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Artistic Weakness: A Thematic Analysis of D. H. Lawrence's *St Mawr*

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Abstract. D. H. Lawrence's *St Mawr* (1925) is known as a modernist example of an open-ended and inconclusive work of art. The novella is abound with ideological dualities such as nature vs. civilization; man vs. woman, and body vs. spirit that stem from and make the core of the writer's personal, philosophical and political beliefs. This article argues that the open-endedness of the novella is more a sign of Lawrence's artistic weakness at handling an overload of symbols and ideas rather than a modernist element enriching the novella with different layers of meaning open to different interpretations. It is argued that, approaching the end, the reader feels that he is entrapped within a complex web of ideas for which Lawrence's attempt to reach a resolution proves futile. Lawrence's artistic weakness shows itself in his uncertainty regarding a resolution for the complicated dualities and mysterious symbols he introduces in his novella. *St Mawr*, accordingly, seems an unfinished work overloaded with philosophical ideas rather than a multi-layered text created by the visionary power of the imagination.

Keywords: Lawrence, *St Mawr*, Resolution, Uncertainty, Artistic weakness.

1. INTRODUCTION

David Herbert Lawrence (1885-1930) uses a simple language in his novella *St Mawr* (1925) and abounds it with poetic descriptions to create an impassioned tone and a wave-like narrative of the heroine Lou Witt who is stifled in her marriage to a talentless artist. Lou is inspired by the eponymous St Mawr the Welsh stallion who causes her awareness of life. The novella is known as a modernist example of an open-ended and inconclusive work of art. This article argues that the idea of open-endedness is not as simple as has been claimed and needs further clarification. Moreover, many of the books and articles on Lawrence's writings deal with the dualities he creates rather than the resolution of such dualities, and whether there is a resolution or not in the writings. Accordingly, this article also argues that Lawrence introduces many dualities in *St Mawr*, however, by offering no resolution, he leaves the tale unfinished, and the reader entrapped between such ideological dualities as wilderness vs. civilization; individual vs. society; man vs. woman; body vs. soul or art vs. life. The present study draws upon the conclusion that more than being a modernist feature, the lack of resolution shows Lawrence's weak artistic handling of his material as well as uncertainty in showing a way leading to comfort and partial satisfaction.

Scott Sanders (1973), as an instance, believes that in *St Mawr* "the quarrel with society is resolved by flight," (p. 134) while Lou's journey to the American wilderness proves no satisfactory resolution or permanent settlement. Or to name another critic with a similar point of view, F. R. Leavis (1979) sees "the total effect of "St Mawr"" to be "an affirmation," to be "affirming" (p. 305) reaching a "normative conclusion" (p. 49). Mick Gidley (1974) states that

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Lawrence "seems satisfied to allow the reader to reach his own conclusions" (p. 30) while I believe Lawrence could not convince the reader of any conclusions at all. A brief look at some of Lawrence's personal beliefs about such topics as education, death and rebirth, religion, or individual consciousness seems necessary for a better grasp of the above-mentioned claims.

2. DISCUSSION

The idea of struggle without fulfillment is not peculiar to *St Mawr*, and it can be traced in *The Rainbow*, *The Virgin and the Gipsy*, *Nirvana*, *The Fox*, or *The Prussian Officer*. What seems ignored is that *St Mawr* is a complex and ambiguous novella, though it does not seem to be so, and the complexity is due to a writer who was a philosopher with lots of big questions in mind intending to share certain morals with the reader. Lawrence could not leave the reader to draw conclusions for himself, for Lawrence did not like this modernist feature at all, and desired to finish his writing and provide the reader with a conclusion whatsoever. *St Mawr* is never successful at convincing the reader that Lou's journey to nature can provide her with wisdom and education that must be cultivated within the confines of the society. In "Education of the People," Lawrence says that the society produces "distinct classes." He says "the basis is the great class of workers. From this class will rise also the masters of industry, and, probably, the leading soldiers. Second comes the clerky caste, which will produce the local government bodies. Thirdly," he continues, "we have the class of the higher professions, legal, medical, scholastic: and this class will produce the chief legislators. Finally," Lawrence believes, "there is the small class of the supreme judges: not merely legal judges, but judges of the destiny of the nation" (as cited in Sanders, 1973, p. 150). This shows that a careful reading of Lawrence's works requires familiarity with his personal beliefs and the tension within them, for his writings are heavily biographical. Lawrence's obsession with ideas like alienation, or death and rebirth caused biographical frustrations that abound his novels, and he remained uncertain how to reconcile raised issues in order to come up with some neat conclusions. As a controversial writer, Lawrence was never sure about his beliefs and, thus, could not offer his reader, from an artistic point of view, a well wrought piece of work. Lawrence suffered a lot from the lack of harmony between his parents, and was afraid of his father's passionate nature. The conflict between his parents was another cause for the writer's uncertainty; he was the product of such ideologies as family, class difference and religious controversies after all.

