically involved .

Birkin sought to support his theory based on his philosophy of the preservation of one's individuality in which the love of "man to man" was a way of securing his "*Self*" from the destructive power of the woman – *The Great Mother* – whom he had to surrender (COWAN, 1992, p. 193).

"It seemed to him, woman was always so horrible and clutching, she had such a lust for possession, a greed of self-importance in love. She wanted to have, to own, to control, to be dominant. Everything must be referred back to her, to Woman, The Great Mother of everything, out of whom proceeded everything and to whom everything must finally be rendered up" (WL, p. 219)

According to Cowan (1992), Birkin's seek for a bond with other man reveals a kind of psychic strategy the man employed to protect his '*Self*' of being dissolved by the "corruptive contact" with women (Hermione, Ursula). It seems Birkin's previously unsuccessful relationship with Hermione, probably, made him afraid of another "unbalanced" heterosexual bond. In other words, based on his theory of 'Star Polarization', Hermione represented a threat to him, for she "is all-spiritual, 'completely without desire'" (BECKETT, 2015, p. 11). This means Birkin thought such 'mental-conscious' woman is not able to balance 'hunger of knowledge', here representing the 'Spiritual' aspect of the *Self* (maybe we could understand it as a criticism to the fact of Victorian society not to look favourably to intellectual and rational women once these "qualities" were supposed to be 'masculine'). Due to this fact, she was empty of any sensuality, which also represented a sign of her strong desire to possess him, as if he were a 'sensual object' under her will (See BRANDÃO, 1985). It seems Lawrence explored the relationship between blood and mental-consciousness among his male and female characters (SALTER, 2013). By doing so, according to Birkin's archetypal ideal of Spiritual-woman, Hermione was kind of trying to reduce him to a 'passive subservient

feminine role', which in a way is represented by his weakness regarding the woman control over him. It represented, therefore the loss of his '*Self*'.

Birkin always seems to contradict himself in his own philosophies. He claims that there is nothing more than a "sort of ultimate marriage between man and the woman" (WL, p. 58), but faithfully defends the need of a relationship of intimate and mystical friendship with a male friend in addition to marriage. Because of this idea, he seeks to justify the duality between the "two types of different loves" for his longed balanced relationship by proposing his theory of blood brotherhood.

The *Blutbrüderschaft* or blood brotherhood proposed by Birkin was, actually, a kind of relationship between the two men - Gerald and himself - in which both of them attach themselves by a mystical homosocial bond. This relationship was based on a somewhat archaic, religious and ritualistic pledge of friendship, love and fidelity between the men. (COWAN, 1992, p. 193)

Homosociality refers to friendships between people of the same gender (BECKET, 2015). Though this term often seems to be confused with homosexuality, it does not imply any indication of homosexual behaviour. Strongly narrowed bonds characterizes homosocial friendships. In this way, it is typical for homosocial friendships often demonstrate physically affection be it among males or females (HAMMARÉN & JOHANSSON, 2014).

According to Szanter (2013), male homosociality was overly valued in Victorian Society. Victorian man was expected to endeavour to show their highly social status among his equals. Women were not actually taken into consideration. Indeed, their only importance were maintaining Bourgeois religious and social values through marriage. Male world diminished the role of the female to mere reproduction or decoration while man needed to be elevated intellectually before society. Under these circumstances, male homosociality were hugely esteemed though homosociality was only supposed to be built on heterosexual standards. The author points out that intimate and even affectionate behaviour among friends of the same sex were socially acceptable to Victorian men without this signifying any sign of homosexuality.

However, we may also remind that ancient Greeks were culturally known for their strong homosocial tradition and even though, it did not prevent them of being famous for their practices of pederasty and bisexual behaviour. In their society, homosexual relationships between young boys and their 'tutors' were nearly normative as a kind of 'spiritual' and intellectual development of the future mature man by strengthening their homosocial friendships (See LEWIS, 2012).

Lawrence seems to show that Birkin's ritualistic offering of blood-brotherhood to Gerald was somewhat an offering of closeness and intimacy that would strengthen their friendship and, in some way, that would lead them to a state of 'spiritual and physical unison', which meant they would be able to reach a state of whole balanced heterosexual relationship with their women lovers. This was a sort of an

Alliance, to enter into the bond of pure trust and love with the other man, and then subsequently with the woman. If he pledged himself with the man he would later be able to pledge himself with the woman: not merely in legal marriage, but in absolute, mystic marriage. (WL, pp. 394-395)

According to Cowan (1992), this homosocial contract had not to do with “overt homosexuality. It was the sublimation of homoerotic desire into blood brotherhood through sacramental ritual” (COWAN, 1992, p. 200).

Fritz Klein (1978 *apud* STORR, 1999, p. 45), says there are two main kinds of intimacy: sexual and emotional. Regarding sexual intimacy, the author affirms its end is sexual gratification. The same author also points out that both sexual and emotional intimacy require closeness through touching; although touching does not need to be sexual at all to be intimate. For love and trust can be transmitted by touch since birth and is completed with the sexual act later. Cowan (1992, p. 198-200), argues in favour of a non-sexual gratification perspective of Birkin and Gerald involvement when they are described as having some very intimate physical contact. He argues in favour of an idealization of a symbolic psychic mechanism of Gerald and Birkin's *self* that sought in the *Blutbrüderschaft* a sublimation of their homoerotic impulses derived from their “absence of a viable paternal imago” (p. 198) and consequent identification and dependence to their mother – archetypically represented by the Great Mother so forth represented by women.

According to Pinto (1975, p. 94), “Lawrence's idea of *Blutbrüderschaft* plays an important role, though secondary, to the construction of Lawrentian view of homosexuality in Victorian Era, a period of transition to modern writing. The two male characters in *Women in Love* did not explicitly show any sign of homosexuality, but rather a suggestive homoerotic mood in the novel, which are one of our purposes to analyse in this work. This sort of 'pledge' Birkin proposed to Gerald, however, does not seem to fit at all in the 'general patters of heterosexual homosocial friendship' so common in Victorian literature, for instance, as in the case of Dorian and Basil in *The Portrait of Dorian Grey*.

In *Women in love*, we rather see throughout the novel, a consciously action of the narrator voice as well as the characters perspective towards an encouragement to the reader realize somewhat a homoerotic atmosphere between the two friends beyond their love affairs

with women. Being so, we could suggest a possible association of Birkin's mystical blood-brotherhood theory with their probable bisexual desires instead of a merely “sublimation of their homoerotic desires” (COWAN, 1992, p. 199) derived from deficits of their frustrating relationship with a father unavailable for idealization or perhaps, even as a strategy Lawrence used to disguise his troubles with censorship regarding homoeroticism.

