# Alchemical Creation: The Art of Transformation in D.H. Lawrence's *St. Mawr*

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## Abstract

This paper explores a creative interpretation of D. H. Lawrence's novel St.Mawr. Throughout the centuries, and across cultures, the presence of a distinctive horse (or horses) in a literary text—and more recently in films — results in what appears to be an unvarying outcome: the restoration of equilibrium and wholeness in situations where balance and a sense of totality has been lost. Powerful illustrations of this phenomenon in Western and Eastern cultures are the medieval epic poem *El Cid*, Heinrich von Kleist's *Michael Kohlhaas*, Leo Tolstoy's *Kholstomer*, Girish Karnad's *Hayavadana*, Akira Kurosawa's *Kagemusha*, or the recent theater hit (originally written as a novel) *War Horse*, by Michael Morpurgo. D.H. Lawrence's *St. Mawr* (1924) belongs to this tradition, but whereas in the previously cited texts the relevance of the horse pertains to other themes—such as power, collective identity, the role of performance in human life, or the tragedy of war—the distinctiveness of Lawrence's text lies in the horse's centrality in the psychological transformation of one individual: Lou Witt. I am currently working on a book-length project that will include the cited texts and others showing, from a transcultural and trans-temporal perspective, how the centrality of horses in literature and film systematically responds to the same causes. Clearly, authors throughout history have validated what V.A. Kolve says about the uses of the horse in the Middle Ages, namely, that it is a "central image" through which human nature can be explored (137).

### Text overview

In D.H. Lawrence's *Saint Mawr* (1923), Lou (Louise Witt, or Lady Carrington), an American in her 20s, and her husband Rico (Henry Carrington) enjoy social success in English society in the 1920s. Strangely drawn to visiting the stables near her house in London, Lou meets a horse, Saint Mawr. The horse's presence triggers in Lou the realization of the profoundly unsatisfactory life that she is leading. This dissatisfaction pertains to both her inner world, and her relationships with her husband and with society. After meeting the horse, Lou is propelled on a journey of psychological growth culminating in a decision to leave London and return to her native America. There she realizes an expanded version of herself and achieves a higher level of consciousness. In America, Lou finds a place that she sees as sacred—a ranch called *Las Chivas*—whose topography and history symbolically mirror the inner process that has led her in the direction of psychic integration.

Although criticism of *St. Mawr* reflects awareness of the importance of the horse, and even of the text's psychological dimension,[14] a new emphasis on St. Mawr, his symbolic value, and the

[14] Although I shall make reference throughout this essay to aspects of how St. Mawr has been perceived, three classic works of criticism illustrate the critical opinions about St. Mawr in Lawrence's text. F.R. Leavis, who considers *St. Mawr* a work of genius (225), sees the horse as an embodiment of "spontaneous life" and a factor of consciousness and depth in the novel (227-31). Although Eliseo Vivas thinks that *St. Mawr* is one of the "worst" novels by Lawrence, he also affirms that the horse is a "genuine symbol" (182). Finally, for Graham Hough, who thinks that the novel is "not an authentic piece of work" (180), the horse is an "unmodulated… symbol of primitive energy" (182). The only psychological study on *St. Mawr* that I am aware of that makes the horse relevant is by Courtney Carter. In her essay, she shows that the horse is one of the three images that unify the text—the other two being water and fire.

psychological process that his image unleashes is necessary if we are to understand Lawrence's text more deeply and from a creative stance. The emphasis that I will place on the centrality of the horse in Lawrence's text suggests, for the first time, that a true metamorphosis—that is, a double quality indicating transformation and growth within a pattern of continuity—between St. Mawr and the New Mexico landscape occurs after Lou leaves Texas, and that such a metamorphosis brings coherence and unity to Lou's psychological development and to the novel as a whole.[15] As we shall see, the transmutation of horse into land is based on the common symbolic treatment granted to both entities in the text: their shared mysterious and paradoxical characteristics—as they are associated with light and darkness, goodness and evil, life and death—and by their "numinosity," that is, the quality by which an entity becomes both divine and diabolical for the person under its spell (Walker 32). Intimately connected with St. Mawr's metamorphosis is an element of considerable hermeneutical consequences: the narrative language used in the novel changes according to the stage of transformation experienced by Lou Witt, from a temporal language before arriving in Las Chivas to a spatial language after that point.

