

D.H. Lawrence's *St. Mawr*: An Ecocritical Study

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ABSTRACT

This study is an attempt to give a close ecocritic scrutiny to Lawrence's St. Mawr. It unravels the dreary repercussions endowed by the environmental crisis, which haunted the imagination of literary artists. It was then that an interdisciplinary school emerged, named ecocriticism, to survey the impact of Industrialism on imagination; the abuses of nature under the wing of Judeo-Christian religions; the impact of philosophy on nature; the secular apocalyptic outcome of mistreating nature; the man-women relationship, affected by environmental suppression; the description of nature in literature; the parallel situations of oppressed women and oppressed nature, as ecofeminism; and the way, in which, the misuses of the literary genre of pastoral have resulted in ecocritics new definition of it, as post-pastoral. Indeed, it brings to light the tragic attitude of man toward nature, which has lessened his gentleness and mental delicacy and made him a furious and revengeful social animal.

Keywords: anthropocentrism; biocentrism; blood-intimacy; ecocriticism; ecofeminism

INTRODUCTION

Nature and woman have since the beginning of time been of secondary importance and are often considered the Other. Indeed, the sense of domination over nature and woman starts with the birth of the binary oppositions between man/nature and man/woman. In fact, the binary concept of man/woman takes a real normalised form after the industrialisation of the Victorian Age. At that time woman was seen as a legitimate asset for reproduction connected to the socio-ethical norms planned and imposed by men as the deciding figures of families and societies. Simultaneously, the industrial man began dominating the earth, dividing and manipulating it, by simply giving it a commercial importance. As Gaard (1993) claims:

Radical environmentalists decry the fact that the scientific, intellectual, and industrial revolutions of the past three hundred years have corresponded to a devaluation and objectification of nature, a reduction of nature's role to that of something to be controlled and used by humans. But whose revolutions? For that matter, whose culture, whose nature, whose control and use? Women barely took part in the conceptualization of those revolutions, or, until recently, in the culture that emerged from them. Neither did the poor, or non-Europeans. We have been assigned much of the execution of the culture-building project, but we have had little say in its design. Thus, culture/nature dualism is hardly a shared experience (p.124).

Man's ability to live in harmony with nature has passed and being pastoral is no longer an option for modern man, who has been cut off from his natural roots. Industry has

contaminated the whole environment, and in such a situation, literary men feel the need to lament the lost innocence of nature. This in turn gave rise to ecocriticism to study the role of nature in literature. Orr (2002) believes:

If we are to build a better world—one that can be sustained ecologically and one that sustains us spiritually—we must transcend the disorder and fragmentation of the industrial age. We need a perspective that joins the hard won victories of civilization, such as human rights and democracy, with a larger view of our place in the cosmos (p. 4).

Since the 18th century the world has shown its concern for the true cost to THE marginalised humans as well as to the earth of our unleashed production progressions and consumption habits. Indeed, our ecosystems, which maintain all life on earth, have reached its topmost menacing mode which is due to our intimidating numbers and levels of consumption. As Slavoj Žižek (1991, p.35) avers:

to the extent that the ecological crisis pertains to what Lacan terms the 'real', that which precedes, defies and disrupts symbolic representation, it remains strangely elusive to thought, even while pressing in upon us daily, shifting the literal ground of our being.

Ecocritics are literary professionals as well as supporters of the environment. One of the implicit goals of this approach is to regenerate professional dignity for what Glotfelty calls the “undervalued genre of nature writing” (1995, p.xxxi). Lawrence Buell defines ecocriticism as the “study of the relationship between literature and the environment conducted in a spirit of commitment to environmentalist praxis” (1995, p. 430). Garrard, states: “Ecocriticism explores the ways in which we imagine and portray the relationship between humans and the environment in all areas of cultural production” (2004, p. 2). The word itself is a combination of the *eco*, which is taken from ecology and criticism, so, like Chaos Theory; it is one of the schools of criticism, which combines humanism and science. Ecocriticism is one of the ways in which man tries to fight for the world in which he lives. Neil Evernden asserts:

there appears to be a human phenomenon, similar in some ways to the experience of territoriality, that is described as aesthetic and which is, in effect, a “sense of place,” a sense of knowing and of being part of a particular place. There's nothing very mysterious about this—it's just what it feels like to be home, to experience a sense of light or smell that is inexplicably “right” (Dreese 2002, p. 1).