Taking into consideration that our understanding of bisexuality in this work concerns a cultural perspective instead of a psychoanalytical view, we considered all kinds of erotic attraction of individuals for both their same and opposite sex as bisexual. Therefore, we might be able to suggest that, although, Cowan’s psychoanalytic perspective (1992), says us that Birkin and Gerald had no overt sexual intercourse but rather a "sublimated homoerotic desire" into other form of activity (the fight in Gladiatorial). The fact they felt some sort of erotic attraction, simply gives ground to say this mutual attraction would be enough for our suggesting of possible representation of bisexual identity in Lawrence's novel under our cultural perspective of sexuality based on queer theories.

5. ANALYSIS OF BIRKIN AND GERALD EROTICALLY SUGGESTIVE LANGUAGE

In developing his philosophies about human sexuality, Birkin reveals himself as an intense lover of the human sexual nature. He criticizes human love relationships at the industrial era as being the

Old way of love [that] seemed a dreadful bondage, a sort of conscription. What it was in him he did not know, but the thought of love, marriage, and children, and a life lived together, in the horrible privacy of domestic and connubial satisfaction, was repulsive. (WL, 218)

In this way, we realized that he did not conceive the conventional model of love only 'achievable' in marriage. He believed the couple connected by this social contract made through marriage would lose their freedom and would be in a state of constant suffering, always seeking love in the other instead of finding it in themselves. That is, one would not be fulfilled in themselves; they would always be incomplete, seeking to fill their emptiness in the other, or find their *'half'* in the other.

In exposing his opinion about human sexual nature, we can realize the presence of mythology regarding bisexual or androgynous personalities – also set in other modernist novelists as Virginia Woolf in *Orlando* (1928) – in an attempt to show how human sexuality

is far beyond heteronormative restrictive categorizations. He argues that "In the old age, before sex was, we were mixed, each one a mixture. "The process of singling into individuality resulted into the great polarisation of sex. The womanly drew to one side, the manly to the other" (WL, 220). It brings out the androgyny myth idea. In this sexual creation myth, humans are categorized into three genders (androgynous, male, and female).

Those with a "male" nature (the Children of the Sun) became homosexual men; those with a "female" nature (the Children of the Earth) became Lesbians; and the androgynes (Children of the Moon) became heterosexuals. Navels are the souvenirs of the operation we all went through in being divided from our beloved other half. The myth warns humanity to be careful in always honoring the gods (especially Eros) or we will be hewn in two once more, leaving us to hop around on just one leg. Part of properly honoring Eros is to search for and find our lost half, to be restored to our natural state of bliss. (O'DONOVAN, 2006)¹⁰

However, he states, "there is now to come the new day when we are beings each of us, fulfilled in difference" (WL, p. 220). His position on the relationship between man and woman in a certain way seeks to find a balance in human relationships in which "there [will be] no longer any of the horrible merging, mingling self-abnegation of love" (WL, pp. 220-221). That seems to suggest in a way heterosexualization of sex made people create a historical-social-cultural binary pattern of love: love between man and woman or man and man or woman and woman, but not a non-binary free love of human to human regardless their gender: the bisexual love (See LEWIS, 2012; CALLIS, 2009).

Birkin says "there is only the pure duality of polarization" in which each individual will be free from the other. "He wanted to be with Ursula as free as with himself, single, clear and cool, yet balanced, polarised with her" (p. 219) though his "heart burning desires" for his friend Gerald implies a bisexual behaviour that should be repressed and sublimated in a platonic love and friendship through a mystical and sacred blood brotherhood. Social marriage, then, would be the deadline of man's happiness; it would restrain his freedom, making him follow the rigid principles and rites of a conservative and repressive society. However, he "believed in sex marriage". There might be not only mystical but also biblical influence in his belief in sex marriage. For in biblical writings "men shall hold to his wife, and they shall become one flesh"¹¹

Beyond this, he wanted a further conjunction, where man had being and woman had being, two pure beings, each constituting the freedom of the other, balancing each other like two poles of one force like two angels, or two demons (WL, p. 219)

¹⁰ O'DONOVAN. Connell. (trans.) "*Hen Ek Duoin*": One Out of Two Aristophanes' Speech from Plato's *Symposium*

¹¹ BIBLE. *Genesis 2:24*. Bible study tools.

Believing or not in legal marriage, Birkin and Ursula decided to marry. This fact seems to have been very shocking to Gerald; 'it was a crucial thing for him.' This fact may allow us to know more about his feelings. As we know he had a deep love for Birkin; this impact caused by to friend marriage reveals us in a way, that this fact stirred him. Unlike Birkin – who seem to have a more recognized bisexual nature and conceptions of sexuality much far from his time – Gerald could not accept this duality of their nature. He, being a man attached to tradition and superficial pride and values of his class, could not understand how to lead with a kind “double feeling” towards Gudrun and Birkin at the same time. Although we do not mean, by saying that, there must be as a matter of course an actual bisexual affair among them. However, we rather believe there might be a possible representation of bisexual behaviour due to the homoerotic feeling among them even when they consider themselves romantically attached to their women lovers. Thus, unlike Birkin, who did not believe that marriage could fulfil the 'emptiness' of the being, Gerald seemed to condemn himself to unhappiness for finding in no woman the love he felt for Birkin. He tried to find that love in Gudrun, but he did not succeed.

Birkin, on the other hand, believed that the single, absolute relationship with a woman was not enough to achieve 'happiness'. He recognized that there was a permanent love between man and woman, and he himself found it in his relationship with Ursula, but there was something more needed "[He] needed something broader. [he] believe[d] in the *additional* perfect relationship between man and man-additional to marriage" (WL, p. 394). Only in this way, he would find a perfect balanced relationship.

We note that Birkin does not seem to be happy with social constraints in relation to the human relationships closed by the institution of marriage. Birkin says, “It is disgusting, people marrying for a home” (WL, 164). He criticizes the bourgeois arranged marriages interested solely in the maintenance of the materialistic order of the Victorian society. He expresses his displeasure with the superficiality of these social alliances devoid of 'spontaneity' built simply by economic interests and preservation of their status quo by means of sexuality (See FOCAULT, 1978, p. 125). Gerald would not share his friend's opinion:

– ‘I can never see how they can be the same,’ said Gerald. ‘Not the same— but equally important, equally creative, equally sacred, if you like.’
 – ‘I know,’ said Gerald, ‘you believe something like that. Only I can't FEEL it, you see.’ (WL, p. 394)

Gerald's conservative constitution did not allow him to accept such situation as normal, although he understood he could not be happy without Birkin's love because "He

would not make any pure relationship with any other soul. He could not" (p. 394). In this way, we can see that his preoccupation with the outside world; the influence of conservative society and social rules prevented him from trying to find 'different ways' of pursuing his love happiness.