Second, a new interpretive prism is necessary to fully appreciate Lou's process of transformation. To that end, I suggest that the character's psychological development follows the pattern of the alchemical *opus*. Although alchemy has been employed in the interpretation of other Lawrence's texts—such as *The Plumed Serpent* (Montgomery and Cowan), or *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* (Whelan)—it has not been used thus far in the analysis of *St. Mawr.* Carl Jung saw alchemy as a metaphor for psychological change, and his views on the subject will inform my interpretation of *St. Mawr*. We know that Lawrence was familiar with both alchemy and Jung.[16] This approach will demonstrate, during the last alchemical phase, how the conscious and the unconscious, as well as spirit and body are fully integrated into Lou's process of individuation.

In what follows, I shall address some of Jung's important psychological concepts that will help to explain why Lou begins her journey of psychological transformation. After that, I shall begin the analysis of Lou's journey according to the four essential stages of the alchemical process.

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[15] The role of St. Mawr in the text is also key in clarifying the alleged dissociation between the English and the New Mexico parts of the novel once the horse physically disappears from the narrative after Lou leaves Texas. Critics have positioned themselves on both sides of this issue. Vivas (152, 162), Father Tiverton (164), and David Cavitch (161) have argued against the continuity between the English and the American sections of the novel, while Frederick McDowell sees the continuity between both parts based on the idea that Lou has seen Pan in both the horse while in England and the landscape while in America (96, 99). As for the disappearance of St. Mawr after Texas, Alan Wilde thinks that the horse's function becomes "exhausted and superseded" (168). Innis sees how St. Mawr's energy is present in the animist landscape of Las Chivas (112).

[16] Lawrence writes on occultism, theosophy, and alchemy beginning in 1917 (Montgomery 168) and he read Jung's *The Psychology of the Unconscious* in 1918 (Cowan182). For Tindall, Lawrence became familiar with occult literature between 1912 and 1915 (134) but, according to Whelan, Lawrence read occult material in October of 1908 (104). The most influential thinkers of the occult for Lawrence were Madame Blavatsky—one of the founders of theosophy and the author of "Alchemy in the Nineteenth Century"—and Frederick Carter. Lawrence found Blavatsky's writings "marvelously illuminating" (cited by Montgomery 35). Whelan adds two more influences: Annie Bessant and Eliphas Lévi (105-6). For Robert Montgomery, Lawrence was drawn to alchemy because it provided him with a symbolic language that confirmed his own ideas (191), while Cowan says that alchemy was for Lawrence a metaphor for "spiritual transformation and vital renewal" (185). As I have mentioned, both Montgomery and Cowan have analyzed *The Plumed Serpent* from an alchemical perspective. While Montgomery draws from Jakob Boehme and Titus Burckardt, Cowan uses Jung. Although Lawrence could not read Jung's writing on alchemy, "Jung's discussion of alchemy as the source of a number of these great archetypal symbols provides a useful context for understanding Lawrence's adoption of […] alchemical imagery" (Cowan 182). Whelan, on his part, has used alchemy in his analysis of *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* as part of a totalizing approach that includes the convergence of several orders of reality: the mythic, the psychological, the ontological, the metapsychological, and the metaphysical.

## I. *St. Mawr* and analytical psychology

In Jungian terms, human beings become Self-actualized as psychological individuals through a process of psychic development called "individuation." In it, the "ego"—or the center of consciousness—and the unconscious approach wholeness through a process in which symbols make possible the disclosure of contents of the unconscious that were previously hidden (Stein 177, 233). In Lawrence's novel, first St. Mawr and later the contents of a "sacred" place become the essential symbols that trigger and guide Lou's process of individuation. Key unconscious forces of her psyche become progressively more conscious as Lou moves toward a greater degree of psychic integration.

