ST MAWR: THE MONK AND THE BEAST

One day when Lawrence was a boy, he and his friend Mabel Thurlby were standing at Moorgreen crossing waiting for a train to pass. The crossing-keeper was Mabel's father, who had lost an arm in a pit accident. He had closed the gates, though the small colliery engine clanking laboriously towards them was still some distance away. At that moment Thomas Philip Barber, owner of the mine, rode up and demanded to be let through. Mr Thurlby refused, and, as Major Barber forced his horse to the gates, said: 'Are you going to make that horse's mouth bleed?' The incident fixed itself in Lawrence's mind. Some fifteen years later he vividly recreated it in *Women in Love*.

The image of horse and rider became for him a symbol of the human will bullying the body, or the instincts, or the life of nature, long before he knew what a symbol was. He would meet the same symbol often in his early reading; in the Bible, for example: 'Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle' [Psalms 32:9]; or in the dialogues of Plato. Discussing Plato's *Phaedrus* with her husband, Connie Chatterley says: 'Don't you think it's rather cruel, the way Socrates drives his black horse - jerking him back till his mouth and tongue are full of blood, and bruising his haunches?' [FLC37]. In the passage to which Connie refers, Socrates, developing his myth of the soul as a charioteer (will or intellect) driving a team of horses, one white and compliant (spirit), the other black and 'hardly controllable' (passion or instinct), reaches a point where the black horse, long frustrated and reined in, 'takes the bit between his teeth and pulls shamelessly':

> The driver . . . falls back like a racing charioteer at the barrier, and with a still more violent backward pull, jerks the bit from between the teeth of the lustful horse, drenches his abusive tongue and jaws with blood, and forcing his legs and haunches against the ground reduces him to torment.
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> [PH 63]

It is unlikely that Lawrence had a copy of the *Phaedrus* to hand while writing *The First Lady Chatterley* at the Villa Mirenda in 1926, yet his recollection of this passage is vivid. It is not known when he had first read the *Phaedrus*, but certainly not later than the beginning of 1913. His famous letter to Ernest Collings, 17 January 1913, reads like a violent reaction to it, such as we often get from Lawrence to something he has just read – a reaction to the opposite extreme:

My great religion is a belief in the blood, the flesh, as being wiser than the intellect. We can go wrong in our minds. But what our blood feels and believes and says, is always true. The intellect is only a bit and a bridle. [L I 503]

Socrates' myth is, of course, a logical expression of his fundamental dualism and its concomitant Puritanism:

Pure was the light and pure were we from the pollution of the walking sepulchre which we call a body, to which we are bound like an oyster to its shell. [PH 57]

Gradually Lawrence was coming to see all cruelty, all perversity and pollution and sterility, as a direct result of such blasphemous and suicidal conceit as that of Socrates and Plato. Consequently he was driven, for most of his life, to enlist on the other side, thereby perpetuating a dualism in which he did not really believe. It was inevitable that he should translate Plato's myth into Freudian terms, and conclude, writing to Edward Garnett in November 1912, that 'cruelty is a form of perverted sex' [L I 469]. That is certainly suggested in the cruelty of Gerald Crich to his red Arab mare in *Women in Love*, prefiguring his subsequent relationship with the watching Gudrun:

He bit himself down on the mare like a keen edge biting home, and forced her round. She roared as she breathed, her nostrils were two wide, hot holes, her mouth was apart, her eyes frenzied. It was a repulsive sight. But he held on her unrelaxed, with an almost mechanical relentlessness, keen as a sword pressing into her . . .
Gudrun looked and saw the trickles of blood on the sides of the mare, and she turned white. And then on the very wound the bright spurs came down, pressing relentlessly. The world reeled and passed into nothingness for Gudrun, she could not know any more. [WL 111-12]

One model for this scene is clearly Vronsky's killing of his mare in *Anna Karenina*. But it is Gerald himself, not Gudrun, who is destroyed in *Women in Love*. Connie Chatterley thought Socrates stupid for not realizing that the black horse could not be broken by cruelty, but would ultimately overturn the chariot. What Gerald is doing to his mare represents something he is doing simultaneously to that part of himself which corresponds to her sensitivity and spontaneity. His willingness to subject her to the 'frightful strident concussions' of the colliery train is of a piece with his willingness to subject his employees to the mangling of the great machine. The crossing-keeper's wooden leg testifies to the human cost. But ultimately he is crueller to himself than to horse, woman or men. The horse – his own affective life – becomes 'convulsed', threatening to 'fall backwards on top of him'.

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Horses figure prominently in The *Rainbow* (written after the scene from *Women in Love* we have been discussing). The book begins and ends with horses. At the beginning horses represent no problem or threat to the Brangwen patriarchs:

> They mounted their horses, and held life between the grip of their knees, they harnessed their horses at the wagon, and, with hand on the bridle-rings, drew the heaving of the horses after their will.

There was no need for cruelty. They were not in conflict with the life of the body or of the earth. Men, animals, earth, weather, season, birth, marriage, death - all are caught up in a rich, fertile interrelatedness, continuity and harmony - a way of life scarcely possible since the Industrial Revolution. But a way of life perhaps not fully human, since it lacks the adventure in consciousness which it is the privilege and the curse of humanity to pursue. The thought-adventurer must be free; yet freedom means rootlessness and danger. When there is no consciousness, the unconscious is untroubled, the horses are docile. But in spite of his admiration for the unconsciousness of the Italians, Lawrence had to admit that 'it is better to go forward into error than to stay fixed inextricably in the past' [TI 132]. The Brangwen farmers, having finished their

work, had no further life; they 'sat by the fire and their brains were inert, as their blood flowed heavy with the accumulation from the living day' [R 10]. Ursula, on the other hand, goes forward into error, and loses that easy unity of being. She looks into the outer darkness, which is also her own inner darkness, and it is 'passionate and breathing with immense, unperceived heaving', and the body of the earth, like a great horse, 'seemed to stir its powerful flank beneath her as she stood'. I have already discussed at length Ursula's final encounter with the horses, which almost kills her, purges her error, and makes possible her rebirth. We have also discussed the several kinds of light, including the 'massive fire that was locked within' the flanks of the horses, which must come together in balance and harmony to make a rainbow. The rainbow is the saving vision, the healing of the dualistic split between mind and body, male and female, self and not-self, god and nature. The image had derived partly from *Howards End*. Forster had taken his rainbow bridge from Wagner:

> the rainbow bridge that should connect the prose in us with the passion. Without it we are meaningless fragments, half monks, half beasts, unconnected arches that have never joined into a man. [HE 174]

Forster's use of the symbol is crude and confused. He considers the monk and the beast to be mere aberrations; when the bridge of love is built they will both die. But Lawrence knows that life itself depends upon, is, the tension between these two opposite imperatives, the absolute need to reach out for the life of the spirit, the absolute need to fulfil the life of the body. We cannot live without the monk and the beast, but the chasm between them must indeed be bridged by a rainbow arch, in the light of which they will be seen to be interdependent parts of a single whole.

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In November 1918 Lawrence borrowed from Koteliansky a book by Jung which he then re-lent to Katherine Mansfield. .