The other way was to accept Rupert's offer of alliance, to enter into the bond of pure trust and love with the other man, and then subsequently with the woman. If he pledged himself with the man, he would later be able to pledge himself with the woman: not merely in legal marriage, but in absolute, mystic marriage. Yet he could not accept the offer. (WL, pp. 394-395)

We then clearly see that he was experiencing a very complex feeling hard time. At this point, we can see the contrast of the bisexual position of the two characters. In addition, how they dealt with their feelings. Birkin's thoughts are far ahead from his time, perhaps representing an autobiographical portrait of Lawrence. He sought happiness in freedom. It seems he is willing to express his possible bisexual nature. Gerald, on the other hand, represents the standard relationship of their time. As a conservative man 'empty' of free love – the target of criticism made by Birkin – he could not understand or might not accept his bisexual nature. Then, they represent antagonistic characteristics that once again reveal to us the duality existing in their relationship and in the work itself.

The intimacy between the two friends seems to reveal clearly that there is some sort of homoerotic feeling between them.

"There was a pause of strange enmity between the two men that was always the same between them; always their talk brought them into a deadly nearness of contact, a strange perilous intimacy which was either hate or love, or both." (WL, p. 31).

Both men, however, deny that feeling. That denial of a probable latent homoerotic desire may be associated with Lawrence's own personal experiences. According to Cowan (1992) by citing one of Frieda Lawrence's letters, Lawrence had had a failed passionate connection with a farmer named William Henry Hocking (pp. 197-198). Freudian psychoanalytic views as the medicalization of the homosexuality and categorization of the "inverted men" also exerted a strong influence on the writer. Thinking from this point of view, we could relate the conception of repression of the "inverted subversive behaviour" from psychoanalytic discourse to Lawrence's attempts to hide the homoerotic desires between the two characters.

At the end of '*Shortlands*' (p. 31) the voice of the narrator tells us that although they felt a deep love desire for each other, they kept this burning for each other "inwardly" and not in the least admitted. The narrator tell us that what they really sought was to maintain a

spontaneous friendship, but consciously or unconsciously, they would not admit their passion for each other: “They were not to be so unmanly and unnatural as to allow any hurt-burning between them [...] they had not the faintest belief in deep relationship between men and men” (WL, p. 31). Notwithstanding, when the narrator voice uses the men’s point of view to describe them internally, it might be suggesting to the reader either literally the characters disbelief of any other form of sexual attraction or an ironic tone to express the fear of the men of accepting their homoerotic desire.

In chapter V (*In the Train*), Gerald and Birkin are talking in their way to London about the love of women and marriage:

“– I don’t believe a woman, and nothing but a woman, will ever make my life”
 “– It seems to me there remains only this perfect union with a woman – sort of ultimate marriage – and there isn’t anything else” (WL, pp. 57-58)

As an autobiographical representation of Birkin, Lawrence seems to show great concern about distancing himself from stereotyped homosexual novels, and further reveals a deep aversion to homosexuality to what he sees as "promiscuous", "unnatural" and "perverse" forms of sexuality. This fact also evidences a sign of Lawrentian Puritanism to which he points homosexual practices as obscure, dirty, and perverse (PINTO, 1975, pp. 40-48; COWEN, 1992, p. 195)

Ahead, we can see that Gerald's speech carries a suggestive connotation for a homoerotic disposition. He asked the other man if he meant there was no woman there would not be other possibility of salvation to man’s sensual fulfilment (WL, p.58). In terms of our search for homoerotic feelings between the two male characters, we could, presumably say that his question revealed his disappointment in knowing that Birkin did not confirmed that there could be any other way of loving than that between a man and a woman.

However, the narrator constantly shows how Birkin feels and looks at the other man. The choice of suggestive yet ambiguous words and the constant use of adjectives to describe intimate physical and emotional characteristics from the point of view of the characters seems to be a recurrent feature explored by Lawrence, although he tries in a certain way to euphemize his descriptions of their suggestive homoerotic desires to the reader.

“He looked at Gerald, and saw how his blue eyes were lit up with a little flame of curious desire. He saw too how good-looking he was. Gerald was attractive; his blood seemed fluid and electric. His blue eyes burned with a keen, yet cold light; there was a certain beauty, a beautiful passivity in all his body, his moulding” (WL, p. 60)

It provokes an ambivalent effect on the reader who cannot know explicitly whether what they really feel is a constrained homosexual desire or simply a mutual admiration of their own masculinity between the two friends.

Despite of what have been said so far, we can see in chapter VII – *Totem* – there is a love affair between Gerald and Minette. They had slept together and in the morning, Gerald sees her “sleeping childishly and pathetically”, there was also “an unsatisfied flame of passion in the young man’s blood” (WL, 79). We feel that there is between them a mutual attraction, sexual appetite and eroticism in the language used to described his feelings toward the woman.

However, it is noticeable that soon after the consummation of the sexual intercourse with Minette Gerald seemed to realize that it meant nothing more than a way to satisfy his sex drive. He realizes that he still does not know what is that "true love" for a woman he has been longing, because he never really felt such a feeling for a woman - "what [he] should call love" (WL, p. 305).

On the other hand, shortly after leaving the room where he had been with Minnette, Gerald found the bohemian hosts Halliday and Libidinikov completely naked in the room. Seeing them this way, Gerald compares Halliday's slim, white body with a "Christ in a Pietà." He gazed at the blue eyes and found them very "beautiful and warm". This comparison seems to express a secret admiration for the aesthetics and sensuality of the naked male body.

We also note that the narrator, from Gerald's perspective, makes clear the man’s attraction to Halliday's model of Nordic beauty in contrast to the "human animal, golden skinned and bare, somehow humiliating" (p. 80) features of the other man. This brings us, in a way, to the question of the association of whiteness with the idea of light, of spirituality, of masculinity, of superiority. It is also noticed the repulsion of Gerald to the darker colour of Libidinikov. This probably stems from the connection these characteristics make with the opposing ideas of darkness, sensuality, femininity, inferiority.