The process of individuation is led by what Jung considers the primal archetype,[17] a "field of structure and energy" shared by all human beings called the Self (Stein 152). Faced with the risk of fragmentation, the Self acts to hold the psychic system together "in balance," "interrelated," and "integrated," as "a transcendent center that governs the psyche from outside of itself and circumscribes its entirety" (Stein 168). The Self adjusts and orders the psyche through compensation, and it helps the subject to get in touch with a wider reality than the everyday, more practical functioning of ego-consciousness. Essential characteristics of the Self are that it presupposes the paradoxical presence of simultaneous and opposed truths (Miklen 8-9), and that it can be experienced as what is known in alchemy as *mysterium coniunctionis*, or a union of opposites, which I shall discuss later in this essay. In *St. Mawr,* Lou becomes progressively more Self-centered as she assimilates different aspects of her unconscious, such as her "shadow" or "*animus*." The "centering dynamics" of the Self act on Lou and lead her toward conscious individuation in a journey that follows the symbolic four essential stages of the alchemical process. In fact, in *Mysterium Coniunctionis* Jung claims that: "the entire alchemical procedure […] could just as well represent the individuation process of a single individual" (cited by Edinger 2).

In the case of Lou Witt, the centering dynamics of the Self archetype begin after she sees St. Mawr as a "vision" (50). This vision of St. Mawr is that of an "archetypal image" that "constellates" (or stimulates) the archetypal energy of the Self archetype.[18] As a generative image, St. Mawr stimulates archetypal power inherent in Lou. In turn, Lou's mind projects onto the horse the energy that translates an unconscious "inner problem" that, without the vision of the horse, would remain obscure and forever unprocessed. Like an alchemist with respect to matter, Lou expels a subjective content into St. Mawr, an object of experience because the unconscious is seeking expression in an embodied object.[19] Furthermore, as Franz states, archetypes project, and Lou's reaction to the image of St. Mawr clearly can be seen as a projection of the Self:

> The fact is that I suddenly find myself in the situation of projecting […]. The Greeks did not say 'I have fallen in love,' but 'the god of love shot an arrow at me' […]. And that is how it really happens—one finds oneself being shot at. So one can therefore speak of the archetype of the god of love. Eros is Hermes, it is a symbol of the Self, or of the totality, which makes the projection […]. If I find myself in a projection situation, that is an arrangement by the Self. (118)

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[17] Unlike physically-based "instincts," which are "modes of *action*" (Jung, 10: par. 273; my emphasis), "archetypes" are spiritual and are "uniform and regularly recurring modes of *apprehension*" (Jung, 10: par. 280; my emphasis*)*. Archetypes are inherited, unknowable, and unconscious forms that become knowable and conscious through "archetypal images," which are contents from the world of conscious experience and manifest themselves in visions, dreams, or fantasies (Walker 13). The "Self" in Jung's psychology is always capitalized. As Stein says, the Self "is Jung's God term" (102). My thanks to the Jungian psychologist Dr. Michael Kaufman for reading and commenting on this essay.

[18] Archetypes are irrepresentable, knowable only through their effects, while archetypal images are accessible to consciousness (Walker 13).

[19] Later in the novel she will do the same with respect to the sacred place in New Mexico

On the one hand, in order to shape her world, Lou projects onto St. Mawr the images and categories of her unconscious; on the other, St. Mawr "mirrors" her inner situation, becoming the object of her "fascination"—in fact, of her "love": "she was already half in love with St. Mawr" (48). After the encounter between inner and outer energies, the subject begins to translate her internal difficulty into one she can "interact with and reflect upon" (Henderson 1-2).

Interaction and reflection lead Lou Witt to the progressive, creeping sensation of how insubstantial and, above all, *unreal* her life is with her husband, Rico: "her life with Rico in the elegant little house, and all her social engagements seemed like a dream" (47). Mysteriously, Lou becomes powerfully attracted to horses to the point that "the *substantial reality* [of her life] […] was those mews in Westminster, her sorrel mare" (47; my emphasis). Horses are the *real* ingredient of her life and the object of her projections. They, and what they represent, become the object of *fascination* for Lou: "she had never had the faintest notion that she cared for horses and stables and grooms. But she did. She was fascinated" (47). When she sees St. Mawr, his presence strikes her "like lightning," "unexpectedly," as Jung says in regard to how archetypes impact people (Jung, *Mandala* 9). Her experience is spiritual, and it stimulates powerful emotions: she was "a woman haunted by love" (54), and she cries uncontrollably because, in that moment, the ego cannot manage the inflow of energy brought about by the archetypal image.