The book was almost certainly *Psychology of the Unconscious* (now called *Symbols of Transformation*), published in England in 1917. In it, especially in the chapter called 'The Battle for Deliverance from the Mother', Lawrence would have found a great deal about horses:

> Legend attributes properties to the horse which psychologically belong to the unconscious of man: there are clairvoyant and clairaudient horses, path-finding horses who show the way when the wanderer is lost, horses with mantic powers . . . Horses also see ghosts. All these things are typical manifestations of the unconscious. We can therefore see why the horse, as a symbol of the animal component in man, has numerous connections with the devil. . . The sexual nature of the devil is imparted to the horse as well, so that this symbol is found in contexts where the sexual interpretation is the only one that fits . .. Lightning, too, is represented theriomorphically as a horse. [ST 277]

A great deal of Jung went into *Fantasia of the Unconscious* in 1921. But there Lawrence shies away from Jung's insistence on placing horse symbolism in a context of incest. Rather, Lawrence offers his own interpretation in which he tries to relate what he has taken from Jung to his own earlier use of horse symbolism and to his growing sense of his own father as prototype of the repressed sensual male:

> For example, a man has a persistent passionate fear-dream about horses. He suddenly finds himself among great, physical horses, which may suddenly go wild. Their great bodies surge madly round him, they rear above him, threatening to destroy him. .. Examining the emotional reference we find that the feeling is sensual, there is a great impression of the powerful, almost beautiful physical bodies of the horses, the nearness, the rounded haunches, the rearing . . . The horse is presented as an object of terror, which means that to the man's automatic dream-soul, which loves automatism, the great sensual male activity is the greatest menace. The automatic pseudo-soul, which has got the sensual nature repressed, would like to keep it repressed. Whereas the greatest desire of the living spontaneous soul is that this very male sensual nature, represented as a menace, shall be actually accomplished in life . .. The dream may mean a

love of the dreamer for the sensual male who is his father. But it has nothing to do with incest. The love is probably a just love. [F 170-71]

The father as miner is also the devil, once Pan, now condemned to an underworld repressed existence.

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Despite his gentle mockery of Jung's muddled mysticism, Lawrence was captivated by the much more muddled mysticism of Apocalypse. Images from the Book of Revelation had been implanted in his mind since boyhood. By the beginning of 1918 he had already begun the analysis of that book which was to result in his final completed work. *Apocalypse*. The first version of Lawrence's essay on Fenimore Cooper's Anglo-American novels begins with a virtual synopsis of that book:

It is quite certain that the pre-Christian priesthoods understood the processes of dynamic consciousness, which is pre-cerebral consciousness. It is certain that St John gives us in the Apocalypse a cypher-account of the process of the conquest of the lower or sensual dynamic centres by the upper or spiritual dynamic consciousness. [SCAL 205]

This essay was published in the *English Review* in 1919. It was probably a reading of it which prompted Frederick Carter to write to Lawrence in December 1922 about his own work along these lines, and to send him, the following April, the manuscript of his as yet unpublished *Dragon of the Alchemists*. Lawrence was in Chapala at the time, working on the first draft of his own dragon book. *The Plumed Serpent*. In December he returned to England, and took the opportunity to visit Carter at Pontesbury in Shropshire to discuss Apocalyptic symbols. According to Carter: 'From this came the landscape background of *St Mawr* and the red horse itself [CB II 515]. The drift of their conversation can be inferred from *Apocalypse*:

Horses, always horses! How the horse dominated the mind of the early races, especially of the Mediterranean! You were a lord if you had a horse. Far back, far back in our dark soul the horse prances. He is a dominant symbol: he gives us lordship: he links us, the first palpable and throbbing link with the ruddy-glowing Almighty of potency: he is the beginning even of our godhead in the flesh. And as a symbol he roams the dark underworld meadows of the soul. .. Within the last fifty years man has lost the horse. Now man is lost. Man is lost to life and power - an underling and a wastrel. While horses thrashed the streets of London, London lived... The red horse is choler: not mere anger, but natural fieryness, what we call passion. [A 101-2]

From Pontesbury Lawrence returned to a dead and horseless London. From there, a week later, on 9 January 1924, he wrote to thank 'Spud' Johnson for the latest number of Spud's magazine, *The Laughing Horse*. The air had smelled smoky to Lawrence even on the Welsh border. In London he could hardly breathe. The *Horse* was a lifeline, and his London letter is a cri de coeur for everything the horse had come to mean to him - for life itself.

He associates the horse with the centaur, and with Pan, dead in Europe, but alive and kicking in the blue air of the Rockies:

> In modem symbolism, the Horse is supposed to stand for the passions. Passions be blowed. What does the Centaur stand for, Chiron or any other of that quondam four-footed gentry? Sense! Horse-sense! Sound, powerful, four-footed sense, that's what the Horse stands for. Horse-sense, I tell you. That's the Centaur. That's the blue Horse of the ancient Mediterranean, before the pale Galilean or the extra-pale German or Nordic gentleman conquered. First of all. Sense, Good Sense, Sound Sense, Horse Sense. And then, a laugh, a loud, sensible Horse Laugh. After that, these same passions, glossy and dangerous in the flanks. And after these again, hoofs, irresistible, splintering hoofs, that can kick the walls of the world down. [CL 769]

In March Lawrence escaped from the 'dreadful mummy sarcophagus' of Europe, back to New Mexico, where he knew the horse in us was not dead:

> In Lobo, in Taos, in Santa Fe the Turquoise Horse is waving snow out of his tail, and trotting gaily to the blue mountains of the far distance. And in Mexico his mane is bright yellow on his blue body, so streaming with sun, and he's lashing out again like the devil, till his hoofs are red. [769]

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It can be seen from this account of the genesis of *St Mawr* how the horse came to focus and embody so many of Lawrence's deepest and most lasting preoccupations; how, with a minimum of overt reference to mythology or psychology or any abstract ideas imported from outside the novel, rather through vivid scenes and the perfect control of evocative language, he is able to endow his stallion with such a range and depth of significance. Yet this account is blinkered; it has left out a whole cluster of themes just as central to the novel as the horse. It is a measure of the complexity of the novel that its genesis could be described equally convincingly in terms which have nothing to do with horses. It could be described, for example, in terms of Lawrence's deepening interest in Celtic and North American Indian mythology. But what I want to do here is to describe it in terms of the lasting attraction for Lawrence of monasticism.

Lawrence's allegiance to the beast (almost any beast would serve, but horse and snake are the most important) and to the body might lead us to expect that the monk would be cast in the role of villain, the opposite, negative pole. But in Lawrence's dualistic scheme, most fully set out in 'The Crown', there is no positive and negative. Who is to say that in all the great pairs of opposites whose interplay

makes up existence – life and death, light and dark, male and female, hot and cold, wet and dry – one is to be preferred to the other? The monk, like the beast, is in all of us, and has as valid a claim.

Lawrence nowhere thinks of the monk as a life-denier, rather as a guardian of the sacred and the life of the spirit within a human world which would deny these things. Lawrence's hatred of the human world which plunged into war in 1914 led him to explore various possibilities of withdrawing from it. On 18 January 1915 he wrote to Willie Hopkin:

> I want to gather together about twenty souls and sail away from this world of war and squalor and found a little colony where there shall be no money but a sort of communism as far as necessaries of life go, and some real decency. [L II 259]

A few days later the Lawrences moved to Viola Meynell's cottage at Greatham. Thanking her for the loan of it six months later, Lawrence wrote:

> I feel as if I had been bom afresh there, got a new, sure, separate soul: as a monk in a monastery, or St John in the wilderness. Now we must go back into the world to fight. I don't want to, they are so many and they have so many roots. But we must set about cleaning the face of the earth a bit, or everything will perish. [374]

After the collapse, in March 1915, of his attempt to form a new revolutionary party, Lawrence turned again to his 'Island idea' - Rananim. But now it was to be located in England. Philip Morrell offered to adapt an old 'monastic building' at Garsington for the purpose; but the project had to be dropped because of the estimated costs of the conversion. When, in March 1916, the Lawrences moved to Zennor, in Cornwall, Lawrence wrote excitedly to Murry that the group of cottages at Higher Tregerthen could be 'like a little monastery' – 'our Rananim' [564]. Again the project failed, with the defection of the first recruits, Murry and Katherine Mansfield. The imagined location of Rananim receded to the far