There is an integral relationship between our existence and our ecosystem. It is in such a relationship that life takes its necessary formation. Therefore, if we want to know who we are, we need to know where we are. The environmental texture which we live in plays crucially important and inevitable roles in our physical and emotional patterns that determine our thoughts of who we are. According to Yahya (2012), “Interconnectedness is among the most basic of ecocriticism tenets as ecocriticism takes as its subject the interconnections between humans and nature” (p. 79).

Ecocriticism is still at its infancy. It is not a unified school with strict boundaries but an area of diverse disciplines. Many critics emphasise the interdisciplinary nature of the enquiry. Ecocriticism has borrowed methodologies and approaches liberally from other fields of study. As a result, scholars are still engaged in defining its scope and aim. Ecocritics try to do away with mankind's anthropocentric attitudes of nature, and implant biocentric attitudes instead. Because of its master-slave relationship, Eco criticism has many similarities with postcolonial studies and feminism. Ecocritics try to put their ideas into actions in their professional lives and try to be activists in political and social movements.

There are two trends in ecocriticism: the first is the one in which the growing literature affected by the contemporary environmental crisis is a matter of concern. The

second trend is rereading the established literary canon based on ecocritical principles, like the present study.

D. H. LAWRENCE AND ST. MAWR

The two American women stood high at the window, overlooking the wet, close, hedged-and-fenced English landscape, Everything enclosed, enclosed, to stifling. The very apples on the trees looked so shut in, it was impossible to imagine any speck of 'Knowledge' lurking inside them. Good to eat, good to cook, good even for show. But the wild sap of untameable and inexhaustible knowledge--no! Bred out of them. Geldings, even the apples (Lawrence 2007, p. 72-henceforth Lawrence).

During the time that *St Mawr* was written, the Species Act of 1973 had extended legal rights to some species of plants and animals. Other fields of study, like literature, had been influenced by such environmental awareness. Lou and her mother are the representatives of the new rights for other than human species, while Lou's husband and the churchman with his wife represent the conservatives.

After D.H. Lawrence wrote his essay on the role of nature in the works of Thomas Hardy, he got interested in the American novelists, in whose work, he found an enormous potential for continuing his studies on the role of the *place* in literature. He discovered that there is good potential for developing the element of nature in novel, while a novelist is in the new continent of America. His descriptions of nature became detailed like that of Thomas Hardy. As Scott Russell Sanders says:

What Lawrence wrote about Hardy applies more widely and deeply, in fact, to American literature. Hardy glimpsed "the primitive, primal earth" in Dorset, and Wordsworth searched for it in the Lake District, and Lawrence himself found remnants of it amid the coal fields of the industrial Midlands. But these were pockets of wilderness surrounded by domesticated landscape..... In America, by contrast, until well into this century... writers have not had to hunt for wildness...., for over three centuries.... They could not help but see "the wilderness raging around"(Sanders 1996, p. 183).

So, Lawrence travelled to a ranch in America, and there he wrote his short novel entitled *St. Mawr*. His protagonist, Lou, is also from Texas. She is a person who has travelled to Europe a lot, but feels a sense of belonging to America. By the time his studies in classic American literature appeared, Lawrence had moved to a ranch in New Mexico, and he could write from his experiences that, "when one comes to America, one finds ... there is always a certain slightly devilish resistance in the ... landscape (Boulton 2004, p. 127). In *St. Mawr*, the hero flies from England, where every scrap of country has been "humanised, occupied by human claims"; and she settles as Lawrence did on a mountain overlooking the desert. There she "felt a certain latent holiness in the very atmosphere,... such as she had never felt in Europe, or in the east... the landscape lived, and lived as the world of gods, unsullied and unconcerned Man didn't exist for it" (Lawrence, p. 184). Lawrence's response to the land is a source of meaning and energy. It is like the view among the ancient Indians.

INDUSTRIALISM

After the Middle Ages, the concept of nature changed, and later on, with the advent of ideologies like humanism and secularism, some binary opposition like natural/artificial, nature/culture, country/town, agrarian society/industrial society appeared. The result became utilitarianism, in which nature is considered just a fresh resource to feed the industrial machine. The Industrial Revolution supports and strengthens the anthropocentric worldview. In fact, before the Industrial Revolution, nature was a source of mystery that aroused unknown fears. But, after the Industrial Revolution nature became tamed by technology. In

such a situation, writers, like Lawrence, began to lament the lost serenity of the countryside under the cruel hand of industry, and to reveal in their novels the horrible condition of the victims of the Industrial Machine.

European civilisation largely conquered nature with trains, roads and ski-lifts, whilst the exploration of the America brought news of the Grand Canyon and the Rocky Mountains, making the wildernesses look tamed. In such a time the story of Lou Witt, who deserts the civilised world to live at the foot of Rocky Mountains, is written.