It looks like Gerald expresses his preference to the artistic admiration of the male body instead of the female one when he showed his deeply dislike to a naked carved statue of a savage woman in labour in Halliday’s house. He asked Birkin his opinion about it and his friend with the other ones in the room confirmed with a single voice that it was a pure form of beauty and art. By looking at it, Gerald can only see the "terrible face, void, peaked, abstracted in utter physical stress. He saw Minette in it. As in a dream, he knew her" (WL, 81).

From this angle, we can propose that that portraying of the woman in labour) relates to the idea of the Great Mother or Mater Dolorosa (WL, 219 [See Annexes A and B, p. 44]).

Once more, we can see the man's fear of being "devoured" and destroyed by the Mater Dolorosa, for she had born him and so she would swallow him back; she should subjugate and enslave him under her will. Would this fear transform in an aversion for the feminine? Would it lead men feel so threatened as to lead them to believe that it is necessary to develop strategies of denial the power of creation of the feminine element through culturally subjugation of it and naturalization of masculine idealization of superiority through heteronormative culturally assumed truths? (See Butler, 1990, pref. XXX).

When we reflect on those questions, it might be clearer to understand why Birkin sought so hard though unsuccessfully to develop a theory that might be able to confront this kind of male fear of the powerful destructive control of women toward men in their heterosexual relationships. His Blood brotherhood with other man represented a signal of the strengthening of male power against the dangerous swallowing mother-snake-goddess, the Medusa which since ancient times had exercised her sensual, controlling over man (See FROTHINGHAM, 1911, p. 358-360). Women are conceived to be a representation of the Magna Mater who held the great black abyss to which the male phallus should penetrate to reach an illusory pretension of power over her.

The Mother Goddess is the goddess of life and death at the same time - the Feminine contains opposites, and the world actually lives because it combines earth and heaven, night and day, death and life (LAGANÀ, 2009, p. 7)

At the end of the chapter, Gerald left Halliday's house after feeling some hostile feeling between him and his host. He felt a little bothered for had left without giving money to the woman. Clearly, she represents only a distraction to him. He might have felt even worst because

He knew Minette was merely glad to be rid of him. She had got her Halliday whom she wanted. She wanted him completely in her power. Then she would marry him. She had set her will on marrying Halliday. (WL, p. 84)

Minette represents, then, the Magna Mater but whose love and control belonged all to her beloved Halliday. Gerald felt he should surrender to a woman to fulfil himself. This surrender would be possible because of Gudrun's power over him. She was the savage, body seductive *femme fatale* whom his rational male soul sought for (See COUMANS, 2012, p. 8). Gudrun would represent the Great Mother whom he would surrender for in the absence of a male substitute he would never admit.

The concept of the Great Mother belongs to the field of comparative religion and embraces widely varying types of mother-goddess. The concept itself is of no immediate concern to psychology, because the image of a Great Mother in this form is rarely encountered in practice, and then only under very special conditions. The

symbol is obviously a derivative of the mother archetype (JUNG, 1959, p. 9 *apud* LAGANÀ, 2009, pp. 2-3)

The conception of the Great Mother helps us to understand the construction of this masculine fear of submission to the feminine imposing originator. Although this inner battle happened in Gerald's mind, deep down, he actually expected his inevitable destiny of surrender to the potent destructive woman, the Magna Mater. He was aware of the undeniable dissolution of his 'Self'.

Still hoping to find a way to preserve his individuality, Gerald is quite willing to accept Birkin's mystical proposal of blood brotherhood, but he could not understand how this mystical harmony of his two halves could be achieved through this intimate bond with Birkin. Bond in which both pledged to each other an 'intimate friendship' based "not in sloppy emotionalism." But an impersonal union that leaves one free " (WL, p. 227).

By accepting this form of commitment, both must be mentally, spiritually, and physically intimate as a whole. This "physical" aspect suggests the sensual aspect of the *Self*. In this work, we decided to approach the issue of the *Blutbrüderschaft* under an essentially cultural point of view and, not under the psychoanalytic view as adopted by Cowan (1992). Therefore, we observe that this concept is also represented in other Lawrence's works. In order to support our hypothesis, we understand that in *Women in Love* the concept of *Blutbrüderschaft* designates a justification to the idealization of subjective and complex precepts about sexuality developed by Lawrence's philosophies throughout his literary career for it represented a possibility of love and sexual attraction to both sexes. In addition, among that complexity of human sexuality, bisexuality seems to be one of the issues represented in the novel, even though Lawrence himself most likely did not consciously think of it.

Birkin also represents the voice of the essentialist and heteronormative discourse of the Victorian Era. His assertion for hegemony and naturalization of the heterosexual "mystical union"; his belief in the need for a homosocial bond as an additional element to 'heterosexual love' and his theories of preservation of the 'Self' provoke us. They provoke us in the sense that they make us wonder if these philosophies are, in a sense, a justification for hiding Birkin's homoerotic desire toward Gerald. This eroticism observed in these love triangles between Birkin–Ursula–Gerald and Gerald–Gudrun–Birkin would hence be the primordial factor by which we try to associate the men's *Blutbrüderschaft* to a possible representation of their bisexual identity. At the last scenes of the novel Birkin confesses to Ursula: "I love you right enough," he said grimly. "But I want it to be something else" (WL, 167).

Would that bisexual behaviour be hidden in the Victorian accepted homosocial bonds? In chapter 15 (*Sunday Evening*), there is a moment when Ursula's younger siblings had a brief contact with Birkin. Before they go to bed, the children watched Ursula and Birkin talking. Ursula noticed them and asked them to "say good-night to Mr. Birkin" (WL, 214). The narrator methodically describes how Billy, Ursula's younger brother, seems to be more friendly and receptive to Birkin's presence. Dora, the other little sister, shows almost a kind of hostility to the man: "Billy went softly forward, slow and willing, lifting his pinched-up mouth implicitly to be kissed [...] But Dora edged away like a tiny Dryad that will not be touched (WL, p. 214).

If we pay attention to some little details, we will subtly see how the issue of the homosocial bond present in Lawrence's work is present in that excerpt. Here both men and boy seem to have a mutual understanding of each other in a relationship of comradeship. On the other hand, there is a mutual aversion between Birkin and the girl: "Birkin felt some mistrust and antagonism in the small child. He could not understand it" (p. 214). It actually sustains the symbolic idea of man's fear of the figure of the woman, the Magna Mater. Regarding the girl's aversion to the man, it symbolically seems to represent the envy of the phallus, the desire to be self-sufficient in relation to man, to be his equal or his superior. (See BUTLER, 1990; FREUD, 1905, p.195; CARNEIRO, 2017, p. 58).