The fact that when Lou feels *love* for the horse when she sees him suggests both that she is on a path of knowledge—"you can only get knowledge through love" (Franz 116)—and that when Lou approaches St. Mawr the projection moves quickly to the realm of the archetypal, [20] as she feels his "vivid, hot life! She pauses, as if thinking, while her hand rests on the horse's *sun-arched neck*. Dimly, in her weary young-woman's *soul*, an *ancient understanding* seemed to flood in" (50; my emphasis). The power of raw, instinctual life is affirmed—the "vivid, hot life"—as soon as Lou is close to the horse. Then, when she lays her hand "on the horse's sun-arched neck"—a mandala-like symbol of the Self—her soul arrives at an apprehension of an "ancient understanding." This understanding transcends the realm of the instinctual, it is spiritual, (of the "soul") and primordial ("ancient") and, as we know, it strikes her as an archetypal experience does: "like lightning."

Meeting St. Mawr is also a numinous experience. As I have previously mentioned, numinosity indicates the possession of God-like and demonic qualities. Thus, St. Mawr is both divine and diabolical: "a god" (51), and a "demon" (51). Because what strikes Lou is an archetypal image of the Self, her whole being is affected, not only her ego: "It thrusts the ego aside and makes room for a supraordinate factor, the totality of a person, which consists of conscious and unconscious and consequently extends far beyond the ego" (Jung, *Mandala* 9). Indeed, Lou's archetypal experience will be relevant to her entire personality ("supraordinate"), to the integration of the conscious and the unconscious.

In brief, in its compensatory *modus operandi,* the Self leads Lou through the vision of the archetypal image of the horse to begin a process of individuation. Lou is open to the "spiritual goal toward which the whole nature of man strives" (Jung cited by Stein 101), and she begins the private, healing adventure that leads her to develop her psychological potential as she sees in the eyes of the horse the "truth of life," the possibilities of "joy and suffering" (Romanyshyn 36). She still does not understand the full meaning of her acceptance of this challenge, but her need to appropriate what the mystery of St. Mawr represents—"she wanted him to belong to her" (50)—will lead her to a return to

[20] Although the text clearly and repeatedly states that Lou falls in love with St. Mawr, no critic, to my knowledge, has attempted to fully integrate this textual *fact* in a comprehensive interpretation of *St. Mawr*. From a Jungian, alchemical perspective, however, falling in love with the horse describes the kind of archetypal experience that causes Lou to initiate her journey. Additionally, the horse represents the various stages of *animus* for Lou, as we shall see.

nature, not in a "regressive" fashion, but in a "restful" one in which she abides by her own, inner laws (Hannah 5).

## II. The Alchemical *Opus*

Jung noticed the coincidence between the ancient alchemists and the modern human world of images, and he concluded that the study of the alchemists' symbols would lead to a better understanding of contemporary people. Alchemical symbols transcended individual or culture-specific experience to become archetypal. Thus, the investigation of the symbolism and imagery of alchemy goes beyond temporal constraints to study processes of psychological transformation, the inner process of individuation, and the human unconscious in the present time.

As for the goals of alchemy, they have been described in various ways. Its function for Thomas Aquinas was to transmute imperfection into perfection (Taylor 99). Paracelsus thought that its goal was to heal the soul by bringing it into harmony with the body in order to "restore health by joining together 'nature and man'" (Henderson 17). For Edinger, the objective of alchemy is a search "for the supreme and ultimate value" (7). Other perspectives on alchemy's objectives include: the realization of the soul's light by transforming base substances into higher materials (gold, the philosopher's stone, the universal elixir of life), transfiguring matter into spirit, or converting the contents of the alchemist's psyche via his own projections into matter. These goals "may be seen as metaphors for psychological growth and development" (Samuels 12), while the philosopher's stone, or *lapis*, becomes a reflection of "the archetype of the Self" (Samuels 136).