Lawrence himself grew up in a coal miner family that has haunted his imagination for all his life. Even when he tries to write a story, which does not relate to such ideas directly, it is inevitable for him to relate to the miners and their sordid condition of living, which are the outcomes of the modern industrial society of England. So, the coal mines and miners, the food for industry, emerge again in *St. Mawr* during protagonists' stay in the countryside of England, where there is a pub, which is a place of retreat from the mines, for the miners, for whom Mrs. Witt dedicates a sum of money to supply them with drinks at a lower price. Their portrayal by the Dean of the countryside shows the effects of industry on man's lives: "...the wicked little group of cottagers down at Mile End, famous for ill-living. The Mile-Enders was all Allison and Jephsons, and in-bred, the Dean said: result of working through the centuries at the Quarry, and living isolated there at Mile End" (Lawrence, p. 21).

Also, in *St. Mawr*, industrialism is attacked for the kind of artificial lives of Manbys or the kind of rootless new generation of bourgeois class artists like Rico, who have lost their roots and cannot live in harmony with nature. Even when Lou and her mother go to live on a ranch in America and she goes to describe the young cowboys there, and we expect to hear about some people who are not contaminated by industry, what we see is ironically the opposite, we see cowboys on motorcars not horses:

Mrs. Witt eyed it all shrewdly. But she failed to participate. Lou was a bit scared at the emptiness of it all, and the queer, phantasmal self-consciousness. Cowboys just as self-conscious as Rico, far more sentimental, inwardly vague and unreal. Cowboys that went after their cows in black Ford motorcars: and who self-consciously saw Lady Carrington falling to them, as elegant young ladies from the East fall to the noble cowboy of the films, or in Zane Grey. It was all film-psychology. (p. 103)

But in Lou's opinion: "No! Man wisely invents motor-cars and other machines, automobile and locomotive. The horse is superannuated for man. But alas, man is even more superannuated for the horse" (p. 59).

We see that Lou and her mother leave England in search of wild fresh nature in America, but ironically what they find there shatters their image of the Wild West in scenes like:

High in the sky a star seemed to be walking. It was an aeroplane with a light. Its buzz rattled above. Not a space, not a speck of this country that wasn't humanised, occupied by the human claim. Not even the sky (p. 82).

So, after a while they get bored with their lives in America that has begun with hopes of finding an uncontaminated country, but has ended in a hotel, consequently, they decide to follow their quest in La Chivas, which has defeated the approach of industry until their arrival.

RELIGION

What human beings do with their environment is based on the way they think of their relationship with it. This thinking is a part of their culture. Many ecocritics believe that, this culture has been seasoned with an anthropocentric worldview, which is the result of scripted religions. Ecocritics claim that the teachings of Judeo-Christian religions have

given human beings immense authority on the earth. It can be easily inferred from those religious doctrines that preach: man is the centre of the universe and he is the king of the earth. Eco critics speculate that the anthropocentric stories of Genesis in the Bible persuade people to regard themselves royal. These stories give them the opportunity to do whatever they want and ignore any other creature on the earth. Under the light of these arguments, it can be inferred that religion is one of the root causes of the anthropocentric worldview which is destroying nature. Eco critics believe that before the appearance of religion, every natural object was believed to have a guardian spirit and man had to respect them, for example, nobody was allowed to kill an animal, cut a tree, or dry a spring without taking permission from its guardian spirit, but by the advent of Judeo-Christian religions, man's unlimited exploitation of nature became rampant and unleashed. Manes in 'Nature and Silence' states that "the introduction of two powerful institutional technologies: literacy and Christian exegesis has put the animism of nature in chains" (Glotfelty & Fromm 1995, p. 18). He contends that if we are to reanimate the nature we should learn a new language, which is the language of all creatures like what Thoreau tried to learn from nature.

As a whole, it cannot be denied that some ecocritics charge religion for its contribution to the nature's destruction, and though, this is a fact that monotheistic religions, like Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, give the highest position to mankind, and reveal that all the other beings are subjugated to him, but, this is just half of the story. The other half is that, the story can also be read in terms of man's responsibility for nature. In this kind of reading, people should take care of other creatures in the name of God, as all the creatures are also the creations of God: "Man is not the lord of beings. Man is the shepherd of Being" (Heidegger 1977, p. 237).

Another important religious movement, which is one of the areas of study for eco critics, is Pantheism or Nature religion. Pantheists believe that the doctrines of the orthodox Christianity interfered with the personal relationship between a person and God. They suppose that God exists within each creature. They believe in the immanence of God in the world, and this is another movement by which ecocritics try to reunite man with his lost natural roots. There are, of course, many other fields that examine religion and nature and the positive or negative effects of religion on nature, and the debate still goes on.