Kumar (2013) argues in favour of an androgynous view of Lawrence's characters. The author points out that Lawrence does not support biological sex as a proponent of gender performativity at all in the novel. Birkin, however, fights for his male individuation through his weird idea of preservation of the *Self* in a balanced "star polarization" of feminine and masculine halves and consequently protection against the imbalanced controlling of women in an "ideal heterosexual relationship".

The division into male and female is arbitrary, for the purpose of thought [...]. Each man comprises male and female in his being... a woman likewise consists in male and female (LAWRENCE, 1971:566 / 1936:481 *apud* KUMAR, 2013, p. 141)

What it seems is that the female characters in *Women in Love* are repulsive, defiant as if they were struggling to reverse the stereotype of passivity and submission to men to an opposing role, the role of domineering woman. The male characters, on the other hand, demonstrate, in a way, a subservience to the woman.

These women also represent an idealization of the most self-sufficient, intellectual, dominant female model, a woman more rational than emotional. Although the Lawrentian woman embodying roles considered "masculine" is exalted on the one hand, that same woman depicted a representation of death and destruction. It seems that Lawrence, in a way, embraces

a misogynist view in his work. He seems to suggest that the nature of the woman should be essentially sensual and submissive to the man.

It is visible that his philosophy of the "Star Polarity" does not actually balance man and woman '*Selves*' equally unless one accepts the essentialist archaic notion of the natural submission of woman to man. Nevertheless, according to Brandão (1985), Ursula is not completely transformed into a submissive wife "like a satellite of man". The author affirms that in several moments of the work, we can see that both Birkin and Ursula defend their points of view divergently. From this perspective, the author shows that although after marriage Ursula changed a lot concerning her conceptions and independent attitudes and began to accept, in a way, the impositions of her husband's conceptions – which, in turn, would represent the woman "being tamed in marriage". Their looking for a different kind of relationship shows that the couple preserves their individualities (BRANDÃO, 1985, pp. 9-10).

In this perspective, Hermione and Gudrun symbolize completely spiritual (intellectual) female. According to Lawrence view¹², this fact probably represents the women willing to "become men or do the same thing men do in the same manner *and in this way they denied their womanhood*" (HALSTEAD, 2006, p. 3 [emphasis mine]). These women solely live for their thirst of knowledge and their desire to possess the male under their will. They are associated with the idea of annihilation and death. Birkin believed that all women were like Hermione. He sought to create a polarization theory in which it was possible to reconcile the bestial and intellectual side of the woman with his own in a mystical union which he called 'Star polarity'.

Something remarkable is the fact that Birkin believed in the need of establishing "alliances" or "irrevocable bonds," united by a mystical force, whether it was purely a friendship or a love affair. In '*Mino*', he makes this clear when he proposes to Ursula an 'alliance' or 'pledge' in which both would unite solidly and deeply. Just as he proposes the *Blutbrüderschaft* to Gerald, he also offers an alliance with the woman. This kind of bond is for him the most important bond in men's life:

"I do think," he said, "that the world is only held together by the mystic conjunction, the ultimate unison between people — a bond. And the immediate bond is between man and woman." (WL, 164)

¹² Lawrence believed women are inherently feeling beings while men have their nature essentially guided by their sense of purpose. According to this view, inside the relationship both are able to act upon the other, but neither of them can change their nature and when they try doing it, they are seen in a negative way. (D.H. Lawrence, *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, p. 58)

According to him, he and Ursula should commit to maintaining a perfect balance in their relationship. This would occur through his theory of *Star Polarity*.

“What I want is a strange conjunction with you —” he said quietly “—not meeting and mingling; — you are quite right: — but an equilibrium, a pure balance of two single beings: — as the stars balance of each other.” (WL, 160)

Thus, in their relationship with the woman, each of them could preserve their own individuality; each would be complete in itself; balancing their two male and female halves without the risk of being absorbed by the other (COWEN, 1992, p. 208; HALSTEAD, 2006, p. 6).

However, Birkin seems to believe that all women are like Hermione, unable to establish this balance of '*Self*' through his philosophy of 'Star Polarity' until he get in love with Ursula. He defended the natural and necessary union between man and woman; however, in an attempt to consolidate this union, without representing a risk for the loss of his '*Self*', he proposes an additional bond to a male friend into marriage. This bond is made possible through a *Blutbrüderschaft* or Blood Brotherhood with a true male friend. What he does not make clear is whether that male bond would cross the boundaries between homosocial friendship and homoeroticism or not.

In the last scene between the couple in the novel, we see this issue more openly, albeit in an ambiguous way. Even after Gerald's death and the non-consummation of the desired *blutbrüderschaft* with his friend, and although Ursula does not understand this "perversion" of the husband to look for "two forms of love" he seems not to abandon the idea instead, he still insists that it would be possible to have "two forms of love". Would not it be an implicit representation of his repressed bisexuality?

What Birkin proposes to Gerald is clearly a very intimate and, in a sense, sensual form of bonding. We can see at this point that the construction of this bond between the two friends, in a sense, seems to transcend the barriers between friendship and sensuality. We also realize that, under these circumstances, it is very difficult not to interpret such philosophy as a mask to euphemize the homoerotic desire the two characters nourished to each other. As both characters seem to demonstrate emotional and possible sexual attraction to both genders, we understand that it would not be possible to say homosexuality is directly represented in the novel; instead, what it seems to be represented is a bisexual triangle. Consequently, we also imply the representation of the bisexual identity of the characters Birkin and Gerald in the novel. These facts indicate the complexity of human relationships present in the work besides the complex view of sexuality in Lawrence's work.

6. HOMOEROTIC SUGGESTIVE LANGUAGE IN *GLADIATORIAL*

From now on, we will be trying to find around the chapter homoerotic suggestive and ambiguous language that may reveal aspects of the bisexuality of Birkin and Gerald. In Chapter XX – *Gladiatorial*, one might see the bisexual suggestive effects brought about by the attitudes of the two characters in the wrestle scene.