Lawrence wrestled, continuously, with important life issues in his fiction, and would often find himself caught in generalities. Kaye (1999) states that Lawrence, "became the philosopher-novelist seeking to unravel basic questions of existence, sometimes at the expense of his art" (p. 52). The significance of the life of the flesh the dark passion of the blood physical life and passion, the transformative power of the phallus, and the role of religion were among his thoughts. He would think religion, as Freeman (1955) reports, "separate[s] daily life and universal truth" (p. 1) and desired to seek a new version of it. According to Lawrence, "humanity" must not be "subordinate[d] to […] religious quest for univocal meaning," for this "fails to render justice to human complexity" (Kaye, 1999, p. 41). Lawrence would think about education and democracy, but his main concern was the individual mind. He wanted to write a novel about the individual consciousness but did not exactly know what to do with history, and the society from which he felt being away. One can easily see Lawrence's too much emphasis on individuality and psychology rather than socio-historical forces and social restrictions toward which he felt restless. This implies that he wrote his novels, as a critic of Victorian moral attitudes, in defiance of the society and the pressures impinged upon individuals. He saw and suffered from the fact that the English life was paralyzed by conventions like censorship regulations and class distinctions. Thus, the exaggeration of the characters and their feelings would undermine the power of history and shaping social forces, and Lawrence remained uncertain of how to handle such ambiguous issues in his writing.

Lawrence was both afraid of people and afraid of his fear of them. He hated conventions and, at the same time, felt worried about moving away from conventions and the distance created between himself and others. Lawrence's art fails when he desires to take side with a cause but remains helpless and is unable to resolve the conflict between personal fantasy and social life while he well knew the plight of a split and isolated self. One reason he hated the English society was that he saw it as a divided society that stifled the instincts, the opportunity for change in condition, and reduced artistic talent and sensitivity to numbness. Lawrence badly felt the need for rebirth and renewal of life which he could represent through his novels where he could project his psyche onto his characters in search of self-realization and a continuous quest for a new and different identity. According to Lawrence who would think of England and her regeneration, the rebirth of the individual as the natural man was the absolutely necessary prerequisite for the rebirth of the society. In a letter Lawrence wrote that "I want to go away from England for ever […] that I want ultimately to go to a country of which I have hope, in which I feel the new unknown." He continues that "England has a long and awful process of corruption and death to go through […] When I can, I shall go to America, and find a place" (Moore, 1962, pp. 481-82). In *Apocalypse*, Lawrence "continues the metaphoric language of rebirth and the emergence of something fine, phoenix-like, out of the destruction of his degenerate civilization." About his individualism, Lawrence says it is "an illusion. I am a part of the whole, and I can never escape. But I can deny my connections, break them, and become a fragment." He says, then, he is "wretched. What we want is to destroy our false, inorganic connections, especially those related to money, and re-establish the living organic connections, with the cosmos, the sun and earth, with mankind and nation and family. Start with the sun, and the rest will slowly, slowly happen" (as cited in Becket, 2002, p. 28).