In *St. Mawr* the above mentioned ideas are dealt with openly. For example the idea of respecting the spirit of the beings of nature is put in the mouth of Lewis during his conversation with Mrs. Witt on their way to save St. Mawr from Manbys. Or the idea of Pantheism is clearly demonstrated by Lou's finding Pan in St. Mawr. In one place, Lou compares religion with the spirit of nature in this way:

There's something else even that loves me and wants me. I can't tell you what it is. It's 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 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 men, bigger than people, bigger than religion (Lawrence, p. 158).

These lines in *St Mawr* may be rightly read as Lawrence's affirmation of his belief in Pantheism, or the omnipresent reality of God. He undoubtedly utilises nature as a replica for the orthodox religion. There are certainly strands of pantheistic readings in his work.

Although Rico has faced an accident, Lou is aware of the evil nature of Rico, the antagonist, who "was one of mankind's myriad conspirators, who conspire to live in absolute physical safety, whilst willing the minor disintegration of all positive living" (p. 58). Here, Lawrence has used the eco critical idea of man's misuse of nature under the wing of religion. He directly puts such an idea in the mouth of a clergy man, the Dean of countryside church

who believes that they should kill St. Mawr because the horse is dangerous to the people who cannot ride it calmly:

The Dean: A vicious horse is worse than a vicious man--except that you are free to put him six feet underground, and end his vice finally, by your own act.
Do you think St. Mawr is vicious? said Lou.
Well, of course--if we're driven to definitions!--I *know* he's dangerous.
And do you think we ought to shoot everything that is dangerous? asked Lou, her colour rising. (p. 63)

Lou tries to explain the right of animals by saying that Rico himself is responsible for encountering disaster because of being rough with the horse and pulling its reins hard, the Dean's answer is: "One hates to have to destroy a fine-looking animal. But I would sacrifice a dozen rather than have our Rico limping" (p. 64). "I am sorry for the horse," said the Dean, with heavy sarcasm (p. 66). Consequently, Even Lou, the defender of animal rights, is at a time influenced by the impact of her surrounding people, when she experiences a quandary about the righteousness of killing St. Mawr: "she would want to hurry down to her mother's house and have the creature shot at once. It would be a satisfaction and a vindication of human rights" (p. 57).

As mentioned before, one of the important ideas related to nature and religion in *St. Mawr* is the idea of Pantheism, or natural religion, which is clearly debated in the story. Nature is apprehended by Lawrence from a pantheistic and monistic dimension as a universal force which sheds light on man's spirituality. Both the physical and metaphysical dimensions of nature are dealt with in his works. For example in this story the horse, St Mawr, is the natural phenomenon in which Lou finds her Pan. Also in this story the idea is not just limited to the protagonists, and even the grooms like Phoenix and Lewis are pagans, who can find their ultra-physical beliefs just in nature. The story develops the idea of Pantheism copiously, especially in the passages where Mrs. Witt is giving a dinner party and the guests talk about the idea of finding someone's Pan in an object of nature. Like most of the other protagonists of D.H. Lawrence, Lou and her mother are not believers in formal religion, instead it is quite evident that they are in search of natural religion.

Your face is curiously like Pan's," said Lou to him (a guest) at dinner.
It was true, in a commonplace sense. He had the tilted eyebrows, the twinkling goaty look, and the pointed ears of a goat-Pan.
People have said so," he replied. "But I'm afraid it's not the face of the Great God Pan. Isn't it rather the Great Goat Pan!"
I say, that's good!" cried Rico. "The Great Goat Pan!"
I have always found it difficult," said the Dean, "to see the Great God Pan in that goat-legged old father of satyrs. He may have a good deal of influence--the world will always be full of goaty old satyrs. But we find them somewhat vulgar. The goaty old satyrs are too comprehensible to me to be venerable, and I fail to see a Great God in the father of them all (Lawrence, p. 37).

For the Dean, the possibility of the existence of the spirit of God in nature is difficult and even seen as a vulgar idea. And even if it is there, it is a fallen goat Pan, not the Great God Pan. But, for those who have not been indoctrinated by Christianity, like Lou and her mother, or the guest, Cartwright, the idea is:

I am not sure," said Cartwright, with a small smile. "But don't you imagine Pan once was a great god before the anthropomorphic Greeks turned him into half a man?
But what was Pan before he was a man with goat legs?" asked Lou.
Before he looked like me!" said Cartwright, with a faint grin. "I should say he was the god that is hidden in everything. In those days you saw the thing, you never saw the god in it: I mean in the tree or the fountain or the animal. If you ever saw the God instead of the thing, you died. If you saw it with the naked eye, that is. But in the night you might see the God. And you knew it was there (Lawrence, p. 37).