West, and the language in which Lawrence spoke of it became the language of wish-fulfilment:

> The only way is my far-off wilderness place which shall become a school and a monastery and an Eden and a Hesperides - a seed of a new heaven, and a new earth. [L III 71-2]

Lawrence can hardly mention Rananim without using the word 'monastery', and he does not use it lightly. The same period saw a radical revision of his formerly hostile attitude to Christianity:

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> I have been reading S. Bernard's Letters, and I realise that the greatest thing the world has seen, is Christianity, and one must be endlessly thankful for it, and weep that the world has learned the lesson so badly. [L II 633]

St Bernard was a bigot and heresy-hunter, a member of an order (the Cistercians) which believed that all beauty was the devil's work. And Lawrence still felt that 'Christianity is based on re-action, on negation really':

> It says 'renounce all worldly desires, and live for heaven'. Whereas I think people ought to fulfil sacredly their desires. And this means fulfilling the deepest desire, which is a desire to live unhampered by things which are extraneous, a desire for pure relationships and living truth. [633]

Nevertheless, Lawrence recognized St Bernard as a kindred spirit, fighting uncompromisingly to save the human spirit from disintegration.

In February 1920 Lawrence had an opportunity to clarify his thoughts and feelings about monasticism when he was invited to visit Maurice Magnus at Monte Cassino, the birthplace of European monasticism. There he talked at length with the monk whom he calls, in his Introduction to *Memoirs of the Foreign Legion*, Don Bemardo, and parted from him with 'real regret'.

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So strongly did Monte Cassino affect Lawrence, and embody ideas hitherto vague and unattached to experience, that he came close to using Monte Cassino to provide him with a resolution of the stalemate he had reached after struggling for over two years with *Aaron's Rod*. In the spring of 1921 Lawrence met the Brewsters:

He told us that he was writing *Aaron's Rod*, and began outlining the story. It seemed more beautiful as he narrated it in his low sonorous voice with the quiet gesture of his hands, than it ever could written in a book. Suddenly he stopped, after Aaron had left his wife and home and broken with his past, gravely asking what he should do with him now. We ventured that only two possible courses were left to a man in his straits - either to go to Monte Cassino and repent, or else to go through the whole cycle of experience. He gave a quiet chuckle of surprise and added that those were the very possibilities he had seen, that first he had intended sending him to Monte Cassino, but found instead Aaron had to go to destruction to find his way through from the lowest depths. [RC 243]

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By 1921 Lawrence's intention had crystallized to locate his community in the New World:

My plan is, ultimately, to get a little farm somewhere by myself, in Mexico, New Mexico, Rocky Mountains, or British Columbia. The desire to be away from the body of mankind – to be a bit of a hermit – is paramount. [L IV 95]

The hermit life was never a serious alternative to the monastic community; in the very next sentence Lawrence is inviting the Brewsters to join him on his 'little farm'. He could justify withdrawal alone, or with Frieda, only as a temporary expedient:

I think one must for the moment withdraw from the world, away towards the inner realities that *are* real: and return, maybe, to the world later, when one is quiet and sure. [175]

When Lawrence finally arrived in New Mexico in September 1922, his first reaction to Taos Pueblo was in terms of 'the old monasteries'; here he sensed another of those 'choice spots of earth, where the spirit dwelt':

To me it is important to remember that when Rome collapsed, when the great Roman Empire fell into smoking ruins, and bears roamed in the streets of Lyon and wolves howled in the deserted streets of Rome, and Europe really was a dark ruin, then, it was not in castles or manors or cottages that life remained vivid. Then those whose souls were still alive withdrew together and gradually built monasteries, and these monasteries and convents, little communities of quiet labour and courage, isolated, helpless, and yet never overcome in a world flooded with devastation, these alone kept the human spirit from disintegration, from going quite dark, in the Dark Ages. [P100]

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It is an increasingly subjective reading of European history. Isolated and helpless in a cabin on the side of Lobo Mountain (like Noah and his wife on Ararat), contemplating the detritus of a civilization, the Christian era, which, for Lawrence, had essentially come to an end in 1916, Lawrence desperately wanted to be one of those brave men who would start a little community from which a whole new faith and new civilization would slowly emerge.

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> The flood of barbarism rose and covered Europe from end to end. But, bless your life, there was Noah in his Ark with the animals. There was young Christianity. There were the lonely fortified monasteries, like little arks floating and keeping the adventure afloat. There is no break in the great adventure in consciousness. Throughout the howlingest deluge, some few brave souls are steering the ark under the rainbow ... If I had lived in the year 400, pray God, I should have been a true and passionate Christian. The adventurer. But now I live in 1924, and the Christian venture is done. The adventure is gone out of Christianity. We must start on a new venture towards God. [P 733-4]

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In December 1923 Lawrence went to London specifically to recruit candidates for Rananim at the ranch. After yet another betrayal by Murry, and the failure of nerve of most of his other friends, he returned to the ranch in March with only one recruit, Dorothy Brett. But the return to England, painful as it was, had been by no means a waste of time, for he returned with the germ of *St. Mawr* within him.

It was during the brief visit to Frederick Carter at Pontesbury That Lawrence's imagination began unconsciously to work upon Experiences which seemed to offer themselves with magical aptness, both by providing ready-made symbols and by fleshing out the framework of ideas we have just been discussing:

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> He was delighted with that wild Shropshire countryside, picturesque and broken with small hills rising to greater ones beyond. England was his own and he felt it within him deeply enough. Of course, even as he looked upon it he would hardly admit his liking. Still, he later wrote a novel about its landscape, with place-names from it, too, and the house in the churchyard with its front windows cheek by jowl with the gravestones came in besides other local matters.
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> Only a little of my enthusiasm about the beauty and interest of that countryside would he accept. And the people he could hardly tolerate. The good-natured curate, fat, hail-fellow-well-met, a helpful and simple-minded gossip for all the world, him he blasted with a few words. Of course the man was bovine, red-faced and naive. What else would serve in such an outlying land on the edge of two countries? Religion in Lawrence's sense meant little enough to such a man. [CB II 316]

In the essay 'On Being a Man', probably written within a fortnight of the Pontesbury visit, we can see the beginning of the process of converting this harmless curate into the far-from-harmless Dean Vyner of the novel:

> He knows he's not a man. Hence his creed of harmlessness. He knows he is not a man of living red earth, to live onward through strange weather into new springtime. He knows there is extinction ahead: for nothing but extinction lies in wait for the conscious ego. Hence his creed of harmlessness, or relentless kindness. A little less than kin, and more than kind. There should be no danger in life at all, even no friction. This he asserts, while all the time he is slowly, malignantly undermining the tree of life. [P II 622]

Religion in Lawrence's sense was no longer to be found in churches; but it was to be found still at such places as the Devil's Chair:

> Lawrence liked the name - the Devil's Chair - for the stone on which we stood. And there we talked of the great hilltop rocks with similar names that are found all over Europe as seats of the changeful gods. .. And besides, as these rocks marked the highest point of the hills in the vicinity, the point where the cloudbursts gathered that sent down floods to the valleys below, this huge mass of stone justified its title in the popular view. It was the place of power and storm - formidable. [C B II 318]

And, of course, the devil would mean something very different to Lawrence from what it meant to the curate; not the Christian embodiment of wickedness, but the pagan fertility god, Cernunnos, the Celtic homed god of the beasts, who can also be identified with Pan. The crisis of the novel is to take place at the Devil's Chair, looking west towards Wales:

> It was one of those places where the spirit of aboriginal England still lingers, the old savage England, whose last blood flows still in a few Englishmen, Welshmen, Cornishmen. [STM 73]

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The Lawrences, with Brett, returned to Taos in March. Frieda had acquired a new ranch, 2,000 feet higher up Lobo Mountain, from Mabel Luhan, and the three of them had to stay with Mabel for six weeks while it was made ready. There, with or without his community, Lawrence would embark on his new venture towards God. The essential clues, he felt, were to be found in mythology, and the three mythologies which interested him most now were Greek, Celtic and Indian.1 Mabel had another house-guest, Jaime de Angulo, an expert on Indian mythology whom she had brought

from California to meet Lawrence. They talked at length. De Angulo knew, and must have told Lawrence, the myth of Lu-Wit. According to Keith Brown, Lu-Wit (or Loo-Wit) is 'the central figure of the best-known of the American Indian volcano-myths':

> This seems doubly noteworthy, since Lawrence's fascination with the image of the volcano is well-attested throughout this period; and *St Mawr* itself is full of images of fire. The heroine of the Indian legend was set by the Great Spirit to be the keeper of the Bridge of the Gods. The Bridge lay between the domains of two mighty brothers, who eventually woke into furious anger, hurling fire, so that the bridge was broken and Lu-Wit herself badly hurt. But the Great Spirit took pity on her, and as recompense transformed her into a beautiful young woman, although she remained an ancient being within herself.. . just as Lawrence's heroine looks at once 'so much younger, and so many thousands of years older'. [WRI 163]

It cannot be chance that Lawrence chose to call his heroine Lou Witt.

From this time Lawrence began to take a much more sympathetic interest in Indian rituals and dances. In April he produced two fine essays, 'Indians and Entertainment' and 'Dance of the Sprouting Corn':

> To the Indian there is no conception of a defined God. Creation is a great flood, for ever flowing, in lovely and terrible waves. In everything, the shimmer of creation, and never the finality of the created. Never the distinction between God and God's creation, or between Spirit and Matter. Everything, everything is the wonderful shimmer of creation, it may be a deadly shimmer like lightning or the anger in the little eyes of the bear, it may be the beautiful shimmer of the moving deer, or the pine-boughs softly swaying under snow. Creation contains the unspeakably terrifying enemy, the unspeakably lovely friend, as the maiden who brings us our food in dead of winter, by her passion of tender wistfulness. Yet even this tender wistfulness is the fearful danger of the wild creatures, deer and bear and buffalo, which find their death in it. [MM 61]

The first thing Lawrence wrote at the new ranch was an essay called ‘Pan in America', where he defines pantheism as 'a vivid relatedness between the man and the living universe that surrounds him' [P 27]. It is not simply nature-worship, for Pan is fierce and bristling, sometimes malevolent, with the power to blast; and 'among the creatures of Pan there is an eternal struggle for life, between lives' [29]. There was indeed real danger up there. Three of the Hawks' horses from the Del Monte ranch below were killed by lightning. The very pine tree in front of Lawrence's cabin that much of 'Pan in America' is about, was terribly scarred by it.

Lawrence finds that the God we have left out of our God-concept in the Christian era is the common element in all three mythologies – Greek, Celtic and Indian. He calls this God Pan: 'And still, in

America, among the Indians, the oldest Pan is alive' [P 31]. In the novel, Cartwright, who is based on Frederick Carter, defines Pan in terms identical with Lawrence's:

> I should say he was the God that is hidden in everything .. . Pan was the hidden mystery - the hidden cause. That's how it was a great God. Pan wasn't he at all: not even a great God. He was Pan, All: what you see when you see in full. In the daytime you see the thing. But if your third eye is open, which sees only the things that can't be seen, you may see Pan within the thing, hidden: you may see with your third eye, which is darkness. [STM 65]

'The third eye' is another way of expressing what Blake calls 'fourfold vision' – the vision with which we perceive that everything that lives is holy. Lawrence uses the term again in *Apocalypse* in describing the resurrection or second birth which takes place at the end of the ritual of the Mysteries of Isis:

> The initiate is dead, and alive again in a new body. He is sealed in the forehead, like a Buddhist monk, as a sign that he has died the death, and that his seventh self is fulfilled, he is twice-bom, his mystic eye or 'third eye' is now open. He sees in two worlds. [A 107]

In 'The Woman Who Rode Away', which Lawrence probably wrote immediately before *St Mawr*, the unnamed heroine undergoes a kind of forced opening of the third eye by means of drugs administered to her by primitive Indians:

> This at length became the only state of consciousness she really recognized: this exquisite sense of bleeding out into the higher beauty and harmony of things. Then she could actually hear the great stars in heaven, which she saw through her door, speaking from their motion and brightness, saying things perfectly to the cosmos, as they trod in perfect ripples, like bells on the floor of heaven, passing one another and grouping in the timeless dance, with the spaces of dark between. .. With refined and heightened senses she could hear the sound of the earth winging on its journey, like a shot arrow, the ripple-rustling of the air, and the boom of the great arrow-string. [WWRA 62, 64]

This woman is not an initiate undergoing a rebirth. This consciousness is not really her own, rather that of her Indian captors. She is allowed to experience it in such a pure form because she is not going to have to live with it - it is part of her purification for sacrifice. In *St Mawr* Lou is the voluntary initiate who has to die to her old consciousness and acquire a new one much more slowly and painfully. She must accept full responsibility for her changing consciousness in her daily living.

There is one character in *St Mawr*, Lewis the groom, in whom Pan has never quite died. Hence his understanding of St Mawr, to whom he speaks in Welsh. He has managed to hold on to folk beliefs from his childhood in Merioneth:

> The world has its own life, the sky has a life of its own, and never is it like stones rolling down a rubbish heap and falling into a pond. Many things twitch and twitter within the sky, and many things happen beyond us. [STM 110]

It follows, of course, that in order to be able to describe this kind of consciousness so inwardly, Lawrence himself possessed it to a high degree. It is a religious sense, but it is also the poetic imagination working at its fullest pitch, seeing into the life of things. Such vision is less difficult to sustain in poems or paragraphs. Lawrence was working up to his most sustained display of it in fiction.

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Little is known about the first version of *St Mawr*, not even that it was called *St Mawr*. The manuscript was burned in a fire at Aldous Huxley's home in 1961. It was probably shorter than the novel we have, possibly as short as 58 pages. It was apparently written very quickly in mid-June. By 18 June 1924 Lawrence was already rewriting it. Work went slowly, for Lawrence. In July Brett recorded:

> You are full of your new story, of Mrs Witt. You sit down in your place, and between bites you read out to us the pages you have just written. You are still twinkling with amusement, and you are still living more with them than with us. You read out the scene of the tea-party, of the tart Mrs Witt, the scandalized Dean and his wife, and the determined Lou. You laugh so much over it, that you have to stop - and we are laughing too. Then you read out Mrs Witt's defence of the horse when Rico pulls him over and the horse kicks Rico in the face. You read it with such keen joy and pleasure at the final downfall of Rico and the terrible revenge of the horse, that Frieda is horrified; she says that you are cruel and that you frighten her. [LB 137]

On 30 July Lawrence wrote to Nancy Pearn that he was 'just winding up *St Mawr*, a story which has turned into a novelette nearly as long as *The Captain's* Doll' [L V 86]. The holograph manuscript of *The Captain's Doll* is 77 pages; that of *St Mawr* was 129! The most likely explanation of this anomaly (which would also make less surprising Brett's description of *St Mawr* as 'the story of Mrs Witt') is Brian Finney's: 'At this time he did not envisage continuing the story by following Lou Carrington and

Mrs Witt to America. He still conceived of *St Mawr* as a satire on English society' [STM xxv].