Lawrence was a critic of the degenerate culture that could not offer the modern man comfort, wisdom and the chance to be reborn, for it was the visionary poverty of the age despite its technological advances that was Lawrence's concern. England had, more than necessary, become civilized and humanized, lacked American purity and wilderness, and had denied life, energy, power and love. According to Lawrence the sterile England had reduced people to money and false standards replacing love with struggle and competition. Accordingly, *St Mawr* is, Gidley (1974) states, "a representative spectrum of the British establishment of the time" (p. 25) and it "deals with the "Waste Land" aspect of modern civilization" (Leavis, 1979, p. 5). Nonetheless, it is the heroine's sense of dissatisfaction on the American, pure, and wild ranch that startles the reader who, most likely, feels to be left in the air rather than feeling to be before a multi-layered writerly text open to different interpretations.

Dualism is an indistinguishable part of Lawrence's thought. It seems that for Lawrence it was the division of body and mind that was the important achievement of the modern age. For him not only human beings but the whole existence was two sided, and he wished to reconcile such dualities as body vs. spirit, illusion vs. reality, hope vs. despair, primitive vs. modern or intellect vs. passion in order to reach a kind of resolution. Lawrence's art of writing, therefore, seems to be more an act of sharing personal ideas rather than a rewriting of aesthetic experiences. Kelley (2001), beautifully, asserts that

> Lawrence's art depends upon his representation of the human scene in terms of dialectical opposites in constant generative conflict with each other, and entails the insistent urgency of his style as it reflects the combative terrain of human relationships in which stasis or fixity is depicted as death to the life force within us. (p. xx)

Lawrence himself had experienced the conflict, and what makes a novella like *St Mawr* personal and less artistic is too much insistence upon personal beliefs and conflicts. As an example, Lawrence could never find an answer to the opposition of nature and the society that

he would see as corrupt on the one hand, and necessary to make a union with nature on the other. Besides, the society was the terrain that could provide human beings with wisdom, experience and education. Again, Lawrence would ask himself, could the society really offer wisdom or does it leave characters like Paul in *Sons and Lovers* helpless? Hope seems an absent element in *Women in Love*, while Ursula's wisdom and consciousness at the end of *The Rainbow* suggest hope through dark days. Nonetheless, hope, truly symbolized by the rainbow of the title, does not seem shiny in the foggy contemporary England for Ursula who is dissociated from her family.

A key theme in *The Rainbow* abound with lyrical descriptions of nature seems to be Ursula's discovery that man is part of nature. To Lawrence love of nature was more important than the love of people, for nature symbolizes freedom while civilization is associated with enslavement. Though aware of the corruption the society and the modern age of materialism could do to human beings, Lawrence never lost faith in the individuals' potentialities for change, and not certain about which could win over the other, he found nature a proper setting where to forsake his protagonist. Nature never offers peace, resolution and safety to those who find themselves, at the end of the novel, in nature that is both benign and dangerous.

The relationship between man and woman and their passions were so important to Lawrence that Schwarz (2005) has concluded Lawrence's message to be that "humankind must rediscover the lost, instinctive, biological, passionate self that has become sacrificed to democracy, imperialism, industrialism, and urbanization" (p. 111). The sensitive Paul, in *Sons and Lovers*, makes the decision to continue his struggle to find love during lifetime. Of course love was a very complex issue for Lawrence. One aspect of it, according to Campbell (2000), is "a struggle for domination between individuals, a desire of one person to possess the heart and soul of another" (p. 747). It was his fiction in which Lawrence wanted to explore and share his conflicts and philosophical issues as love with which Lawrence was preoccupied. In *Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays* Lawrence (1914) states that:

> It is art which opens to us the silences, the primordial silences which hold the secret of things, the great purposes, which are themselves silent; there are no words to speak of them with, and no thoughts to think of them in, so we struggle to touch them through art. (p. 140)

Lawrence felt he needed to preach things he did not feel confident about, and needed to provide the reader with certain answers for large questions but could not, and this threatened the artistic beauty of his writings with the danger of improbability, generality and inconclusiveness in the negative sense of the term. This is why Pritchard (1971) believes *St Mawr*'s "weakness lies in the uneasy relationship between symbolic action and realistic surface: certainly both plot and character are improbable" (p. 157).