Gladiatorial depicts a fight between Birkin and Gerald. The chapter begins with Gerald sitting on a sofa. Birkin arrives at *Shortlands* (Gerald's house) and finds his friend bored and melancholic. After some small talk, Gerald tells him that there was nothing better than women's company or "an amusing man" (WL, p. 296). He said that there were only two things to cure boredom, 'love and work'. Yet Birkin added another: fighting. Then they decide to strip themselves to start the fight. From that moment on, we can already perceive that there is a constant use of ambiguous language throughout the chapter, describing the actions of the characters in the fighting scene under plenty of interpretations: either as an average fight between two men or as a homoerotic sexual scene. This chapter causes a provoking suggestive homoeroticism. This ambiguous language evokes a suggestively erotic atmosphere between them. It also reveals the talented creativity employed by Lawrence in the novel. This ambiguous manipulation of language, in a certain way, produces a beautiful erotic and aesthetic effect unique to the work. An effect that both embellishes his style of narrative as well as reveals the possible bisexual nature of the characters, without, however, explicitly expose this fact to the reader.

Knowing that Lawrence still lived in a society strictly governed by very conservative social conventions (wherein even tablecloths should be long to cover its legs)¹³, he, with his revolutionary writing, defies conventions. In *gladiatorial*, the use of ambiguous language in the depiction of the struggle between them seems to be not merely an aesthetic effect, but is a way of criticism to his puritanical society. It is criticism that denounces Victorian false moralism that only concealed or repressed human sexual freedom.

This repression is represented by Gerald's consciousness. It demonstrates the power, the influence, and the discourse of conservative and moralistic society that denied and repressed sexual freedom. On the other hand, Birkin, as Lawrence's own autobiographical portrait defies social rules and does not accept this repressive discourse at all. Lawrence

¹³ There is a myth in which during Victorian ages Sexual repression was so strong that "Even table legs were hidden with tablecloths and embroidery, according to a common myth, and though this myth has not been proven, it was used as a symbol for the extremism of the Victorian era (Trollop, 1832, p. 17)."

seems to represent an intellectual voice of minority discourses, the voice of those who ventured against society "good behaviours". As consequence of his decision, he was toughly censured and had his books censored. In the novel, Gerald, as his antagonist preferred to follow convention by not accepting Birkin's proposal of *blutbrüderschaft* that attracted him indeed, however he could not fail on doing his "duty" before society.

Marriage was not the committing of himself into a relationship with Gudrun. It was a committing of himself in acceptance of the established world, he would accept the established order, in which he did not livingly believe, and then he would retreat to the underworld for his life (WL, p. 394).

Now, we will examine some excerpts from the dialogues of the two men or the voice of the narrator who somehow shows us some aspects of the bisexuality of the characters through the ambiguous language used by the author in the construction of the narrative and that suggest homoerotic images between them.

After Ursula's refusal to Birkin's marriage proposal he went straight to Short lands (p. 392) to meet Gerald. That fact confirmed us again that formal marrying-love was not important for him. In other part of the fighting scene, Gerald would like to hit someone, to discharge his energy in the 'fight':

“- [...] I want something to hit. It's a suggestion
- So, you think you might as well hit me?
- You? Well! Perhaps – In a friendly kind of way, of course” (WL, p. 297).

From another perspective, we could interpret "hitting Birkin in a *friendly* way" as discharging all his energy sexually with his friend help. Taking into account that sex between men has been generally associated as a wilder or more 'violent' sexual activity. In his case, an activity in which he might discharge all that energy he could not quite feel at that moment with any women. The situation becomes even more sexually suggestive when he says, "*He felt that if he did not watch himself, he would find himself doing something silly*" (p. 297) Then Birkin explains to him that he had lived with a Japanese man who taught him jiu-jitsu. Hence, one of the most sexually suggestive excerpts occurs when Birkin and Gerald strip themselves to begin to fight:

“- Then we'll try jiu-jitsu. Only you can't do much in a starched shirt.”
“- Then let us strip and do it properly.” (p. 298)

Gerald asks Birkin about the Japanese he used to struggle with, and once again, we can see a play of ambiguous language:

- “And you used to wrestle with a Jap?” he said. ‘Did you
- Strip?
- ‘Sometimes.
- You did! What was he like then, as a wrestler? (p. 298)

When the reader reads, “*What was he like then*”; they can feel the brief interruption made by the punctuation (a comma) followed by the adjective phrase “*as a wrestler*”. It seems to have been used intentionally so we could understand it literally as either “What was he like as a wrestler”, indeed or as “What was he like then [...] *stripped?*” As we know that this question comes soon after Birkin's assertion that sometimes, he and the Japanese man stripped to fight.

- ‘Good, I believe. I am no judge. He was very quick and slippery and full of electric fire. It is a remarkable thing, what a curious sort of fluid force they seem to have in them, those people not like a human grip—like a polyp’ (p. 298)

Birkin responds Gerald by using terms typically common in Lawrence's works as “*electric fire*” and “*fluid force*” that most frequently suggested sexual activity. Ahead, we can look at one of the most creative and sexually suggestive parts in this chapter. Here, we can observe Birkin physically describing the characteristics of the Japanese when he was struggling to answer Gerald's question:

- ‘Repel and attract, both. They are very repulsive when they are cold, and they look grey. But when they are hot and roused, there is a definite attraction—a curious kind of full electric fluid—like eels.’- ‘well—yes—probably.’ (p. 298).

Looking again at the language narrated above, from our perspective, we can clearly realize the representation of the phallus or penis, depicted here in two ways: either ‘cold and grey’ or ‘hot and roused’. The polysemy of language helps the narrative produce a very well designed ambiguous effect. We can associate these adjectives “cold and grey” with the flaccid penis, described by Birkin as something repellent; while “hot and roused” can be associated with the image of the erect phallus that caused him “a definite attraction—a curious kind of full electric fluid—like eels.” Again, we perceive suggestive sexual expressions in “electric fluid-like eels,”. Perhaps we may once again associate the figure of the phallus with the strange similarity between the animal (eels) and the male sexual organ. However, what would be this “electric fluid”? Could we relate it to blood, semen, energy, the power symbolized by the phallus? Could we make an inference of that *blutbrüderschaft* proposing by substituting “obsolete wounds blood” to other representations of blood? As semen, for instance? A mutual exchanging of semen instead of blood, as a symbolic blood brotherhood pledge? (WL, 227).

Besides, would that sworn friendship and love represent a mutual blood and mental consciousness of them that is able to produce a unison of mind and body? An elevated pledge that balanced spiritual and sensual halves of the *Self*? A pledge that should release them from the archetypal eternal searching for the other half of that ancient androgynous creature existing inward every human? Would that pledge cure the bisected division of their female

and male *Selves*, which made them eternally in search of the opposing half? Would it be a symbolic representation of a cure to that eternal circle of man looking for woman and vice-versa? (PLATO [trans.] Jowett, 1996).