Since his return to America, Lawrence had been more aware than ever before of the spirit of place in the Southwest: 'There is something savage unbreakable in the spirit of place out here – the Indians drumming and yelling at our camp-fire at evening' [L.V 47]. On 4 July he wrote to Rolf Gardiner, an enthusiast of international youth movements:

> Here, where we have the camp just above the cabin, under the hanging stars, and we sit with the Indians round the fire, and they sing till late into the night, and sometimes we all dance the Indian tread-dance - then what is it to me, world unison and peace and all that? I am essentially a fighter - to wish me peace is bad luck - except the fighter's peace. And I have known many things, that may never be unified: Ceylon, the Buddha temples, Australian bush, Mexico and Teotihuacan, Sicily, London, New York, Paris, Munich - don't talk to me of unison. No more unison among man than among the wild animals - coyotes and chipmunks and porcupines and deer and rattlesnakes. They all live in these hills - in the unison of avoiding one another. [67]

In mid-August, while *St Mawr* lay wound up in a form which must have realized only a fraction of its potential, Lawrence went off for ten days with the Luhans to Arizona to see the Hopi Snake Dance. His subsequent struggle to understand what he had seen there brought him as far as he was ever to get, possibly as far as a white man can get, towards understanding the Indians, their consciousness, their relationship with the place, its creatures and climate, and its gods. ‘The Hopi Snake Dance' must be quoted at length, for it is Lawrence's fullest and finest description of 'animistic vision':

> The American-Indian sees no division into Spirit and Matter, God and not-God Everything is alive, though not personally so. Thunder is neither Thor nor Zeus. Thunder is the vast living thunder asserting itself like some incomprehensible monster, or some huge reptile-bird of the pristine cosmos. How to conquer the dragon-mouthed thunder! How to capture the feathered rain!...
> The Potencies are not Gods. They are Dragons. The Sun of Creation itself is a dragon most terrible, vast, and most powerful, yet even so, less in being than we. The only gods on earth are men. For gods, like man, do not exist beforehand. They are created and evolved gradually, with aeons of effort, out of the fire and smelting of life. They are the highest thing created, smelted between the furnace of the Life-Sun, and beaten on the anvil of the rain, with hammers of thunder and bellows of rushing wind. The cosmos is a great furnace, a dragon's den, where the heroes and demi-gods, men, forge themselves into being. It is a vast and violent matrix, where souls form like diamonds in earth, under extreme pressure.

So that gods are the outcome, not the origin. And the best gods that have resulted, so far, are men. But gods frail as flowers. Man is as a flower, rain can kill him or succour him, heat can flick him with a bright tail, and destroy him: or, on the other hand, it can softly call him into existence, out of the egg of chaos. Man is delicate as a flower, godly beyond flowers, and his lordship is a ticklish business. [MM 75-6]

On 30 August, the same day on which he sent 'The Hopi Snake Dance' to his agent, Lawrence wrote to Murry: 'This animistic religion is the only live one, ours is a corpse of a religion' [L V 109]. On the following day he sent his niece Margaret a detailed description of the ranch and its history:

Forty years ago a man came out looking for gold, and staked here. There was some gold in the mountains. Then he got poor. and a man called McClure had the place. He had 500 white goats here, raised alfalfa, and let his goats feed wild in the mountains. But the water supply is too bad, and we are too far from anywhere. So he gave up ... So we leave the ranch quite wild - only there's abundant feed for the five horses. And if we wanted to take the trouble, we could bring the water here as McClure did, and have a little farm ... We went to get Frieda's grey horse – the Azul – shod. They call him in Spanish el Azul – the Blue ... I want a Mexican to come and live here while we are away, to keep the place from going wild, squirrels and bushy-tailed pack-rats from coming in, and to see the water doesn't freeze for the horses. [110-12]

In the absence of the manuscript we shall probably never know, but it may well be, as Brian Finney suggests, that it was the Snake Dance experience which served as the catalyst in Lawrence's imagination, inducing the belated realization that the necessary ending of *St Mawr* was here at the ranch. Only by bringing Lou here could he take her through with what St Mawr had only prepared her for. Only here, in the crucible of the New Mexico Rockies, could he bring together and fuse all his preoccupations, needs and insights. The new ranch had already acquired for Lawrence a symbolic significance the old one never had. His two greatest needs (the two great needs of the species he would say), which had hitherto been kept apart, running strangely parallel courses through his work, the need for bodily, earthly, fulfilment, as symbolized by the horse, and the need for spiritual experience, to find God and worship him apart from 'the world', flowed together here at the ranch and met in Pan.

The Indians had rituals to enable them to handle the potent, potentially destructive, energies of Pan. The white man had lost them. For him there must be a death to the old consciousness followed by a resurrection, equally painful, to a new reality - the stark, sordid, beautiful, awe-inspiring reality of Pan, which he wrestled with every day on this pack-rat infested, lightning-

scarred, but certainly not god-forsaken ranch.

*

The first problem confronting the reader of *St Mawr* is the title. Anyone who has taken a perfunctory interest in Welsh place-names will know that mawr means 'great' (it is the masculine form, the feminine being fawr). Is St Mawr then an obscure Welsh saint or a fictitious one? After several pages we discover that St Mawr is in fact a horse. We first meet the name when the horse is directly addressed by his owner in the language of the stable: 'Cup! my boy! Cup my beauty! Cup then! St Mawr!' [STM 28]. The name comes with a deep shock; the reverberations run through the whole story. It jars on the reader's consciousness because it is so difficult, such a violation of our preconceptions, to have to bring together such polar images as saint and horse, to bridge our widely separated associations with these words. They belong to different worlds of experience; all the more so if we have become attuned to their implications in earlier Lawrence works.

Here in the name, in the title, is encapsulated Lawrence's supreme effort in this story to bridge that gap, to connect the monk and the beast, to alter our perception of the sacred and the animal to the point where they become identical. The first purpose of the name is to issue that great challenge. The second is to indicate the importance of Welshness.

St Mawr's owner pronounces the name 'with a slight Welsh twist': ' "He's from the Welsh borders, belonging to a Welsh gentleman, Mr Griffith Edwards"' [28]. He has a Welsh groom, Lewis, who speaks to him in Welsh, an exile from Welsh Wales (Merioneth) whose consciousness still retains flickers of the old animistic vision which was the vision of the druids and of pre-Christian Celtic religion; whose very name is an anglicized dilution of names which take us to the heart of Welsh history and mythology - Llewelyn, Llew and Lugus. (It is also, as Keith Brown reminds us, the masculine equivalent of Louise.)

St Mawr embodies, in a pure, concentrated, blazing form, the light which in Lewis has dwindled into a Celtic twilight. St Mawr is the living reality of something we are normally aware of only as ghosts and shadows.

Though there is no St Mawr, there is, of course, a St Maur or Maurus. On the only occasion she mentions the name of the story she was typing, Dorothy Brett spells it St Maur [LB 123}, and this may, indeed, have been Lawrence's spelling before he thought of

Welshifying it. Brett told me that Lawrence pronounced the name Seymour. This seemed highly unlikely, despite coming, as it were, from the horse's mouth, until I looked up Seymour in a book of surnames, and found that it derives from the Norman French de St Maur.

