

Antipodes: D. H. Lawrence's St Mawr

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ST Mawr is an animal, a horse named out of the Celtic twilight. To several of the novel's characters — a representative spectrum of the British establishment of the time — he seems, unequivocally, "a menace." Rico Carrington, the baronet, from the first harbours a wariness, a fear of the stallion; F. R. Leavis, primarily because of Lawrence's stress on Rico's "horse-like" characteristics, finds him the very "antithesis" of St Mawr:¹ a judgment which I hope to show has even more to recommend it. Rico's fall in the Welsh mountains crystallizes his fear; he wants the horse shot. But later the idea of Flora gelding it possesses a more appropriate appeal because (in the garb of nurse/bride/nun) she flirts with him. For the sake of the gelding he reveals a readiness to scheme against Lou, his wife. Dean Vyner, pillar of the church, feels "sorry for the horse" yet does not doubt the desirability of its destruction. St Mawr looks a "terrible horse" of whom even Lewis the groom should by rights be afraid: this is the view expressed by Laura Ridley (a tiresome friend of the family but "not a bad painter" — and, doubtless, not a good one either²). While Flora, the landowner, would, as I have recorded, "cut" him, she says, "to make a horse out of him."³

Because St Mawr is not a horse. Not simply a horse. He comes to represent far more than mere "horseness" as, during the first half of the novel, various sets of antitheses become associated with him: Ancient Mysteries and Modern Knowledge; Animal and Human; and Nature and Society.

Several times the characters discuss the Greek mystery religions which, antedating Christianity, flourished before

the rise of rational philosophy. For instance, Lou senses that "St Mawr drew his hot breaths in another world from Rico's, from our world. Perhaps the old Greek horses had lived in St. Mawr's world. And the old Greek heroes, even Hippolytus, had known it" (p. 26). In Shropshire the party spends an evening talking with the resident artist, Cartwright, about the potency and meaning of the pre-anthropomorphic Pan. The artist describes the god thus:

[he] is hidden in everything. In those days you saw the thing, you never saw the god in it: I mean in the tree or the fountain or the animal. If you ever saw the God instead of the thing, you died. If you saw it with the naked eye, that is. But in the night you might see the God. And you knew it was there. (p. 66)

Later he agrees with Lou that Pan might "easily" be seen in St Mawr but, probably, never in a man.

One night Lewis, the bearded Welsh groom, confides the nature of his god to Lou's mother, Rachel Witt. His beliefs, although Gaelic, turn out to be remarkably similar to the subtle kind of pantheism which Cartwright — without of course Lewis' kind of faith — had been able to intellectualize, render into words. The trees talk to the groom as he passes and there are "other people," "fairies." And, as nightfall brings a greater awareness of the god, men should strive to become what he calls "moon-people . . ." (p. 121-25).

While Rico convalesces after his fall Lou fills her time studying "the Classical Gods" and decides, tellingly, that the world's "a very queer" place "when Rico is the god Priapus" (p. 131). The tenor of this and other references to ancient mysteries in *St Mawr* disposes the reader to feel that the modern world lacks something, lacks something upon which the ancient world thrived. This is especially so when they are viewed against the backdrop of Lawrence's evocation of early mystery religions in, say, *The Man Who Died* (1929), and his abiding interest in myth,⁴ demonstrated only too obviously in *The Plumed Serpent* (1926). We might observe with Leavis that throughout *St Mawr* the modern age im-

pinges upon our consciousness, in precisely the sense of Eliot's poem, as a wasteland.⁵ Several of the novel's early commentators managed to see no further than this anti-thesis and accused Lawrence of a simple-minded "primitivism."⁶

When Lou becomes aware of St Mawr's animal nature (though at the time she knows only dimly what that nature amounts to), when he looks at her "with demonish question, while his naked ears stood up like daggers from the naked lines of his inhuman head" she senses that she "must worship him" and hides herself from Rico, from "the triviality and superficiality of human relationships" (p. 20).

As the story develops Lou talks frequently to her mother about the animal as against the human nature of man himself. In this context they first make a distinction between "animal" and "mind," mind being a, possibly *the*, human characteristic. Lou however demonstrates that the particular human specimens with whom they are intimate, lack mind of the kind they envisage, are really "old women"; she states her ideal as a "pure animal man" possessing a "good intuitive mind" who would be

as lovely as a deer or a leopard, burning like a flame fed straight from underneath. And he'd be part of the unseen, like a mouse is, even. And he'd never cease to wonder, he'd breathe silence and unseen wonder; as the partridges do, running in the stubble. He'd be all the animals in turn, instead of one automatic thing, which he is now, grinding on the nerves. (p.61)

She continues, "Ah, no, mother, I want the wonder back again, or I shall die." And the point of reference — and reverence — for such a desire is St. Mawr.