In this part the idea of the respect for the guardian spirit of the natural being is clearly demonstrated. It is stated that when the eyes of mankind were not veiled by uni-God religions, and he himself was not contaminated by industry, he could respect the spirit of the nature. But, for those like Rico, and the Dean, such ideas are not serious: “The modern pantheist not only sees the God in everything, he takes photographs of it,” said the Dean. “Oh, and the divine pictures he paints! Cried Rico” (p. 38). But, there are still some protagonists, like Lou and her mother, who can find their great Pan God in the objects of nature that may even include the human beings themselves.

PHILOSOPHY AND NATURE

The main doctrines of western civilisation are derived from philosophy, and philosophy itself is mainly affected by Renaissance beliefs, which are themselves the results of humanism and secularism that resulted in the Industrial Revolution. The motto that man is able to be the pillar of the world, and the Scientific Revolution, are the results of Renaissance. The emerging self-reliance and the science exerted mostly negative influences on the world and human beings. One of the ideas that emerged out of Renaissance philosophy was the binary opposition of nature/culture in which artificiality was a sign of culture, while everything natural was a sign of untamed barbarity. This kind of philosophy had a profound effect on people’s lives. Many people tried to appreciate artificiality to the extent that, during renaissance, they even built their houses in the form of their initial family names. In fact during this period the meaning of the word natural gave up its previous pastoral prestige for the sake of artificial or cultural. Many such ideas can be seen in the literary works of this period. It was renaissance philosophy that strengthened the idea that the proper study of man is man, so the ideal concern of man’s knowledge became human nature to the extent that in this period the idea of nature in arts and literature became human nature not the outside nature. Thus, besides religion, philosophy strengthened the anthropocentric worldview by overtly encouraging human beings to gain control and dominion over nature, which has eventually led the universe to the current environmental crisis.

After Renaissance, René Descartes (1596–1650) proposed an influential account of the difference between mind and body. He separated mind and body, and denied to animals not only the faculty of reason, but the whole range of feelings and sensations that he had associated with thought. As a result, he saw animals as radically different from, and inferior to, humans. They were bodies without minds, effectively machines.

One of the influential philosophers, whose thoughts are in line with the ecocritical movement is Martin Heidegger, who distinguishes between the ultra-physical being of the things and their corporeal being. “Heidegger had blamed Socratic philosophy for constructing a rational subject that approaches the natural world as an object that serves a purely utilitarian purpose, a process that culminates (or reaches a disturbing nadir) in the Cartesian split” (Borlik 2011, p. 9). So, ecocritics try to condemn mechanical philosophies like those of Bacon and Descartes, and instead try to expand the philosophies of those like Ruskin and Heidegger.

According to Glover Smith “Lawrence felt only antipathy for Freudian concepts, and psychoanalysis, fashioned as they were by repressive forms of modern civilisation” (1971, p. 22). Lawrence has been affected by the philosophy of Martin Heidegger and Nietzsche, who are two of the outstanding touchstone philosophers for Eco critics. Their ideas have affected the school of Transcendentalism, which opposes the Materialism of the modern society. This movement believes that man is pure by nature and for his contamination the society should be blamed. Lawrence tries to show that a man is ‘a god in ruins’ by delineating the process in

which most of his characters first follow their romantic ideals, and then, become more degenerate as they grow up. As a consequence they separate from nature, and become corrupted by culture. This is one of the Wordsworthian maxims too, that children are in perfect harmony with nature, but as they grow up their separation is caused by urbanization. Lawrence has been deeply influenced by the philosophy of Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Darwin; he has also been under the influence of Ruskin's inflamed anti-utilitarian and anti-materialistic preaching. Besides he has been influenced by Marinetti, who has written of the need to destroy the 'man side' of literature and 'put matter in his place' in a passage from *The Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature*, that Lawrence praised in his letter to Edward Garnett in 1914. Johnson avers:

Evolutionary theory provided a compelling alternative account of the origin of living beings, creating a significant reconsideration of human and animal boundaries. Before this point in the philosophy of the animal, major thinkers from Aristotle, Saint Augustine, Saint Thomas Aquinas, and Descartes to Kant had dismissed animals as inferior to humans. According to the dominant western perception of a fixed hierarchy, humans exist below god(s) and above animals, a hierarchy that justifies the human right to power. Darwin's evolutionary theory changed this prior philosophy of the animal (2009, p. 15).