Lawrence probably first came upon St Maurus in the Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*, which was in the International Library of Famous Literature in the Lawrence home.[1] There Chaucer describes the monk as a worldly man more interested in horses and hunting than study and the life of the spirit:

> The reule of seint Maure and of seint Beneit,
> Because that it was old and somdel streit,
> This iike monk let olde thinges pace,
> And held after the newe world the trace. [I L IV 1790]

Lawrence has Ursula study Chaucer at college in The Rainbow, and probably did so himself. St Benedict, the father of Western monasticism, founded his great monastery at Monte Cassino in 529; St Maurus was his disciple and successor. It seems that in Chaucer's day their names had become by-words for the strict monastic life, withdrawal from the world to cultivate the life of the spirit. Lawrence may well have learned more of St Maurus from the monk he befriended during his visit to Monte Cassino in 1920, whom he calls Don Bemardo in the Introduction to the memoirs of Maurice Magnus, and to whom he later sent a copy of The Lost Girl! Don Bemardo's real name was Don Mauro Iguanez.

The first challenge to Lawrence's art is to establish the saintliness, sacredness, of St Mawr. He does it in two ways, each having its distinct style and tone. The tone of the opening is flippant, ironic, or bitingly sardonic when it expresses the views of Mrs Witt. It evokes a world which cannot be taken seriously, cannot be lived in, only drifted through – 'from Paris to Palermo, Biarritz to Vienna and back via Munich to London, then down again to Rome' [STM 21]. None of these unreal cities engages the soul. They are interchangeable because equally devoid of spiritual significance; the 'life' offered by each the same round of frivolous pursuits, the same striking of attitudes. Nor do Lou's personal relationships offer her anything better. Her marriage is the most artificial attitude of all, that of the 'charming married couple'. For several pages Lawrence keeps the style thin, superficial, insubstantial, in order that the other style, that enters with St

[1] I owe this suggestion to Polly Whitney.

Mawr, shall be the more striking in its poetic resonance, substance and vitality:

> In the inner dark she saw a handsome bay horse with his clean ears pricked like daggers from his naked head as he swung handsomely round to stare at the open doorway. He had big, black, brilliant eyes, with a sharp questioning glint, and that air of tense, alert quietness which betrays an animal that can be dangerous... He was of such a lovely red-gold colour, and a dark, invisible fire seemed to come out of him .. .
>
> She looked at the glowing bay horse, that stood there with his ears back, his face averted, but attending as if he were some lightning conductor. He was a stallion . ..
>
> Dimly, in her weary young-woman's soul, an ancient understanding seemed to flood in . . . For some reason the sight of him, his power, his alive, alert intensity, his unyieldingness, made her want to cry. She never did cry ... But now, as if that mysterious fire of the horse's body had split some rock in her, she went home and hid herself in her room, and just cried. The wild, brilliant, alert head of St Mawr seemed to look at her out of another world. It was as if she had had a vision, as if the walls of her own world had suddenly melted away, leaving her in a great darkness, in the midst of which the large, brilliant eyes of that horse looked at her with demonish question, while his naked ears stood up like daggers from the naked lines of his inhuman head, and his great body glowed red with power.
>
> What was it? Almost like a god looking at her terribly out of the everlasting dark, she had felt the eyes of that horse; great, glowing, fearsome eyes, arched with a question, and containing a white blade of light like a threat. What was his non-human question, and his uncanny threat? She didn't know. He was some splendid demon, and she must worship him. [28-30]

The question St Mawr asks Lou can be articulated in many ways: 'If I am real, what are you?'; 'What in you can answer to my godhead?'; 'Can you cross into my world?' It is a threat because she senses that what is required of her is her death to her former self and life.

Lou's vision of St Mawr is, strictly, a hierophany, 'the only thing that was real' [32]. Eliade defines a hierophany in these terms:

> For it is the break effected in space that allows the world to be constituted, because it reveals the fixed point, the central axis for all future orientation. When the sacred manifests itself in any hierophany, there is not only a break in the homogeneity of space; there is also revelation of an absolute reality, opposed to the nonreality of the vast surrounding expanse. The manifestation of the sacred ontologically founds the world. In the homogeneous and infinite expanse, in which no point of reference is possible and hence no orientation can be established, the hierophany reveals an absolute fixed point, a centre. [SAP 21]

St Mawr provides Lou henceforth with such a point, an orientation, a direction for her life. And what has hitherto constituted her world she is now able to recognize as unreal, in spite of the almost universal conspiracy to pretend that it is reality:

the talk, the eating and drinking, the flirtation, the endless dancing: it all seemed far more bodiless and, in a strange way, wraith-like, than any fairy story. She seemed to be eating Barmecide food, that had been conjured up out of thin air, by the power of words. She seemed to be talking to handsome young bare-faced unrealities, not men at all: as she slid about with them, in the perpetual dance, they too seemed to have been conjured up out of air, merely for this soaring, slithering dance-business. And she could not believe that, when the lights went out, they wouldn't melt back into thin air again, and complete nonentity. [STM 42]

The form of *St Mawr* is that of the religious quest, the quest for union with God. And the fictional religious quest which stands most directly behind it is *Pilgrim's Progress*. Lawrence may have thought that *Pilgrim's Progress* was bad art, but Bunyan's images stuck like burrs. At the beginning, Lou's soul, like Christian's, is crying 'What shall I do to be saved?' But Christian lacks orientation – 'he could not tell which way to go' – until the arrival of Evangelist, who provides him with a fixed point – 'yonder shining light' – at which to aim. Christian runs towards it crying 'Life, life, eternal life'. Worldly-Wiseman (Dean Vyner) tries to persuade Christian that salvation can be attained much more safely and modestly through Morality and Civility:

Thou art like to meet with in the way which thou goest, wearisomeness, painfulness, hunger, perils, nakedness, sword, lions, dragons, darkness, and in a word, death, and what not? [JB 49]

But Evangelist insists on danger and death, and the total rejection of everything and everybody associated with the old false life:

The King of Glory hath told thee, that he that will save his life shall lose it: and *he that comes after him, and hates not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters; yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.* [54]

After this orientation Christian has no difficulty in recognizing Vanity Fair for what it is. Bunyan's description of the streets of that fair reminds us of Lou's reaction to Rotten Row and its equivalent in the other major capitals of Europe:

Here is the Britain Row, the French Row, the Italian Row, the Spanish Row, the German Row, where several sorts of vanities are to be sold. [125]

I am suggesting that St Mawr corresponds not to Christ

(for it is possible to live in Christ, and not in St Mawr), but to Evangelist. He is a messenger, not a goal. He brings Lou 'the intimation of other worlds' [L III 40], towards which she feels she must set out:

> Only St Mawr gave her some hint of the possibility. He was so powerful, and so dangerous. But in his dark eye, that looked, with its cloudy brown pupil, a cloud within a dark fire, like a world beyond our world, there was a dark vitality glowing, and within the fire, another sort of wisdom When he reared his head and neighed from his deep chest, like deep wind-bells resounding, she seemed to hear the echoes of another, darker, more spacious, more dangerous, more splendid world than ours, that was beyond her. And there she wanted to go. [STM 41]

In the *Mabinogion* Math's vestigial divinity is indicated by his superhumanly acute hearing. St Mawr's most characteristic posture is head raised, ears pricked, listening to sounds from across the gulf.