If humans, or at least the ones in control, the Ricos and the Vyners, are "old women knitting"; and if those nearest to the ideal of the "pure animal man" (like, according to Lou, Lewis and Phoenix, the half-Indian) are in positions of servitude, then society is obviously based on poor foundations. It has deformed the natural order. Consequently Mrs. Witt can feel that in England something has gone

radically wrong with the landscape itself; England, as she phrases it, has been too deeply "humanized." She thinks of the bestraddling pylons which she observes on her ride from Shropshire as steel expressions of the process rising above the fields.

Lou and her mother, by virtue of their Texan origins, can place America in polar opposition to England, to Europe. It could be thought that there, across the Atlantic, the machinations of humans, the work of humanization, has been going on for less time so that properly speaking there should be a corresponding reduction of friction between nature and society. In the land of their birth the other polarities — between ancient mystery and modern knowledge, animal and human, and animal and mind — should, by extension, not be so much in evidence. Conditions should more nearly approach their posited ideals. It is partly such a hope that drives Mrs. Witt and her daughter westwards, ultimately to New Mexico, joining one of the main movements of the novel.

Clearly, St Mawr represents more than mere "horseness" and those who wish to destroy him by bullet or scalpel are to be despised: Lawrence leaves us in no state of tension about that. They are grouped too closely round the "wrong" poles in each of the dichotomies. The fact that they are limned as shallow, satisfied with the motor car age, reasonable, civilized, and "dead" reflects this. One of them, Freddy Edwards, can but blush when Rachel Witt asks him how he can be so certain he exists; in truth his existence goes no deeper than a transitory skin change. Lawrence muses and speculates on the premonitions, doubts and assumptions of Lou and Rachel — as he does on those of the grooms — but he concedes no space in this tight novel for like consideration of Rico and the others. It is not accidental that those who would easily eliminate the animal are presented without interior motions worthy of examination.⁷

Yet their stark judgement of St Mawr is not completely wrong. His actual behaviour as a horse mirrors the knot of ideas, threatening ideas to them, with which he is associated. And even *their* instincts have not been attenuated to such a degree that they are unable to recognise the threat when it confronts them. St Mawr is in fact a killer. He had been sold to Lou *because* he's a killer. To Lou herself he at first appears "out of a dark background" as "a sort of menace, doom. Master of doom" (p. 21). During the confusion of Rico's fall the horse's neck arches "cruelly from the ground" and he later looks around "in a ghastly fashion," becomes "like some terrible lizard" before backing away with "a terrible guilty, ghostlike look on his face" (p. 80). Though committed to St Mawr, the incident makes it possible for Lou to debate, pro and con, the horse's possible "meanness." To be sure, there is menace in his mane. But, as she appreciates, there is so much else too, and this she tries to fathom. At his core there burns mystery.

Hence it must be deemed appropriate that Lawrence held to his original name for the novel, that he used the name of its central symbol as a suitable title for this long story primarily about two American women.⁸ There is a kinship of story and symbol. Like the horse's sharply outlined exterior ("his naked ears . . . like daggers . . .") the plot of *St Mawr*—if I may boldly cut through past controversies — receives firm delineation in terse, telegraphic sentences,⁹ comparable to those of the young Hemingway — a writer Lawrence was to praise in 1927¹⁰ — and which (except, importantly, in the evocation of New Mexico) lack the rich rhythms possessed by the prose of, say, *The Rainbow* (1915). To some—such as most of the book's early reviewers—*St Mawr* is easily grasped for it can be read as a simple story of two women, tired of men, their own way of life and Europe who eventually break free of their hollow relationships to find, perhaps, a measure of contentment in their homeland, the United States. It has often been said that Lawrence hectors the reader. Certainly into the body of many of

the major novels which preceded *St Mawr* he injects quite explicitly, if with labyrinthine complexity, his articles of faith. In *St Mawr*, with the exception of the bones of dialectic which I have already uncovered, he seems satisfied to allow the reader to reach his own conclusions. Perhaps then there may be some justification for finding it a simple tale. On the other hand, if Lawrence can actually follow his own precept and not put his "thumb in the balance," he must feel confident of the story's total effect, he must be assured that the discerning reader will follow his signals. My contention — to continue the analogy — is that in *St Mawr*, under the ribs of dialect, there beats, as in the horse itself, a mysterious heart.