In *St. Mawr*, Lawrence explicitly addresses the difference between animal and human existence. Consistent with his rejection of a rational modern human, Lawrence favours nonhuman animal intuition. When Lou approaches the topic of a rational human versus an intuitive animal, Lou's mother announces that man is valuable because he thinks. Lou replies:

It seems to me there's something else besides mind and cleverness, or niceness or cleanness. Perhaps it is the animal. Just think of St Mawr! I've thought so much about him. We call him an animal, but we never know what it means. He seems so far greater mystery to me than a clever man. He's a horse. Why can't one say in the same way, of a man: *He's a man?* There seems no mystery in being a man. But there's a terrible mystery in St Mawr (Lawrence, p. 55).

In Heideggerean conception, there is no external world separable from human beings in the world. This view of a Heideggerean "being in the world" includes a consciousness of environment in which the human realises his/her place in evolution, a place comprising all other living organisms. From a Heidegger, *St. Mawr* is the story in which Lou and her mother are trying live in harmony with nature. The environmental philosopher, J. Baird Callicott, claims that,

..the typical traditional American Indian attitude was to regard all features of the environment as inspirited. These entities possessed a consciousness, reason, and volition, no less intense and complete than a human being's. The Earth itself, the sky, the winds, rocks, streams, trees, insects, birds and all other animals therefore had personalities and were thus as fully persons as other human beings (Glotfelty and Fromm, 1995, p.79).

Lawrence, too, uses the short story of *St. Mawr* to philosophise the same ideas, often directly or through the mouth of the Welsh groom, Lewis.

Norris in *The Ontology of D.H. Lawrence's St. Mawr*, turns to Lawrence's description of exploring a world "...where each creature attains, to its own fullness of being, its own *living self*" (2005, p. 297). She tackles one of the most commonly disputed controversies in animal philosophy: "how humans understand animal being without projecting a human perception onto what it is like to be an animal" (p. 17). She firmly claims: "One can be an animal without *being* an animal and it is precisely the wedge of difference between these two statements that is the philosophical object of the novella" (p. 297). Therefore, according to Norris, humans have the ability to imagine animal perception, or, at least, to imagine a perception that is not human-centred and *St. Mawr* successfully describes such experiences.

So, *St. Mawr* develops the author's philosophy of animal being most effectively. Lawrence utilises animal consciousness as a way to experiment with human consciousness; he is interested in shared experiences between humans and nonhuman animals. Lawrence in his *Selected Essays* confirms that,

At the same time, every creature exists in time and space. And in time and space it exists relatively to all other existence, and can never be absolved [. . .] when speaking of existence we always speak in types, species, not individuals. Species exist. But even an individual dandelion has *being* (Boulton 2004, p. 66).

ECOFEMINISM

Ecofeminism is one of the main sub-branches of ecocriticism that tries to find similarities between the oppressed condition of women and the environment. They also try to prove that women are more in harmony with their environment both physically and spiritually. So, they state that, if we want to avoid the destruction of the world, we should release women as well as nature from the cruel suppression of the oppressors. Gaard (1993) comments:

Ecofeminism contributes the necessary insight into the link between the abuse of power on personal and political levels that underlies human oppression and environmental exploitation. On a theoretical level, an ecofeminist paradigm can help us to redress the historical split between experiential/ individual (Liberalist) and critical/institutional (Leftist) orientations. On a practical level, it can enable us to link environmental theory and practice, and to develop new strategies for social change (p. 16).

In the realm of ecocriticism, there are copious discussions on the role of animals in literature, and the differences between wild and domestic animals in which the former are linked with masculine freedom, while the latter are denigrated as feminine servants of human depredation. Also in the western stories, the wild is usually portrayed to be tamed by the masculine power of man. But, in *St. Mawr*, not only is the wild the destroyer of man's virility, but also, the women are those who protect *St. Mawr*, the destroyer of man's power.