Perhaps, that blood brotherhood would make them perfectly balanced and prevent them of losing their *Selves* in promiscuous desire for the seductiveness of women and make women – *The Mater Dolora* – control them. (See CRISP, 1990-2010; COWAN, 1992). Both men were supposed to get a balanced relationship with both women and each other. It is also interesting to remember that the very image of the phallus is also seen later in another works of Lawrence as *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928) where according to Constance Chatterley, the penis seemed to have a life of its own, “as if it were another being” (LCL, 279)¹⁴.

After locking the door, Gerald and Birkin began their fight excitedly. The narrator describes Gerald as having "a rich, frictional kind of strength, rather mechanical, but sudden and invincible" (p. 299).

“They seemed to drive their white flesh deeper and deeper against each other, as if they would break into an oneness. Birkin had a great subtle energy that would press upon the other man with an uncanny force, weigh him like a spell put upon him.” [...] he seemed to penetrate into Gerald's more solid, more diffuse bulk, to interfuse his body through the body of the other, as if to bring it subtly into subjection, always seizing with some rapid necromantic fore-knowledge every motion of the other flesh, converting and counteracting it, playing upon the limbs and trunk of Gerald like some hard wind. It was as if Birkin's whole physical intelligence interpenetrated into Gerald's body, as if his fine, sublimated energy entered into the flesh of the fuller man, like some potency, casting a fine net, a prison, through the muscles into the very depths of Gerald's physical being.” (p. 299).

However, we should not only think of the sexual act itself, but we also could interpret this frame as

[...] a scene of erotic sublimation, a psychic process that Sigmund Freud identifies as the transformation or displacement of one's desire into another. Lawrence describes the physicality of the struggle and the intense interweaving of Gerald and Birkin's bodies are being driven by a "sublimated energy" that refers to the passionate attraction between the two men, which is being transformed into the brute struggle and the exertion of their battle. (PARRIS, B. C.; MCKEEVER, 2013)

At the end of the fight, Birkin, once recovered from exhaustion, comments: "We are mentally, spiritually intimate, therefore we should be more or less physically intimate too – it is more whole" (p. 302). This comment reminds us of another excerpt from Chapter XVI – *Man to Man* – in which Birkin speaks to Gerald about the ancient Germanic knights' brotherhood oaths of loyalty showing a historical and mythological symbolism in relation to their homoerotic desires and their possible bisexual behaviour, as we can see in:

¹⁴ LAWRENCE, David Herbert. *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928).

"-You know how the old German knights used to swear to *BLUTSBRUDERSCHAFT*¹⁵," he said to Gerald, with quite a new happy activity in his eyes.

-'Make a little wound in their arms, and rub each other's bloody into the cut?' Said Gerald.'

'Yes—and swear to be true to each other, of one blood, all their lives. That is what we ought to do. No wounds, that is obsolete. But we ought to swear to love each other, you and I, implicitly, and perfectly, finally, without any possibility of going back on it.' (p. 227).

According to Frank Westenfelder, the Celtic and Germanic tribes' warrior aristocracy were known for generally preferring sexual relations with other men. They were famous for their ferocity in battle, a fact that for them could be justified by the strength and courage they acquired to protect their partners, by which they maintained a mystical relationship of intimate physical, mental and spiritual love (See also section 3.1.1 *The Greek Pederasty*). Westenfelder argues that

[...] these brotherhoods were strictly separated from the rest of society, and surrounded by an aura of mystery. From their ranks came the dreaded warriors who dressed in wolf or bear skins and transformed, with the help of shamanic rites, into raging beasts (WESTENFELDER, 2011)

Now that we have already been analysing the aspects concerning the 'mystical *blutbruderschaft*' between Gerald and Birkin through the chapter we will move on our perspective to the love issues regarding to Birkin and Ursula. For as we are discussing the bisexuality nature of the characters, we need to see how eroticism regarding male-female partners are described in the novel in order to show how Birkin's or Gerald's psychic, emotional or social sexually behaviours demonstrate their 'double feelings' that elicits their bisexuality.

In *Water-Party*, we are able to see that Lawrence depicts Birkin's passionate love for Ursula. Lawrence shows us that "[Birkin] was a perfect hard flame of passionate desire for her." (p. 204).

Nevertheless, we are only going to see the eroticism of their relationship more explicitly in *Excuse*, when we see the intimacies of their relationship. In one excerpt of that chapter Birkin and Ursula talking about their love for each other. The scene depicts an erotic moment between the couple: "Unconsciously, with her sensitive finger-tips, she was tracing the back of his thighs, following some mysterious life-flow there" (WL, p. 149). In that scene, we can see how that even though in a so conservative society, Lawrence defies the conventions and depicts the women's sexual desires and even their active role over her partner in the relationship. Ahead, by the way, once more Lawrence depicts, perhaps, one of

¹⁵ Blood brotherhood

the most erotic scenes of the novel. One can see through Lawrence's erotically suggestive language that Ursula had anal sex with Birkin. Additionally, the most interesting and shocking is that Birkin was who seemed to be the bottom. In a way, it shows Lawrence's defiant courage to write those things in his times, fact that once more credited him as a literary precursor of sexual liberation movements.

She traced with her hands the line of his loins and thighs, at the back, and a living fire ran through her, from him, darkly. It was a dark flood of electric passion she released from him, drew into herself. She had established a rich new circuit, a new current of passional electric energy, between the two of them, released from the darkest poles of the body and established in a perfect circuit. It was a dark fire of electricity that rushed from him to her, and flooded them both with rich peace, satisfaction (WL, p .349)

Once more, we may see that in this excerpt we can find a rich amount of terms Lawrence used to describe sexual intercourse or erotic involvement between their characters. However, what called our attention to the use of those terms is the fact he used to use them in the novel both to describe the erotic scenes between Birkin and Ursula in *Excuse* as well as he did in *Gladiatorial*. The same happens with Gudrun and Gerald in chapter XXX – *Snowed up*, when she and the man are erotically described having wild sex, although in their case, we realize that their attraction to each other is not love, but a destructive passion:

His passion was awful to her, tense and ghastly, and impersonal, like a destruction, ultimate. She felt it would kill her. She was being killed. – “My God, my God,” she cried, in anguish, in his embrace, feeling her life being killed within her. And when he was kissing her, soothing her, her breath came slowly, as if she were really spent, dying (WL, p. 497)

In that other following excerpt, we shall observe the emotional complexity of Birkin that demonstrates his dual emotional relationship and his desires toward his ‘male and female’ lovers at the same time as a proof of his bisexual nature:

“Birkin laughed. He was looking at the handsome figure of the other man, blond and comely in the rich robe, and he was half thinking of the difference between it and himself—so different; as far, perhaps, apart as man from woman, yet in another direction. But really it was Ursula, it was the woman who was gaining ascendance over Birkin's being, at this moment. Gerald was becoming dim again, lapsing out of him” (WL, p. 304).