The antitheses (upon which I have doubtless imposed a sharper pattern than may be effortlessly warranted by the buzz and bustle of the novel's living) complement one of the main movements of the story, the journey westwards. Caught up in the current, the reader finds himself swept further and further from metropolitan London towards the wilderness. First the principal characters quit their drawing rooms to canter daily in the park's open space. Then they venture to a country retreat in Shropshire. From there they ride out for a day to Wales where, pointedly, they observe from an outcrop of rock that England "was in shadow" while "Wales was still in the sun, but the shadow was spreading" (p. 78). This day witnesses the shock of Rico's fall which, indirectly, precipitates Lou and her mother into deciding to leave for America. And in America the westward motion does not come to an immediate halt. They stay at their ranch near San Antonio for only a short while before travelling on to Santa Fé and then, again, onwards to Las Chivas, the ranch on the edge of the wilderness. Admittedly there are minor interruptions — a few days back in London before setting sail and a brief rest in Havana — but these only serve to accentuate the primarily westward surge.

It is noticeable that in this general current, like one wave

before another, Mrs. Witt leads the way. As a breaker, so to speak, she precedes Lou in riding out; she has already taken up residence in Shropshire when her daughter arrives. She is the one to first decide on rescuing St Mawr from Flora and returning to America; in fact she travels to London to prepare for their voyage. And, having reached San Antonio, it is she who most quickly tires of the ranch.

Mrs. Witt outstrips her daughter in other ways; she falls in love with Lewis and proposes marriage. The proposal is made as they journey alone together from Shropshire. Lewis refuses her offer for a complex of reasons, the chief one being that he wants to keep intact what he assumes to be the essential nobility of his manhood. Later, when traveling alone with Phoenix Lou begins to brood upon *his* nature as a man and lover — and the reader knows that, up to this point, she has preserved a high regard for him, has considered him as approaching her notion of a “pure animal man.” Thus the parallelism raises expectations of a positive relationship between the two; at a minimum she should fall in love with him. . . . Yet this does not prove to be the case. In fact Lou has come to despise Phoenix. She thinks him “stupid.” So she dashes our expectations.

Mrs. Witt also outstrips Lou (if the word “outstrip” can be applied to such a state) in her mood of languor, resignation and indifference. Their ship to the New World has barely left England when she ceases to take her usual vivacious, even dominating, interest in her environment and succumbs to perusing bad novels she doesn't actually want to read. But the causes of this emotional condition and what it presages as a parallel experience for Lou are complicated matters to which we must return.

At this juncture it is as well, considering that at least one expectation provoked by the *plot* structure does not come to fruition in America, to note exactly what kind of syntheses America provides for the various *ideological* anti-theses — ancient mystery versus modern knowledge, etc. — which I have abstracted.

Having concluded that her vocation should be that of "one of the eternal Virgins, serving the eternal fire," that she wants "[her] temple and [her] loneliness and [her] Apollo mystery of the inner fire" (p. 164), Lou comes to believe that the ranch in New Mexico is "sacred," "blessed." Hence it seems, superficially, that the ranch somehow approximates the ideal she has formulated in connection with the ancient Greek, and Gaelic, mystery religions. The lengthy odyssey from the modern wasteland of England appears to have been worthwhile.

Yet, more importantly I think, the ranch and its setting *fail* to approach the ideal in two divergent ways. On the one hand there appears to be something so primeval about its situation as to antedate sex itself. It is a place in which pine trees thrive. One of them is described as "a passionless, non-phallic column, rising in the shadows of the pre-sexual world, before the hot-blooded ithyphallic column ever erected itself" (p. 171). In dedicating herself to such a place, by declaring herself "one of the eternal Virgins," Lou cuts herself off from sexual relationships. She insists to her mother that "either [her] taking a man shall have a meaning and a mystery that penetrates [her] very soul, or [she] will keep to [herself]" and, men "mystic" enough being hard to find, she dooms herself to a kind of virginity. Since the emphasis in their earlier discussions had fallen more heavily on the hope of discovering such a partner, however rare, Lou's declaration of her "virginity" appears to represent a loss of some kind: her response to the ranch neutralizes — even neuters — her.