Here Lawrence portrays two women characters that not only do break the power order between man and women, but also cut the destroyer hand of mankind from nature, and by doing so explain the union of women with the wild nature, which can be the result of a shared enemy. It is explained by ecofeminists, as the process in which a similarity is described between the way that women and nature have been both misused by men. Also, the story tries to portray women protagonist who dares to face the wildest scenes of nature ever seen by mankind at the foot of rocky mountains in the spectacular vision of Lou on her ranch, as Veral L. Norwood puts it: "(Ecofeminists) free women from safe, cultivated gardens, playing out their burden of guilt for destroying Eden...to leave the garden and venture forth into the wilderness" (Glotfelty & Fromm 1994, p. 343). In *St. Mawr*, the main woman protagonist, Lou, is the one who discovers that the world in which the horse resides is preferable to any human world known to her. Lou, as an American intellectual, cynically criticises the modern, materialistic lifestyle of the current cultural environment. Lou describes her superficial human world as "far more bodiless than *St. Mawr's*" (Lawrence, p. 35). At social gatherings she finds herself "talking to handsome young barefaced unrealities, not men at all" (Lawrence, p. 35). Lou restores a wild, primitive, flame of life through the horse and its caretakers, Phoenix, and Lewis. Another woman character, Mrs. Witt, portrayed frequently as a new woman of authority in the story, can be seen as an example of the ecotopian woman of Earnest Callenbache's *Ecotopia*, who shows her potential to escape from the social, cultural, and ideological conditionings.

MEN-WOMEN RELATIONSHIP

One of the major themes of Lawrence is the relationship between men and women. This is also one of the concerns of ecocriticism. Ecocritics try to analyse the way that man's separation from nature has separated him from the other kinds of his species, and especially the way that Industrialism and Consumerism have broken the ex-natural intimacy between opposite sexes. The major relationships between men and women in the *St. Mawr* are the ones between Rico and Lou, and the other between Mrs. Witt and Lewis, as we see; both of them are not examples of the Lawrence's accepted relation, which is blood intimacy. Mrs. Witt does have contempt for young neatly-shaved modern men. She is in search of real men, whom she does not define and cannot find in the story. Her idealised husband was "A clever husband, who was a brilliant lawyer, but who was far more thrilled by his cattle ranch than by his law" (Lawrence, p. 74). However, the time for such men has passed. Mrs. Witt's infatuation with the uncivilised Lewis expresses the priority of her search for Primitivism over her civilising inclinations. Lewis is for Mrs. Witt the conflict between the wild nature and the civilised culture that she experiences in Europe. Lewis is an uneducated groom, rough, untidy and untameable, in many ways reminiscent of *St. Mawr*, by which the Witts are infatuated. In fact it seems that he is a part of the horse. He knows the wild nature of *St. Mawr*, how to deal with it, and even appreciate its uniqueness. He also knows the wilderness, how to live in it, and appreciate its beauty. With his aid Mrs. Witt takes the horse away to save it. Lewis is also, sometimes a gentleman. He treats Mrs. Witt as a lady with due respect. Though she regrets his being an uneducated, it is his being a natural man that she appreciates in him to the point that she falls in love with him and asks him to marry her. When he rejects her proposal, he rejects her aim to civilise him. Also between Lou and Rico the situation is not better:

But it was a strange vibration of the nerves, rather than of the blood. A nervous attachment, rather than a sexual love. A curious tension of will, rather than a spontaneous passion. Each was curiously under the domination of the other. They were a pair--they had to be together. Yet quite soon they shrank from one another. This attachment of the will and the nerves was destructive. As soon as one felt strong, the other felt ill. As soon as the ill one recovered strength, down went the one who had been well.

And soon, tacitly, the marriage became more like a friendship, platonic. It was a marriage, but without sex. Sex was shattering and exhausting, they shrank from it, and became like brother and sister. But still they were husband and wife. And the lack of physical relation was a secret source of uneasiness and chagrin to both of them. They would neither of them accept it. Rico looked with contemplative, anxious eyes at other women (p. 4).

The cause of such a relation is quite evident by the clues in the story: "The horror of man's unnatural life, his heaped-up civilisation!" (p. 102). The women protagonists of the story, being out of tune with nature, are in search of their lost identity through reunification with nature. There are symbols of nature like *St. Mawr* at the beginning and the ranch at the end of the story that have taken the place of men in Witts' fascination. Even Lou makes up her mind that the horse should take the Place of Rico as a husband emotionally; *St. Mawr* is more real to her than her husband. Toyokuni comments that "the horse is symbol of fertility, especially the red horse is offered as a public sacrifice to purity and the land....*St. Mawr* is, therefore, a scapegoat to purify the modern world, a sort of trespasser in Lou's life to make her aware of her futile life" (1990, p. 6), and to galvanise her quest of wilderness after her epiphany caused by seeing the horse, while Rico is the opposite, reminding her of the modern futile life repeatedly.