Reading through *St Mawr*, one feels the second half of the novella lacks the vivid descriptions and imaginative freedom of the first half. Influenced by the modernist emphasis on character and the inner workings of the mind, Lawrence would lay more emphasis on personality rather than social forces that shape the personality. As a philosophical and affected writer, Lawrence loads the characters of *St Mawr* with philosophies and ideas changing the novella to a debate of ideas. Frank Kermode (1973) believes in the 'doctrinal' function of characters who produce important statements regarding the modern age and the place of feeling. A writer of such political novels as *Aaron's Rod* or *Kangaroo* enters so many of his philosophical ideas into his fiction so that the boundary between fiction and philosophy is removed, and the organization of the material becomes complicated. In *Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays* Lawrence (1914) states that "it seems to me it was the greatest pity in the world, when philosophy and fiction got split." He continues that "so the novel went sloppy, and philosophy went abstract-dry. The two should come together again, in the novel. And we get

modern kind of gospels, and modern myths, and a new way of understanding" (p. 154). "Overt philosophizing," according to Bell (1992), "would distract from, and undermine, the holism of Lawrence's presentation of states of being" (p. 10).

I believe Bell, by "overt philosophizing," means that Lawrence wanted to write and define himself, and explore his personal concerns. His self-exploratory novels would create unsure attitudes that would reduce the artistic qualities of the novels. It comes as no surprise that Lawrence must have produced these words, in "Studies in Classical American Literature," that "the essential function of art is moral. No aesthetic … but a passionate, implicit morality […] a morality which changes the blood" (1977, p. 180). And the result is, in Goodheart's words (1963), that "when Lawrence converts his vision into doctrine and turns prophecy into moral prescription, he betrays a confusion about his achievement. The visionary habit is alien to the moral life, because it refuses to accommodate itself to anything different from it" (p. 169).

Schwarz (2005) avers that "no less than his Romantic predecessors Blake, Shelley, and Wordsworth Lawrence sought refuge from the stress of life in the comfort of his fiction" (p. 114). The attempt to reconcile dualities in order to find an answer or relief from the pressure of questions Lawrence had in mind Lawrence thought in extremes was the attempt to solve a problem rather than to create an artistic work of art. He was not sure of how to reconcile man with nature, and what would happen if man was cut from the society and his fellow human beings. To him death was a great mystery as well as the end of association with nature and others, thus, he was desperate to find a way to inspire his readers with the need to change not only England but the world through words.

It is not difficult to find mysterious symbols signifying death in Lawrence's fiction. St Mawr is certainly a mystery associated with death. It is worth asking why there is no mention of the horse, as the most complicated symbol of the novella, after Lou's experience at the ranch. It seems to be Lawrence's weakness at finding a proper conclusion to such a multi-layered symbol when he cannot even decide how to settle his characters Lou and her mother whose movement supposes no destination; just an aimless journey from San Antonio to Santa Fe to Las Chivas with no arrival or guarantee for settlement. There is a misspeak and that is when Lawrence refers to the history of the ranch which, according to Leavis (1979), is "a history of defeat" (p. 305). The descriptions that appear on the final pages of the novel are less dreamy than those appearing in the beginning chapters which is why the reader is not likely to find the end convincing. One cannot easily draw the conclusion that Lawrence intentionally left the novella open-ended for the readers, in the Joycean sense of the term, to decide for themselves. As a matter of fact Lawrence never liked such self-reflexive and experimental novels as, say, Joyce's *Ulysses* where the writer offers flight from realism as much as philosophical and political novels.