On the other hand the ranch falls short of approximating the ideal by being both literally and metaphorically goatish. Towards the beginning of *St Mawr* Cartwright exposes himself as closer to the "Great Goat Pan" than the "Great God Pan" (p. 65), the goatish Pan being the result of man's degrading civilization. The ranch's hundreds of multiplying goats, introduced by the previous owner (from which, presumably, its name, Las Chivas, was adopted) tend thus to

symbolize the *decline* from an ideal order which has already ceased to exist.

The previous owner's wife, meaning of course something quite different, felt that the landscape surrounding the ranch was "a world before and after the God of Love" (p. 177). If, instead of Christ, we take Pan to be the novel's God of love, it is possible to see how the ranch falls short of the ideal in two such paradoxically different ways.

Again, in the U.S. the "pure animal man" endowed with "a good intuitive mind" proves as rare as he did in England. Perhaps even more so. If in Europe Lewis most nearly approaches their wish (despite his inability to mate), no-one in America comes within reach of it. Even the cowboys — who, it is admitted, must be admired for their hard stoic lives — amount, ultimately, to mere "self-conscious film-heroes" (p. 154). And Phoenix, who might be expected to blossom forth as not only more equal but more desirable in his home environment becomes, as I have noted, rather a figure to be despised. This is hammered home by the plot parallelism: Lewis and Rachel converse while travelling alone on horseback; Phoenix and Lou silently convey their images to and of each other as they bounce along in that emblem of a sterile era, a motor car. A car, moreover, which Phoenix drives badly.

Lou and her mother discover that in fact America has not been "humanized" in the manner of Europe. Yet, in another way, the distance between the two poles of nature and society appears to be as great, if not greater. Las Chivas, a "little tumble-down ranch, only a homestead of a hundred and sixty acres" situated on the edge of the wilderness is "man's last effort towards the heart of the Rockies, at this point" (p. 165).

As such it has witnessed an incessant battle between man and nature throughout its sixty year existence. Harmony has not been achieved. Clearly, the long inserted narrative about the New England trader and his wife may teach the futility of man's mental efforts against the onslaught of

the wilderness, but it also demonstrates, in practical terms, that Lou, in order to have water, in order to abide there at all, will not be allowed simply to submit to the wilderness.¹¹

In sum, it would not be exaggerating to insist that the various conflicts, antitheses, Lawrence raises during the first half of the novel are *exacerbated* in America. America proves, so to speak, anticlimactic. This conclusion is encapsulated in the fate of the stallion, St Mawr. Inasmuch as the horse may be viewed as the central symbol and point of reference for the ideals proclaimed by Lou and her mother, what befalls him mirrors what I have sketched as happening to those ideals. Instead of entering into his wild free inheritance in America his seemingly essential nature is violated. After suffering himself to be ridden by the laconic ranch boss he begins to show an amorous interest in one of the Texan mares; he becomes no better than what Richard Poirier terms "a fawning stud,"¹² provoking the stunned Lewis to think "What a world!" (p. 153). After this St Mawr disappears from the story and his influence, both as a character and as a symbol, wanes. In a sense, the vitality of the horse is extinguished by the spirit of the continent. (We will note later that it is rather a case of St Mawr receding in significance as the spirit comes to the fore). Towards the end of the novel Lou admits to herself that "even the illusion of the beautiful St Mawr was gone" (p. 161).

I wish now to seek the deeper causes behind the defeat of expectations raised by the plot and (linked to that) Lou's failure to find her ideals embodied. To do this it appears essential to examine closely, first, the nature of the ideals (for instance, we need immediately to discover why their symbol comes to be thought a mere "illusion"); second, the presence of death and evil as they are perceived in the novel; and, finally, the "spirit of place" in America, in New Mexico.