But at first St Mawr's world seems so alien from her own that Lou can see it only as non-human. It seems a world of horses, of long-dead heroes like centaurs, of long-dead gods or demons like satyrs. How can she hope to enter 'that terrific equine twilight'? She needs both Lewis and Phoenix as intermediaries. Each is, in his way, a centaur: 'Phoenix looked as if he and the horse were all one piece' [36]; and Mrs Witt says of Lewis: 'He seems to sink himself in the horse. When I speak to him, I'm not sure whether I'm speaking to a man or a horse' [38]. Later Lewis comes to have much the same effect on her that St Mawr had had on her daughter:

> And yet, what made him perhaps the only real entity to her, his seeming to inhabit another world than hers. A world dark and still, where language never ruffled the growing leaves, and seared their edges like a bad wind. ...
>
> But then, when she saw Phoenix and Lewis silently together, she knew there was another communion, silent, excluding her. And sometimes when Lewis was alone with St Mawr: and once, when she saw him pick up a bird that had stunned itself against a wire: she had realized another world, silent, where each creature is alone in its own aura of silence, the mystery of power: as Lewis had power with St Mawr, and even with Phoenix.
>
> The visible world, and the invisible. Or rather, the audible and the inaudible. She had lived so long, and so completely, in the visible, audible world. She would not easily admit that other, inaudible. [104]

But Lewis is a figure of the Hermit, not the Monk. He withdraws behind his beard into a private, rather childish world, inhabited

by pale ghosts from the past, his own childhood in Wales, and the dim past of Wales itself. His world is as lacking in substance as Lou's, in a very different way. It has none of the robustness of Celtic mythology; and it can only be preserved by nursing it in secret, by denying human responsibility and relationship. If Pan has become a goat in Cartwright, he has become a ghost in Lewis. Phoenix has more to offer. He represents the consciousness of the north American Indian, also in an exiled and degraded form. At the personal level he is impossible, impossible as a mate or lover for Lou, under, his integrity gone, the Pan in him reduced to the sexual opportunist. Nevertheless, the alternative vision which flickers in him, though it seems but a mirage in the context of English 'reality', is grounded in the spirit of a real, if distant, place; a place one might actually go to; a place where God bums in every bush:

> He was watching the pale deserts of Arizona shimmer with moving light, the long mirage of a shallow lake ripple, the great pallid concave of earth and sky expanding with interchanged light. And a horse-shape loom large and portentous in the mirage, like some pre-historic beast. That was real to him: the phantasm of Arizona. But this London was something his eye passed over, as a false mirage. [36]

That horse-shape is Pan in one of his many manifestations. St Mawr is but a token and messenger from that infinitely vaster reality. It is Phoenix who sows in Lou's mind the idea of taking a ranch in Arizona. He translates the challenge of St Mawr into an orientation and a practical proposition. Once Lou is embarked on her quest towards the American Southwest, Lawrence's Delectable Mountains, St Mawr's role is fulfilled, and he drops from the story as naturally as Evangelist from *Pilgrim's Progress*.

*

It is not St Mawr's only role in the novel to play Evangelist to Lou's pilgrim. He has another, more negative role in relation to Rico. This is indicated at the very beginning of the novel, when we are told, of Rico:

> uneasiness that might make him vindictive .. . He looked like something finely bred and passionate, that has been judged and condemned. [28-9]

He had been treated cruelly in the past, and has twice 'made a break', killing two men, in one case by smashing a young man's head against an oak.

St Mawr is representative of Nature herself at her most sensitive and vulnerable, yet capable of terrible revenge when injured or denied; and of man's own deepest nature which turns upon him and rears against him when denied. Rico is representative of a civilization which had found its spokesman in H. G. Wells, whose *Outline of History* (1920) had equated human history with progress. In 1925 Lawrence was to write: 'Hadn't somebody better write Mr Wells' History backwards, to prove how we've degenerated, in our stupid visionlessness, since the cave-men?' [P II 434]. Mrs Witt accuses Lou of wanting a cave man who would knock her on the head with a club. She is voicing the Wellsian stereotype of early man as brute. But for Lawrence

> The pictures in the cave represent moments of purity which are the quick of civilisation. The pure relation between the cave-man and the deer: fifty per cent. man, and fifty per cent. bison, or mammoth, or deer. It is not ninety-nine per cent. man, and one per cent. horse. [434]

Lou puts it more poetically:

> A pure animal man 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, fixed, automatic thing, which he is now, grinding on the nerves. [STM 62]

Rico, on the other hand, has tried to extirpate his own animal nature: 'He had composed this little tableau vivant with great effort. He didn't want to erupt like some suddenly wicked horse' [27]. This tableau vivant of his marriage and other relationships is no more life than one of his painted 'compositions'. His denial of life is, in Lawrence's terms, irreligious:

> If it is to be life, then it is fifty per cent. me, fifty per cent. thee: and the third thing, the spark, which springs from out of the balance, is timeless. Jesus, who saw it a bit vaguely, called it the Holy Ghost. [P II 434-5]

That spark, which Rico has extinguished in himself, blazes in St Mawr; but Rico, in his visionlessness, cannot see it. He can only see that St Mawr would be 'marvellous in a composition' [STM 33]. It is the spark of intuitive sympathy and of creativity. Without it Rico becomes representative of 'our whole eunuch civilization, nasty-minded as eunuchs are, with their kind

of sneaking, sterilizing cruelty' [96].

It is inevitable that Rico, on St Mawr, should provoke a catastrophe. In conceiving the exact form the catastrophe should take, perhaps Lawrence remembered Genesis 44:17:

> Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.

St Mawr, alert in all his senses, knows there is some danger round the next bend in the path. Rico, denying the possibility of such awareness, tries to bully him to go on, like Gerald forcing his sensitive Arab mare to the crossing. Rico is not only bullying another creature, he is violating an essential part of himself. Deny creative energy and it turns savagely destructive. St Mawr becomes 'reversed, and purely evil'. But the two grooms and the two women all know where the blame lay. Phoenix, anticipating Connie Chatterley's objections to Plato's myth, says:

> That horse don't want to fall back on you, if you don't make him. If you know how to ride him. - That horse want his own way sometime. If you don't let him, you got to fight him. Then look out! [85]

Around the next bend in the path there had been a dead adder, crushed by stones while drinking at a reedy pool - another victim of man's hatred of any life beyond the control of his own mind. Another violation of a lord of life. Another crime to be expiated.

If man, in trying to destroy Pan, merely turns him into the devil, then Lawrence will be of the devil's party: 'He's lashing out again like the devil, till his hoofs are red. Good old Horse!' [CL 769].

*

The concluding section of *St Mawr*, after the protagonists have left England, is a piece of marvellously sustained vision and complex art, as Lawrence puts to the test, with profound sensitivity and the clearest intelligence, the claim of New Mexico both to offer literally and to symbolize an answer to Lou's need and a viable alternative faith to the sterile visionlessness of Europe.

Lou has now cut herself off from all her former attachments. She has, in effect, emptied herself. And what rushes in to fill the vacuum is beauty, 'the marvellous beauty and fascination of natural wild things' in contrast with 'the horror of man's unnatural life, his heaped-up civilization':

> The flying-fishes burst out of the sea in clouds of silvery, transparent motion. Blue above and below, the Gulf seemed a silent, empty, timeless

place where man did not really reach. And Lou was again fascinated by the glamour of the universe, [129]

But the difference between 'beauty' and 'glamour' is that 'glamour' implies that the fascination is superficial, and, ultimately, delusory. If Lou's quest is for the 'roots of reality' [131], she must not allow herself to be dazzled by the glamour that awaits her in New Mexico.