Although *St Mawr* seems prophetic, one is more likely to take it as a personal novel. The personal question of whether self-satisfaction is equal to the Nietzschean 'will to power' made Lawrence create restless characters taking after himself. "The women in Lawrence's life and books," according to Freeman (1955), "are not quenched inferior beings, but usually energetic, often clever, always vital persons, equal matches for Lawrencian males" (p. 198). As an example Lou has potential for sense-bound perception: "but she did know everybody by sight" (*St Mawr*, p. 37). She is quick at feeling the need to destroy something in order to recreate it; she enters long philosophical discussions with her mother Mrs. Witt, and tries to defy restrictions. She rejects the modern world, and tells her mother that "no, but, mother, I only take life differently. Perhaps you used up that sort of go. I'm the harem type, mother: only I never want the men inside the lattice" (*St Mawr*, p. 50). Her quest in the American wilderness, then, becomes a rejection of European corruption and convention.

Lawrence had, most probably, thought a lot about 'life force' as another complex issue, and in *St Mawr*, he assigns it to Lou who needs to attain vital energy for what she is about to accomplish. Lawrence loved the Nietzschean 'will to power' and was accordingly a celebrator of the seemingly divine 'life force.' 'Life force' is associated with the moonlight, flowers and stars, and suggests identity, individuality and strength. Lou needs it to kill Rico and her connection with him just to experience the 'life force' associated with St Mawr that inspired her and her strength. It is certain that 'life force' was of paramount importance to Lawrence however, he failed at handling it properly: one cannot be sure if Lou needs the force to find strength or it is after defying Rico and seeing the horse that she finds it. In a letter Lawrence says

> we want to realize the tremendous, non-human quality of life it is wonderful. It is not the emotions, nor the personal feelings and attachments, that matter …. Behind in all are the tremendous unknown forces of life, coming unseen and unperceived as out of the desert to the Egyptians, and driving us, forcing us, destroying us if we do not submit to be swept away. (Moore, 1962, p. 291)

Campbell (2000) refers to Lawrence's look at 'life force:'

> The world contains a vital, powerful "life force" that gives people their highest level of fulfillment, energy and being. It is a force expressed through love, nature, sexuality, and creative work. When people arein touch with their force, they are at their best; this is when they are most individual, free, and strong. (p. 747)

The unknown 'life force' is associated with feeling that was, for Lawrence, a kind of energy. The free play of 'life force' as energy would, then, create sympathy between man and man as well as man and nature. A repressive and biased society like the English society which has stifled old rituals in itself, ignores social change and 'life force.' 'Life force' is the necessary energy needed for change, however, Sanders (1973) comments that this 'life force' that exists "in nature or in the depth of the self […] cannot be made fully articulate, for to articulate is to rationalize, and to rationalize […] is to destroy" (p. 148). More important than that is the hope for the future that is associated with the 'life force.' The rainbow the glowing symbol of a better future and hope amid a sordid contemporary England that appears standing on the earth before Ursula who now possesses an individuated consciousness and which is representative of 'life force,' "was arched in [people's] blood and would quiver to life in their spirit" (*The Rainbow*, p. 418). Lou buys the dangerous St Mawr for which she shows passion. The horse has huge impact on Lou who tells her mother

> I don't want intimacy, mother. I'm too tired of it all. I love St Mawr because he isn't intimate. He stands where one can't get at him. And he burns with life. And where does his life come from, to him? That's the mystery. The great burning life in him, which never is dead. Most men have a deadness in them, that frightens me so, because of my own deadness. Why can't men get their life straight, like St Mawr, and then think? (*St Mawr*, p. 56)

The mysterious, high-spirited St Mawr symbolizes, as Aldington (1975) suggests, "the unconscious life-power Lawrence thought had been lost by industrialism" (p.7). St Mawr represents life energy and is associated with doom, darkness and death. It symbolizes blood, flesh, and being, and is the ideal Lou is looking for, however the reader loses track of the horse in the final parts of the novel; it changes to an illusion and disappears. Although the horse was made by Lawrence to stand for many signifieds, it seems to belong to another world in opposition to men and their world. Gidley (1974) believes St Mawr is not a horse at all; "not simply a horse. He comes to represent far more than mere "horseness" […] various sets of antitheses become associated with him: Ancient Mysteries and Modern Knowledge; Animal and