Much of Lawrence's writing — the essays and the books on the "unconscious" particularly — attests to the fact that

he habitually thought in extremes.¹³ It seems that in *St Mawr* — just as by inversion he mocks — the phoenix, one of his own favourite symbols — he deliberately permits — this personal characteristic to be somewhat undermined. In a certain light the poles — between which so many of the novel's sparks fly — turn out to be spurious, or less than justified. Nature and society is probably the best example: we have already seen that, in practice, it appears virtually impossible for man *not* to set himself in conflict with nature, even when his society totals nothing more than a “tumble-down ranch.” The falseness of the “pure animal man” ideal is a more subtle matter. Lou's description of him as “lovely as a deer . . . burning like a flame He'd be all the animals in turn, instead of one automatic thing” amounts really to the same thing as Cartwright's rendering of the pre-anthropomorphic Pan who “is hidden in everything . . . in the tree or the fountain or the animal.” Obviously the “pure animal man” would have to *be* Pan, be a god. And the existence of such a Being must be utterly beyond hope.

Yet the very real way in which Lou — and, to a lesser extent, her mother — harbour such a hope gives rise to serious questions. We have already noted how surmises about “what will happen next” are rudely struck down as we read; now we see just how much of an “illusion” St Mawr, in every sense, represents. Consequently it comes as no surprise to find that underneath the now discarded antitheses there is another: one of *St Mawr's* crucial dichotomies concerns, precisely, *the constitution of illusion and reality*.

Near the beginning of the novel, before setting sail for the United States, Mrs. Witt, Lou, and even Phoenix, have the strange experience of finding London a “mirage” (pp. 27, 35, 137)—or, as Eliot would have it, “unreal city” Their spirits have flown before them to America. America then will be *real*. But, once more, Lawrence furnishes us with an anticlimax. When staying at their ranch near

San Antonio Lou is struck by how much the cowboys appear like Zane Grey cut-outs and "film heroes." It all seems a sort of celluloid dream or, as she puts it, like a "strange cheerful mirror" (p. 154). At one point, after she considers returning to Europe, she has to remind herself how unreal England had been. "What was real? What under heaven was real?" she exclaims (p. 154).

What under heaven is real: this agonizing question lies at the hidden heart of *St Mawr*. Lawrence appears to have undercut everything, even what originally seemed his own prescriptions for salvation. Nothing, it seems, remains. A great abyss of unreality and of nihilism, open up under *St. Mawr*.

Mrs. Witt provides one demonstration of how to cross this abyss. We have watched how — after the rejection by her prospective "mystic" partner — she suffers a mood of indifference, perhaps resignation, to overtake her. At Santa Fé Lou offers her the chance to return to Europe, to Italy, and she replies: "Never again, Louise, shall I cross that water. I have come home to die" (p. 156).

Death takes on the aspect of a second best mystic union after her failure with Lewis; it is at least *real*. Deep within the novel the reader senses the attraction, the gravid force, of death. For Mrs. Witt it is the only possible antidote to illusion. Her listlessness, her travail, begins as they traverse the grey seas; the voyage across the grim inhospitable Atlantic provides her with an appropriate passage into another new world.

Now it goes without emphasis that Rachel Witt's antidote to illusion contributes nevertheless to the novel's dark underside. The same may be said of Lou's apocalyptic vision of evil. After Rico's accident she spots the snake — mythic progenitor of wrong — in the grass. The sight provokes her into considering not only the possible particular "meanness" of *St Mawr*, but the pervasiveness of "positive evil" as a general force in the world. It is so palpable that she finds she can virtually smell it. She feels it all about

her like the sea, in waves. While Lawrence explicitly uses the noun "vision" (p. 82) to sum up her mystical experience he renders it so vividly, in so concrete a manner — even down to the inclusion in it of references to topical events of the day (the situations in Russia and Germany) — and he makes it so pertinent to the accidents she has just witnessed, that it takes on a semblance of *reality*. The premise here must be that reality is that which most forcibly impinges on the consciousness of the individual. London, even Texas, do not exert such a force on Mrs. Witt and Lou; death and doom do. Clearly, like the major American works of the nineteenth century, *St Mawr*, to use Harry Levin's appropriation, has a great power of blackness in it. It tells of hope and of hope's defeat. And of death and doom as the plaintive answers to broken hopes.