Then, maybe, it would be possible to say that Birkin's both desires completed one another by forming a single feeling through a mystical relationship. Would it be the mystical sex marriage of the male and the female he wanted?. A marriage of “the sons of sun (male element) and the daughters of the earth (female element)? Would not be the case that the mystical sex marriage Birkin wanted with Ursula was a denial of the binary division of female and male genders, in which each one was supposed to be exclusively attracted to the opposite one?. In other words, would not be the case Birkin felt he was not supposed to feel attraction

exclusively to a woman, but rather, he could feel attraction to a man additionally, though he himself would not admit it?

Would there be, perhaps, the possibility of a conjunction of both male and female genders into a third one? An androgynous gender, which enabled him to become free in himself to find happiness and satisfaction with the polarized combination of both genders in a symbolic sacred trinity?

Maybe we might think of another different and new creature, neither homosexual nor heterosexual, an androgynous one, and at the same time, more independent, a bisexual being, endowed with two opposite natures that bind and complement each other. William Blake suggests, in a way, that each thing has two opposing natures. Why we might not assume that some people or all people are able to have two natures either?

Without contraries is no progression. Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate are necessary to Human existence. From these contraries spring what the religious call Good and Evil. Good is the passive that obeys Reason. Evil is the active springing from Energy. Good is Heaven. Evil is Hell!¹⁶

In this way, we can conclude, without willing to be repetitive, that there are many sexually suggestive images evoked through figurative language full of ambiguous elements throughout this chapter and the book that reveal the essentially bisexual nature into the relationship between the two characters analysed in the work.

CONCLUSION

Lawrentian writing notably manifested controversial views of human relationships. By the change of the late 19th century Victorian period to Modern 20th century fiction, Lawrence's novels got greatly influences from the historical changes provoked during the Industrial Revolution, scientific discoveries and the First Great War period.

We initiated this work by bringing a brief historical background of England and world social and political scenario along the late 19th to early 20th century. We emphasised the literary influences of authors such as Lawrence, Woolf and Wild to the development of strong criticism on human sexuality issues. Subsequently, we continued with a short biography of D. H. Lawrence. Then we made a summary of his novel *Women in Love* published in 1920 in which we analysed the behaviour and language of the characters about society, marriage, and

¹⁶ The Marriage of Heaven and Hell by William Blake

sexuality and therefore, their criticism about Victorian society conservative restrictions toward non-heteronormative forms of sexualities.

Afterwards, we divided the next section of the work into three perspectives of bisexuality. In the first section, we approached a bisexual etymology that handled the mythological origins of bisexuality. It was followed by a discussion of Lewis' (2012) discussion of bisexual behaviour in Ancient times which embraced Greek pederasty; Roman symbolic sexual hierarchy and Japanese *Shudo* practice. Finally, we discussed Dantas' (2016) positioning about *Laotong* sisterhood from which we related it to possible bisexual behaviour practices.

In the following section, we discussed the Lawrence's concept of *Blutbüderschaft* dealt within the novel. We analysed it from the perspective of queer theories and cultural studies of Bisexuality (BUTLER, 1990; LEWIS, 2012; CALLIS, 2009; STORR, 1999; FOUCAULT, 1978[a]/1985[b]). We sought to establish a bridge between the notion of Lawrentian blood brotherhood and its relation to the idea of the loss of the *Self* and the male symbolic fear of submission to the woman, represented by the symbolism of the Great Mother archetype.

Summarizing, we made an effort to link the concept of *Blutbüderschaft* to the supposed homoerotic relationship between Gerald and Birkin beyond their heterosexual affairs. From that point of view, we characterized the two male characters' relationship as being bisexual.

In the last section, we tried to describe and analyse some excerpts from the chapter XX – *Gladiatorial*, rich in an amount of ambiguous homoerotic suggestive language, then characterizing the possible bisexual nature of the characters. In this chapter, we analysed the ambiguous language of the narrator and of the two men to describe their actions, gestures, language and behaviour in the homoerotic portrait scene of the fight between them.

Thus, from our analysis of the eroticism used by Lawrence throughout the novel to describe the relationships of the love triangle between Birkin, Ursula, and Gerald, we concluded that their relationship might be a possible representation of bisexual identity in Lawrence's fiction. We could see that both characters 'struggled' with their sentimental dilemmas and suffered because of their choices. Perhaps one would imagine that the "*Blutbrüderschaft*" proposed by Birkin might be a possible solution for their 'undeniable' bisexual relationship. Perhaps one may say they, especially Gerald, might have found such a "mystical happiness" to fulfil his 'emptiness', but it will be up to each one's conscience to respond it, or rather each one's "nature's" to answer it. In this way, we could see, from this

perspective, *bisexuality* seem to be one of the issues dealt by D. H. Lawrence's Post-Victorian literature.

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ANNEX A – “Goddess”

Fonte: Archetype of the Great Mother¹⁷

¹⁷ Available at <<https://dreamhawk.com/dream-encyclopedia/archetype-of-the-great-mother/>> Access at June 13, 2019.

ANNEX B – Archetype of the Great Mother

The symbols of the great mother hold in them our awareness, unconscious, as it may be, of the forces of nature active in us. These forces, in the guise sometimes of a beautiful woman dancing or beckoning, are both wonderful and dangerous. The dance of nature is unconscious. If we get in its way without awareness, we may be ground under its heel, as it dances on its beautiful way. We see this not only in natural disasters such as earthquakes which wreck towns, but also in our own emotional and sexual energies which, if not cared for and deeply respected, can be enormously destructive. To meet this aspect of ourselves we must be both admiring of the natural in and around us, but also resourceful. The danger for a man might be that he loses himself in desire for all women or one woman. For a woman, that she becomes a spiritual whore, thinking she can uplift all through her womb. The point for the woman is that she is only incidentally part of the creative act of childbirth. The processes of creation are far deeper than her personality. To feel she is personally holding all that power can lead to hubris. (CRISP, 1990-2010)¹⁸

¹⁸ CRISP, Tony. *Archetype of the Great Mother*. Dreamhawk, Copyright © 1999-2010. Available at <<https://dreamhawk.com/dream-dictionary/goddess/>> Access at June 13, 2019.