Human; and Nature and Society" (p. 25). Another layer of meaning is introduced by Pritchard (1971) who believes that the horse "signifies more for Lou than phallic energy. It is somewhat perverse, refusing to mate with the mares; it fears human contact" (p. 158). Lou is mostly afraid of the mysteriously dangerous and beautiful St Mawr's plunging, and by the horse better grasps the failure of her marriage. The reader is also likely to feel uneasy when hearing about it, and is likely to see it as an image overloaded with philosophical ideas rather than an artistic symbol created by the visionary power of the imagination. The threatening feature of St Mawr reminds the reader of the horses in *The Rainbow* who symbolize fear, animal sensuality and a repressed part of Ursula'a nature:

> But the horses had burst before her. In a sort of lightning of knowledge their movement travelled through her, the quiver and strain and thrust of their powerful flanks, as they burst before her and drew on, beyond. (*The Rainbow*, p. 412)

As threats on civilization, the horses symbolize power, cruelty and resistance, and are the destroyers of the conventional usual life. They are the dark forces that co-exist with other forces within human beings. Ursula is both frightened and inspired by the mysterious horses who cause her illness and miscarriage.

Rico the disliked artist represents the modern age. He is defiant and over-conscious, but cannot assert his masculinity. It is interesting to note that he is afraid of the power and the frenzy St Mawr creates. According to Pritchard (1971), Rico "epitomizes the remorselessly trivial and unnatural society that Lawrence considered the England of the 1920s" (p. 158). Rico is both the opposite of St Mawr, and like the fierce St Mawr however, he lacks the horse's courage and sensitiveness. It comes as no surprise that St Mawr must crush Rico.

Lawrence experienced tensions in his marriage. Like *The Rainbow*, *St Mawr* is about an unhappy marriage and its discontents. Lou does not find her marriage a passionate experience but rather a wasteland. Lou who is discontent with her sterile marriage to Rico as well as life and the society, is put in a quest for something not really known or recognizable. She decides to reject family as an ideology and a destructive discourse that would confine, define, restrict and stifle Lou and her passions. The dilemma introduced is that man must retreat and experience isolation in order not to be threatened by the outside reality while he is a social creature in desperate need for interaction with others. Sanders' words (1973) are noteworthy: Lawrence "insists on the destructive consequence of isolating oneself from the world of man but he cannot resist showing his major characters fly from society" (p. 93). *St Mawr* was the result of a "conflicting experience": Lawrence "disliked the people" (Aldington, 1975, p. 7). One can, accordingly, see Lawrence's anxiety projected upon Lou who is anxious to remain free and experience a fuller life. The same as March in *The Fox*, Lou is in search of liberation. Influenced by his mother, Lawrence created female figures who "freed [themselves] at least mentally and spiritually from the husband's domination" (as cited in Sanders, 1973, p. 48). The reader may be reminded of Ursula who dissociates herself from her family just to become self-absorbed, as the reader is left in the air thinking about Ursula and her uncertain future.

This shows Lawrence's aesthetic uncertainty about the consequences of being away from one's fellow human beings or from the flesh. Kermode (1973) says the narrative of *St Mawr* "shows how the different, brutal life of the horse so insistently representative of "another world," the nonhuman world of Pan damages Rico and changes Lou's world to one of separateness in an inhuman landscape" (p. 119). Lou, at the end of the novella, decides that "the time has come for me to keep to myself" (*St Mawr*, p. 165) which means the solution she believes in is isolation. However, Lawrence believed that "sexual love is the ultimate solution for man" (Wilson, 1976, p. 172) which means that the reader can never be sure about what Lawrence had in mind and how he wanted to handle the material. Lou dooms herself to eternal virginity by isolating herself from men just to experience regeneration on the ranch. This

uncertainty implies the danger of being more than a woman on Lou's part. Lou associates herself with the 'spirit:'