Yet, ultimately, for Lou at any rate, another real alternative presents itself. We have observed that she divests herself of illusions at Las Chivas; she remarks that "the mystic new man will never come to [her]" (p. 164) and she puts *St Mawr* behind her. She can perform this feat *only* at Las Chivas, at "man's last effort towards the heart of the Rockies." This is the key: we must assume that it is the wilderness which reveals to her the truth, the truth for her. And that is what the ostensibly extraneous story of the New Englanders is all about. It brings forth, evokes, over a period of time, Las Chivas' "spirit of place" (p. 169).¹⁴

"Spirit" has religious connotations. And I have recorded that Lou dedicates herself to the wilderness in religious, even sacrificial, terms. In the story of the New Englander's wife the wilderness constantly appears juxtaposed against her New England Christian faith in "the God of Love." These points accentuate the degree to which the wilderness proclaims itself an absolute, a god. The final fifteen or so pages form a celebration, a hymn, to this god:

Always, some mysterious malevolence fighting, fighting
against the will of man. A strange influence coming out

of the livid rockfastnesses in the bowels of those un-created Rocky Mountains . . . [with the pine tree a] non-phallic column rising in the shadows of the presexual world . . . [and] beyond, in the farthest distance, pale blue crests of mountains looking over the horizon, from the west, as if peering in from another world altogether.

Ah, that was beauty! — perhaps the most beautiful thing in the world. It was pure beauty, *absolute* beauty!

So it was, when you watched the vast and living landscape. The landscape lived, and lived as the world of the gods, unsullied and unconcerned. The great circling landscape lived its own life, sumptuous and uncaring. Man did not exist for it.

[The landscape with its lightning told the New England woman] *that there was no merciful God in the heavens* There was no love on this ranch. There was life, intense, bristling life, full of energy, but also with an undertone of savage sordidness

[And] the roses of the desert are the cactus flowers, crystal of translucent yellow or of rose colour. But set among spines the devil himself must have conceived in a moment of sheer ecstasy [etc.] (pp. 169-77)

The extended quotation above conveys the essence of the spirit of place. And, of course, Lou's discovery of it supercedes her vision of evil. However, it must be kept in mind that it folds into itself elements not only of ancient myth, but of the very doom, the very evil, that she had first envisioned when she saw the dead serpent in the grass. Her final reality is all-embracing. The crucial, central point about it is that it is a force. And a force which, though acknowledging or including the fact of evil, works — albeit sometimes violently — for the propagation of *life*. Thus, in their avoidance of the chasm of unreality, if Mrs. Witt incarnates the novel's powerful drift towards death, Lou embodies an equally strong motion towards life. And, since the novel ends with a sustained consideration of Lou's reality,¹⁵ it seems reasonable to infer that the life principle emerges, to put it grossly, on the *upswing*

Quite early in *St Mawr* Lou is described as looking "so much younger and so many thousands of years older than her mother . . . with . . . eyes . . . that were so disillusioned they were becoming faun-like" (p. 55). This remark pro-

vides a hint as to why Lou rather than her mother feels the potency of the wilderness. Though the two women belong to the same family and share a similar outlook, Mrs. Witt is essentially too innocent; in her innocence she neither gladly suffers fools (like Rico) or allows herself to be *too* influenced by illusion (e.g. she sees comparatively quickly that a "pure animal man" will be impossible to find). This characteristic makes it extremely hard for her to be *dis-illusioned*, to become as utterly bereft as her daughter. She feels less hunger for reality than Lou — even towards the end of *St Mawr* she can recommend that Lou try to "keep up the illusion" (p. 185). So, when she chooses to break away from unreality she finds it impossible to make a positive assertion; she simply accepts the dominion of death.

To account more fully for the disparity between the two women's fates I suspect the reader must cast into more uncertain waters. The description of Lou quoted above ("so many thousands of years older . . .") intimates that she has been elected as of old; that she has been fitted by life, so to speak, to serve the life principle. This is why she can truthfully testify that she has been *called* to her "mission" quite as much as she has chosen to undertake it. She says, "[The Spirit is] something big, bigger than men, bigger than people, bigger than religion. It's something to do with wild America. And it's something to do with me" (p. 185). It seems feasible to deduce that Lawrence invokes here a peculiar (and covert) concept of pre-destination.¹⁶

In any event, with or without such a concept, no doubts can be entertained about the age of the two principles; like Christ's poor, life and death are always with us. Life against death: the elemental strife: Lawrence's novel springs from, exhibits, bears upon nothing less than the first great antipode. At *St Mawr's* conclusion, having purchased the ranch, Lou has hacked through all illusions and stood out against her mother's choice and counter-principle to, in a way, triumph, to "come through" at the behest of the primordial life principle. And the final words of the

novel — “Then I call it cheap, considering all there is to it: even the name” — reveal that death-bound Mrs. Witt recognizes her daughter has found in no crude sense, a bargain. In rendering so completely — that is, with due complexity and simplicity — both the price paid and the bargain itself; in adopting the appropriate form of the novel (“the novel,” he said, “is the one bright book of life”), Lawrence conveys something dynamic that no abstractions can devalue.