On the day Lou first drives out to see the ranch, it almost seems that the place is disguising its true nature the better to seduce her:

For the moment, the brief moment, the great desert-and-mountain landscape had lost its certain cruelty, and looked tender, dreamy. And many, many birds were flickering around. [134]

Lou is lured into the fantasy of herself as Vestal Virgin 'turning to the unseen gods, the unseen spirits, the hidden fire, and devoting herself to that, and that alone. Receiving thence her pacification and her fulfilment':

'I want my temple and my loneliness and my Apollo mystery of the inner fire'. . . She felt a great peace inside her as she made this realization. And a thankfulness. Because, after all, it seemed to her that the hidden fire was alive and burning in this sky, over the desert, in the mountains. She felt a certain latent holiness in the very atmosphere, a young, spring-fire of latent holiness, such as she had never felt in Europe, or in the East. 'For me,' she said, as she looked away at the mountains in shadow and the pale-warm desert beneath, with wings of shadow upon it: 'For me, this place is sacred. It is blessed.' [138-40]

Already, before she has even arrived at the ranch, she has projected all her tender dreams upon it. Her easy identification of the gods of this place with Apollo, the god of light, is naive. Her sense of what constitutes holiness is going to have to go into the crucible of bitter experience. The beauty of a landscape, its grandeur and sublimity, is not the same thing as its spirit, may even mask its essential spirit. Already, Lou must turn a blind eye to the real spirit of the place in order to preserve the purity of her dream:

She realized that the latent fire of the vast landscape struggled under a great weight of dirt-like inertia. She had to mind the dirt, most carefully and vividly avoid it and keep it away from her, here in this place that at last seemed sacred to her. [140]

The admission which will have to be wrung from her is that the dirt is also god.

It is at this point, at the very moment Lou says to herself *'This is the place*', that Lawrence gives us the history of the ranch, the reality of this place which Lou proposes as the temple where she shall 'serve the most perfect service', the nature of the gods she proposes to serve there. For Lou was not the first woman who had stood on that spot, looking out over the vast sweep of the desert, falling in love with the soul-stirring beauty of it, and wishing only to serve it. For the woman from New England it had been just the same:

> Ah, that was beauty! - perhaps the most beautiful thing in the world. It was pure beauty, absolute beauty! There! That was it. To the little woman from New England, with her tense fierce soul and her egoistic passion of service, this beauty was absolute, a ne plus ultra ... 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.
>
> And if it had been a question simply of living through the eyes, into the distance, then this would have been Paradise, and the little New England woman on her ranch would have found what she was always looking for, the earthly paradise of the spirit.
>
> But even a woman cannot live only into the distance, the beyond. . . While she revelled in the beauty of the luminous world that wheeled around and below her, the grey, rat-like spirit of the inner mountains was attacking her from behind. [145-7]

The pack-rats which come down out of the hills and bounce on her ceiling 'like hippopotamuses in the night' are 'symbols of the curious debasing malevolence that was in the spirit of the place'. The guardian of the place is a great pine-tree in her yard: 'But a bristling, almost demonish guardian, from the far-off crude ages of the world'. And the place is fenced in with a 'circling guard' of pine-trees:

> Never sympathetic, always watchfully on their guard, and resistant, they hedged one in with the aroma and the power and the slight horror of the pre-sexual primeval world. The world where each creature was crudely limited to its own ego, crude and bristling and cold, and then crowding in packs like pine-trees and wolves. [145]

The woman is driven to the final admission: 'There is no Almighty loving God. The God there is shaggy as the pine-trees, and horrible as the lightning'. And the woman's deeper self glories in the destruction of her illusions: 'What nonsense about Jesus and a God of Love, in a place like this! This is more awful and more splendid. I like it better' [148].

There follows some of Lawrence's finest prose, as he describes

the 'bristling, hair-raising tussle' which characterizes 'even the life of the trees and flowers'. The flowers are fierce and dragonish, each one fighting for its ground: 'A battle, a battle, with banners of bright scarlet and yellow'. Glamour is cancelled by sordidness and savagery. But here Lawrence evokes a more robust beauty which is a marriage of heaven and hell:

> 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. [149]

And if man, too, tries to live in this place, he too must expect a battle, not least against 'the animosity of the spirit of place: the crude half-created spirit of place, like some serpent-bird forever attacking man, in a hatred of man's onward-struggle towards further creation'; and against the gods of the place, who were grim and invidious and relentless, huger than man, and lower than man' [150]. It is unthinkable that man should relate to them in terms of 'service'. They must be fought, ‘to win from the crude wild nature the victory and the power to make another start’ [151]

A civilization which has lost 'its inward vision and its cleaner energy' is sordid; and 'all savagery is half-sordid'; but the fight with savage nature is rousing, energizing. It is a great reservoir of latent energy. And the struggle to draw upon it for his creative purposes is what defines a man.

The New England woman was ultimately defeated. Lou is going to have to releam her lessons, through bitter experience. At the end of the story she is still speaking in terms of love and service:

> It's my mission to keep myself for the spirit that is wild, and has 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. [155]

Mrs Witt is highly sceptical of Lou's 'something bigger':

> Girls in my generation occasionally entered convents, for *something bigger* I always wondered if they found it. They seemed to me inclined in the imbecile direction, but perhaps that was because I was *something less* – [154]

With her 'stony indifference', 'like a pillar of salt', 'crystallized into neutrality', she seems indeed something less than her daughter. However romantically Lou still conceives her mission, it does at least save her from cheapness. Lou looks at her ranch and sees beauty and hope; Mrs Witt sees nothing but 'so much hopelessness and so many rats' [152]. Doomed romanticism and sterile cynicism.

Mrs Witt seems to have the last word, with her sneer at the name of the ranch - Las Chivas, the She-Goats. We remember Cartwright's account of the decline of the Great God Pan into the Great Goat Pan in the Christian centuries. Perhaps Keith Brown is right in suggesting that the name also echoes khiva, the holy place where the Indians, after centuries of imposed Christianity, still perfom their secret rituals and commune with their mysterious ancient gods, their equivalent of Pan.

*

Lawrence's search for god, and his search for the vivid life of the body here on earth, both led him to Pan. But Pantheism, in Lawrence's day, in England, had come to mean little more than the Wordsworthian pieties. It had nothing to do with the realities of modern life. It was not a serious option as a religion for the twentieth century. Lawrence took it upon himself to make it so; not just an option, but a necessity for sanity and survival. It was a Herculean undertaking in 1924, when nature seemed to be disappearing under the 'century-deep deposits of layer upon layer of refuse: even of tin cans' [151]; when the machine seemed to have triumphed utterly; when H. G. Wells and the majority for whom he spoke could complacently assume that history was the story of man's progress towards the triumph of mind over both nature and human nature.

Lawrence was exhausted when he finally completed the novel. He wrote to Seeker on 13 September 1924:

> Yes, the novelette *St Mawr* is finished and Brett is typing it out. It's good – a bit bitter – takes place in England, then moves to this ranch – some beautiful creation of this locale and landscape here. But thank God 1 don't have to write it again. It took it out of me. [L V 121-2]

The greatness of the story depends upon the difficulty and the bitterness, upon his capacity to resist the temptation to create for his heroine a 'pure animal man', a man in whom Pan was not dead, a Centaur:

> I like the Centaur as a symbol: would like to write a Centaur story: but can't in these white countries, where the lower half of man is an automobile, not a horse. – I just finished a novelette *St Mawr* – more or less a horse story. I wanted it to be a Centaur story – but – la mala suerte – impossible. [133]

The following month he summed up to Catherine Carswell the

experience and achievement of that summer:

> The summer has gone. It was very beautiful up here. We worked hard, and spent very little money. And we had the place all to ourselves, and our horses the same. It was good to be alone and responsible. But also it is very hard living up against these savage Rockies. The savage things are a bit gruesome, and they try to down one. – But far better they than the white disintegration. – I did a long novelette – about 60,000 words – about 2 women and a horse – 'St Mawr'. But it may be called Two Women and a Horse'. And two shorter novelettes, about 15,000 words: 'The Woman Who Rode Away' and "The Princess'. 'St Mawr' ends here. They are all about this country more or less . . . They are all sad. After all, they're true to what is. [L V 147-8]

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