> There's something else even that loves me and wants me. I can't tell you what it is. It is a spirit. And it's here, on this ranch. It's here, in this landscape. It's something more real to me than men are, and it soothes me, and it holds me up. I don't know what it is, definitely. It's something wild, that will hurt me sometimes and will wear me down sometimes. I know it. But it's something big, bigger than people, bigger than religion. It's something to do with wild America. And it's something to do with me, it's a mission, if you like. I am imbecile enough for that! But it's my mission to keep myself for the spirit that is wild, and had waited so long here: even waited for such as me. Now I've come! Now I'm here. Now I am where I want to be: with the spirit that wants me. And that's how it is. And neither Rico nor Phoenix nor anybody else really matters to me. They are in the world's back-yard. And I am here, right deep in America, where there's a wild spirit wants me, a wild spirit more than men. And it doesn't want to save me either. It needs me. It craves for me. (*St Mawr*, p. 165)

The reader may wonder if Lawrence really knew what the spirit was. What could Lawrence do with her heroine gone so far, out of the writer's sight, into the wilderness? How could Lawrence manage to control her? The 'spirit' that calls Lou is not going to save her who will be left wandering on the ranch reaching nowhere, belonging nowhere. The reader's fate seems no better.

Lou, finally, decides to repudiate Rico to know herself better. The journey she makes is, according to Freeman (1955), "toward death" (p. 186) and has no arrival. The reader and Lou can never be sure if the journey will be a promising one. Again one may be reminded of Ursula's uncertain future when put in a literal movement. After dreaming of her comforting past, "she mounted into the wet, comfortless tram, whose floor was dark with wet, whose windows were all steamed, and she sat in suspense. It had begun, her new existence" (*The Rainbow*, p. 310). By and large, women, in sharp contrast with men, are in quest for "another form of life," and want "to discover what was beyond, to enlarge their own scope and range and freedom" (*The Rainbow*, pp. 506-507). Lou's quest is for self-definition and moral values, and the reader finds no mention of St Mawr in the concluding crucial pages of the novella. Mrs. Witt accompanies Lou to New Mexico where the horse is replaced with the wilderness: "For Lou, this magnificent mountain landscape has replaced St Mawr as the more than human power to which she can submit" (Pritchard, 1971, p. 161). There Lou purchases a ranch which is like a prehistoric and primitive landscape in the new imaginative setting of American wilderness. Lou is attracted to the inhuman beauty of the mountains (standing in sharp contrast with the human life she has experienced). The novella tells us that Lou

> loved her ranch, almost with passion. It was she who felt the stimulus, more than the men. It seemed to enter her like a sort of sex passion, intensifying her ego, making her full of violence and of blind female energy. (*St Mawr*, p. 152)

Lou decides to take refuge in the ranch in an act of rejecting the human society. By choosing the ranch and believing in the self-sufficiency of her soul, Lou chooses life and 'life force' over death, darkness, and sterility. Lou tries to keep in touch with 'life force' as she works on the ranch; a creative activity that keeps her happy and high-spirited. Lawrence's uncertainty and artistic weakness are proved when he takes Lou to the inhuman world of the ranch. Lou takes the risk to experience life on the ranch but she can never be certain if it can replace what the society has to offer. The ranch is both beautiful and cruel, and Lawrence shows the cruelty and bitterness in the desert. The creatively beautiful ranch is an embodiment of 'life force' on the one hand, and also an embodiment of savagery which shows the writer's uncertainty regarding

the fate of his heroine left in an isolated place with an uncertain future ahead of her. The ex-owner of the ranch, most probably Las Chivas, left it in decline the reason for which may be dissatisfaction with the ranch, or the need for a journey to find a more ideal setting. It is not difficult to guess that Lou is another Las Chivas who will sooner or later set on a journey of finding another ideal place rather than remaining on the seemingly promised ranch, and this renders her movement futile. Lou has a utopian vision of the ranch but the ranch with thrived pine trees is not really different from the wasteland of England. It is very likely that Lou and her mother will tire of the ranch, and their journey will be continued.