Lou and her Mother cannot desire men as they desire their quest for their lost ties with nature. It is clear that to be able to regain their ability to create the normal blood intimacy with their opposite sex, they should first reach, and pass the state of the end of the story,

which is natural life. According to the story, The hope for a new salvation in a blood-intimate relationship between Lou and Rico is only possible if he decides to come back to nature to live with Lou on the ranch, but Mrs. Witt tells Lou that it is impossible for Rico to come, because as we get from the story, he is a snob who prefers a modern city life, and he is not at all interested in nature. Therefore, as we see in *St. Mawr*, like *The Rainbow*, the lost connection between man and nature has caused the lack of normal connection between men and women.

CONCLUSION

Indeed, the widest definition of the subject of ecocriticism is “the study of the relationship of the human and the non-human, throughout human cultural history and entailing critical analysis of the term ‘human’ itself” (Garrard, p. 5). So, by reading Lou’s journey one will be tempted to think about the answer to the question; why is it necessary to leave society to find reality? From the very beginning lines of the story the sense of alienation and rootlessness of Lou Witt, the sense that ecocritics relate to mankind’s separation from nature, is delineated as: “Lou Witt had had her own way so long, that by the age of twenty-five she didn’t know where she was” (Lawrence, p. 1). Such a feeling is emphasised repeatedly in the story in lines like: “She didn’t quite belong;” “she didn’t ‘belong’ anywhere”; or in “...and the lurking sense of being an outsider everywhere,” (2).

The study tried to show Lawrence’s belief in re-establishing an intimate relationship between humans and the rest of life. He states: “the human race is . . . like a great uprooted tree, with its roots in the air. We must plant ourselves again in the universe.” (Boulton 2004, p. 129), and this can only be done by going back to wilderness that is the natural, unfallen antithesis of an unnatural civilisation that has lost its soul. It is a place of freedom in which we can recover our true selves that we have lost to the corrupting influences of our artificial lives. Most of all, it is the “ultimate landscape of authenticity” (Cronon 1996, p. 80). Lou is determined to experience the wilderness on her own terms. Her efforts are tinged with a certain aesthetic quality. She seeks in wilderness a denial of the weakness of self, or a kind of self-denial. She voluntarily chooses the more difficult or dangerous route with Phoenix to go to La Chivas, her tour of Rockies could have been done by her lovely horse accompanied by some reliable guides, but she chooses the rougher ride by her mother’s threatening groom. This means that she quite often feels like one who goes to sea without a compass, prompted by her need for being far from tamed, safe life. She constantly attempts to get far enough away from cities and settlements so that she can experience nature alone. Many of her letters to her mother, prior to leaving Rico, shows her inability to bear the artificiality of Manby’s high life, and reveal her frustration at being able to retreat to wilderness and yet not being able to break with urban chains.

What ecologists believe is the fact that, in the modern time man has an experience of a lost unity, and a desire to regain it, which is central to his human nature. They state that such feelings come from our separation from the rest of the natural world. As Emerson puts it in *Nature*, “We are as much strangers in nature as we are aliens from God. We don’t understand the notes of the birds” (1836, p. 68). Such a situation is the feeling felt by the protagonists of the most of the works by Lawrence. In *St. Mawr*, Lou tries to fill such a gap by being mesmerised with a symbol of the wild nature. What is most fascinating for her about the horse is his untameable wild nature. It becomes a Pan for her by whom she is able to unite herself with her lost unity with nature. It is evident that, such unification with the roots of mankind happens, just by going back to nature. Lawrence implies that all desire is not human, that we belong not only to networks of language and culture, but also, to networks of land. And it is in nature writing, perhaps almost as much as, in wilderness itself that Lawrence

learns to recognise the shape and force of his own desire to be at home on the earth. Lawrence states his opinion of the way of living that he prefers for a human being to live a healthy life. He puts his ideas in Lou's mouth. When Lou talks to her mother about the cause of her choosing to live on a remote ranch, she states that "I don't want to be an animal like a horse or a cat or a lioness, though they all fascinate me, the way they get their life straight, not from a lot of old tanks, as we do. I don't admire the caveman, and that sort of thing. But think, mother, if we could get our lives straight from the source, as the animals do, and still be ourselves"(Lawrence, p. 37). This is the way man should live based on Lawrence. Lou states that men "always do leave off really thinking when the last bit of wild animal dies in them" (Lawrence, p.37). There is something in the wilderness that lures her:

There's something else for me, mother. There's something else even that loves me and wants me. I can't tell you what it is. It's 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 men, bigger than people, bigger than religion (p. 123).

To put it simply, the ecological writers or critics reject the notion that everything is socially, culturally, or linguistically constructed. Thus, Lawrence believes that nature is beyond human construction, for him any human artistic representation of nature is no more than a human construct or that it is doomed to failure.

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