### A. Alchemical Horse

St. Mawr both triggers Lou's process of psychological transformation and guides the process until the point at which Lou arrives in America, where she overcomes this projection. Henceforth, the sacred place of Las Chivas becomes the new indicator and guide of her development. From the outset, the text foreshadows this transmutation between horse and place when it establishes the analogy between St. Mawr and a crucial element of the New Mexico ranch—flowers: "The horse was really glorious: like a marigold" (53). Of course, the colors of marigolds are yellow, orange, and gold—the colors of the last two phases of the alchemical process in which the metamorphosis between the guiding entities, horse and place, occurs.[21]

Because the horse incorporates some of its key features, the alchemical procedure is the first thing that St. Mawr represents in the text. Like the most important figure in alchemy, Mercurius, who represents many contradictory characteristics simultaneously, St. Mawr possesses opposing attributes as well: he is identified with "liquid metals"—"red-gold liquid" (48)—with evil and goodness, power and sensitivity, threat and reassurance, danger and vulnerability, life and death, darkness and light, servant and master. Furthermore, he is presented as both above humans (a numinous image for Lou) and below humans (he does not need the kind of "consciousness" that Lou, as a human, misses in Texas).

Throughout the text the horse is connected with the key elements in alchemy: fire—"fuel of the alchemical work and the main agent of its continuous process of transmutation" (Hamilton, "Alchemical" 4)—and the heat that emanates from that fire and must be present during the four stages of the *opus*. To wit, *St. Mawr* speaks of the "invisible fire" (48) and the "vivid heat" (49) that came out of the horse, his "mysterious fire" that melts away Lou's past life and world (50), the "fire" of St. Mawr's vitality (61), and the "great burning life in him" (80).

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[21] The importance of flowers in *St. Mawr* cannot be underestimated. In fact, Dan Stiffler argues that it is the flowers found on both sides of the Atlantic that unify *St. Mawr* (87).

Another central element of the alchemical process, the colors characterizing the different phases of the *opus*—black, white, orange/yellow, and gold—are the colors that the text associates with St. Mawr, as the analysis of the stages of the *opus* will show. In addition to the association of St. Mawr with these colors, fire, and with Mercurius' contradictory characteristics, there is a clear link between the fundamental alchemical metaphor—*sol niger,* or "black sun"—and St. Mawr. The *sol niger* image implies the duality between light and darkness that St. Mawr embodies in the novel. Thus, the text speaks of St. Mawr's pupil as "a cloud within a *dark fire*" (61; my emphasis). This association with *sol niger* establishes the connection between St. Mawr as image and the Self since this essential archetype is, as we know, about totality and wholeness; it rules out a one-dimensional understanding of the psyche as defined merely by "light" with exclusion of the equally essential "darkness."

Finally, St. Mawr is associated with the *ouroboros*, the circular snake that Jung saw as the central mandala figure and "symbol for the integration and assimilation of the opposite, i.e. of the shadow" in alchemy (Jung, 14: para. 513). For Franz, the *ouroboros* represents "the symbol of the alchemical work as a circular, self-contained process" (41); "the snake which eats its own tail" is the guardian of a "world beyond our world" (60)—the world of possibilities that St. Mawr helps Lou to envision and pursue. The text links St. Mawr to circles and snakes at various points: his head is both "handsomely round" (48) and "snake like" (54), a strange head evoking "something of a snake" (55). Like the *ouroboros*, who vanishes and then is reborn, St. Mawr disappears as a horse and reappears in a different form (the New Mexico ranch) where the same essential opposites that characterize the horse re-appear to be united in Lou's *coniunctio opositorum*, or marriage of opposites, during the *rubedo* phase. Finally, shortly before Lou makes her decision to move forward, away from Rico, she finds a dead "'gold-and-yellow' snake" (97) that not only signals the death of her English life, but also foreshadows the great steps ahead: her move to America with St. Mawr, and her outgrowth of her projection on him before she faces the last, golden phase of the alchemical process.