The dichotomy of life and death shows itself on the ranch. What gives Mrs. Witt peace of mind is the thought of dying on the ranch. Lawrence who was preoccupied with the idea of death found it a suitable context for himself, the readers and the characters to get rid of the philosophical entanglement, and conceal his uncertainties. Death, to Mrs. Witt, is the only antidote to illusion, and by accepting it she seems to be more content and victorious than her daughter who knows herself a pre-destined, in connection with the 'spirit' thinking about life on the ranch.

In *St Mawr*, Lawrence tries to show his anxiety about being more than human, ignoring the flesh, dislike of others, and being separate from fellow human beings. The anxiety shows itself in the writer's uncertainty and the inconclusiveness of the novella leaving the reader in the air. Lou realizes a connection between herself and what she sees as the 'spirit' on the ranch. By submitting to the 'spirit,' Lou desires to be overwhelmed with 'life force' what neither Lawrence nor Lou is certain of. All Lawrence can do is to make Lou awakened by it, and to send Lou after the unknown 'spirit.' And then to the reader's surprise the 'spirit' is found to be associated with evil; a (life) force that "Works albeit sometimes violently for the propagation of life" (Gidley, 1974, p. 38). Lou is left with a vision of evil filling and containing the world.

The skeptical disillusioned Mrs. Witt who boundlessly dislikes the society, and does not believe in the 'spirit' is both liked and disliked by Lawrence; liked for the dislike of England, and disliked for being an American hating England. It is a surprise that she must be the person who offers a solution: "the only sensible thing is to try and keep up the illusion" (*St Mawr*, p. 164). One wonders what the real question and answer are at the heart of *St Mawr*. One doubts if Lawrence was ever a thinker, and sees his weakness at handling his vision of life in *St Mawr*. Personality and emotions have reduced the aesthetic quality of the novella which, as it reaches the end, moves away from being a work of art communicating a vision of life. Overloaded with Lawrence's personal beliefs, *St Mawr* promises no resolution, and the reader is likely to think that the novella is left unfinished in the hands of a writer who is himself caught within the discursive threads of a complex web of philosophical and political ideas.

3. CONCLUSION

Lou feels an unconscious attraction to St Mawr but the confusion and anguish that one may feel to be Lou's feelings at the end show Lawrence's uncertainty about whether the union yields satisfaction/wholeness or not. And then Lou is taken by the savage beauty of the ranch which replaces her traditional religious beliefs. Pritchard (1971) believes that in Lawrence "savagery usually implied a fierce, dehumanizing passion or mindless sensuality" (p. 23). Lou's flight to the wilderness and her retreat do not seem to provide her with peace and power, and the reader never receives answers for Lou's journey to the wilderness, to the wild spirit, and is left with narrow faith in the philosophy that Lawrence brings up. It is very difficult for the reader to have faith in Lou's rebirth who remains an outcast wandering between nature and civilization.

Lou's conflict is not resolved. Despite the fact that Leavis' comment (1979) makes sense there is no textual evidence to support it. He believes that "we still feel that [Lou] truly apprehends, in this antithesis [wild America vs. Bloomsbury world], something positive, a

possibility of creative life, in spite of the closing sardonic comment" (p. 306). Lawrence cannot convince the reader to share a sense of creativity, and instead a sense of sterility seems more probable. One cannot easily decide whether Lawrence desires to show the victory of wilderness or civilization. All throughout the novella Lou's desire of union with nature is referred to, and Lawrence cannot finish the story of Lou who fails to locate her ideals in nature. Lawrence sets Lou free just to find her a wanderer between being different and being normal, and with a strong sense of dissatisfaction regarding both civilization and nature.

Lou feels she belongs nowhere, and the reader doubts if she can ever find and meet her ideal man. Lawrence's artistic failure is proved when Lou thinks of returning to Europe though she still believes England is spiritless. There is no body to restore Lou where she experiences illusion. This puts the reader in a vicious cycle never sure about the meaning of a novella that simultaneously, encourages and disappoints him.

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