NOTES

¹D. H. Lawrence, *Novelist* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1955), p. 228.

²Leavis' remarks in “On Being an Artist” (*ibid* pp. 297-302) might as justly be applied to her and to Cartwright as to Rico.

³*St Mawr*, together with *The Princess* (London: Martin Secker, 1925), p. 106. All page numbers refer to this, the first, edition.

⁴See, for instance, John B. Vickery, “Myth and Ritual in the Shorter Fiction of D. H. Lawrence,” *Modern Fiction Studies*, 5 (1959-60), 65-82; P. Merivale, “D. H. Lawrence and the Modern Pan Myth,” *Texas Studies in Language and Literature*, 6 (1964-65), 297-305.

⁵Leavis, p. 225.

⁶For example, Peter Quennell, “The Later Period of D. H. Lawrence,” *Scrutinies*: II, ed. Edgell Rickword, (London: Wishart, 1931), pp. 134-36; John Middleton Murray, *Son of Woman* (London: Cape, 1932), pp. 337-38.

⁷Cf Robert Liddell, “Lawrence and Leavis: The Case of *St Mawr*,” *Essays in Criticism*, 4 (1954), 321-27 and the ensuing controversy, printed in volume 6.

⁸Cf Alan Wilde, “The Illusion of *St Mawr*: Technique and Vision in D. H. Lawrence's Novel,” *PMLA*, 79 (1964), 164-70.

⁹See Liddell; also, Edwin Muir charged that the novel is “formless” in his review, *Nation and Atheneum*, 30 May, 1925. Wilde lists similar complaints of “sloppiness,” etc., on the part of more recent critics like Graham Hough and Eliseo Vivas.

¹⁰Review of *In Our Time* reprinted in *Selected Literary Criticism*, ed. Anthony Beal (London: Mercury), 1961, pp 427-28.

¹¹Leavis (p. 276) finds this factor a weakness in the moral. I, for reasons which will become obvious, do not.

- ^{12A} *World Elsewhere: The Place of Style in American Literature* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1967), p. 42. Poirier's reading of *St Mawr* (pp. 40-49) as tantamount to an "American" novel is very interesting; also relevant here is the interpretation to be found in David Cavitch, *D. H. Lawrence and the New World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 152-63.
- ¹³See also Harry T. Moore, *The Life and Works of D. H. Lawrence* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1951), pp. 142-46; the rather cursory asides in Mary Freeman, *D. H. Lawrence: A Basic Study of his Ideas* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1955), pp. 52-53, 57-58 and 149; H. M. Daleski, *The Forked Flame*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1965) especially Ch. I; John W. Ehrstine, "The Dialectic in D. H. Lawrence," *Research Studies* (State University of Washington), 33 (1965), 11-26. Lawrence Lerner offers a reading of *St Mawr* itself in terms of one of the antitheses discussed above, that between animal and mind: *The Truth-tellers, Jane Austen, George Eliot, D. H. Lawrence* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1967), pp. 185-91.
- ¹⁴In *St Mawr* these words do not of course denote societal factors as they do in the opening chapter of *Studies in Classic American Literature* (1923).
- ¹⁵Poirier (p. 48) and Wilde (p. 170) believe that the very last sentence of the novel, Mrs. Witt's final comment, must be Lawrence's own view and that it deflates Lou's position; I hope to show that this is not so and — as against Leavis (p. 245) — that it is not even "sardonic."
- ¹⁶Frank Kermode, in "Lawrence and the Apocalyptic Types" *The Critical Quarterly*, 10 (1968), 14-38, speaks of *St Mawr* as "in general an apocalyptic story" — as, of course, Lou's vision of evil and a comparison of the novel with the "horse" chapter (X) in *Apocalypse* (1932) would indicate. With these ideas in mind it is possible to grope toward a conception of just what kind of predestination the novel may indicate. Kermode says "the beneficiaries [of the new dispensation, after the cataclysm] constitute an *elect*, isolate in a new consciousness A mark of this elect will naturally be the new man-woman relationship." Clearly Lou is denied this "mark" in the time span covered by the novel. But she is shown as capable, as a woman, of such a relationship.