## B. The Colors of the *Opus*

The features characterizing the realization of and transition between stages of the symbolic alchemical process do not always occur in a neat order in *St. Mawr*, as is to be expected from the protean nature of modern literature and from the uneven unfolding of any psychological process. In what follows, I will cover the four phases of the *opus—nigredo, albedo, citrinitas,* and *rubedo*.

### 1. Black: *Nigredo*

"In his big black eyes there was a lurking afterthought" (*St. Mawr* 48).

Following the pattern of the symbolic alchemical procedure, the *nigredo* phase of the subject's process of individuation begins with a reduction to *prima materia,* in which the psyche is metaphorically placed by fire in a situation conducive to transformation and renewal. Psychologically, the reduction to *prima materia* leads to a period in which opposing forces enter a situation of chaos and conflict with each other, and consciousness begins to be aware of those conflicts. This is a period when the subject experiences grief, pain (Hamilton, "Alchemical" 5), and a sense of personal deadness that entails the end of a materialist perspective, then becoming open to a life of the imagination and greater psychological depth (Marlan 83). It is in the *nigredo* that the "confrontation with the shadow" occurs (Samuels 14), and it is the phase in which the darkness of the *sol niger*, or "black sun," manifests itself first. Finally, the *nigredo* phase initiates the process of reconnecting with the inner feminine—*anima*—or inner masculine—*animus.*

In alchemy, change and transformation can only happen from a homogeneous, primordial, and chaotic matter that was believed to be the basis for the unity of nature—although the fact that such matter cannot be found in nature made Jung believe that it is a metaphor for transformation itself. In fact, for Aristotle, *prima materia* was a way to designate the "indeterminate power of change" (cited by Edinger 9). Psychologically, the reduction to *prima materia* by fire and the subsequent experiences

characteristic of the *nigredo* phase begin for Lou as soon as she approaches St. Mawr's dark fire: "a dark, invisible fire seemed to come out of him" (48). The horse's image has a dramatic effect on her:

[St. Mawr] 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*. (50; my emphasis).

The vision of St. Mawr, toward whose universe Lou will turn, brings about images of demolition, dissolution, and liquefaction of Lou's current way of being. The rock of her social persona has been cracked by the horse's fire. As if it were the metal of a literal alchemical process, her psychological world simply "melted away." Because she "never did cry," her tears are a testimony to the extraordinary experience she is undergoing: psychologically, she is entering the "great darkness" of the undifferentiated form. Her psyche is becoming *prima materia*.[22]

From the moment Lou meets St. Mawr she stops recognizing herself as part of her usual "reality," which becomes unreal and insubstantial (47): nothing is "clear nor feels clear" (60). She experiences a strong sense of displacement which results from the characteristic alchemical awareness of "tension" (61) between contrary forces that she has previously either ignored or repressed. During her transformation, and in addition to the tension between reality and unreality, Lou also becomes aware of the opposition between life and death, and good and evil. I shall discuss the tension between life and death first, and I will refer to the other pair later in this paper.

The contrast between life and death is exemplified by the schism in vitality between St. Mawr and Rico. Lou immediately experiences St. Mawr and his "fire" as the embodiment of life itself. She repeatedly feels the "vivid heat of his life…, [his] vivid, hot life!" (50), how "he burns with life" (80). Lou's projection on St. Mawr and his life transcend the level of the instinctual and, as we have seen, it entails an "*understanding*," "another sort of wisdom" (61) that makes St. Mawr such a powerful symbol of life, a life "which *never* is dead" (80-1; my emphasis). That is to say, he symbolizes a life that transcend the ephemeral existence of one person or even of St. Mawr himself, foreshadowing the symbolic metamorphosis of the horse into the New Mexico landscape. At the *nigredo* stage, however, the text contrasts the life force as embodied in St. Mawr with the death represented by the people in Lou's world, the chief representative of which is Rico. Lou feels that while St. Mawr and the "centaurs" Phoenix and Lewis represent life, Rico represents death and the ruin of everything alive because he is "afraid, always afraid of *realising*" (82; my emphasis). Lou knows that to avoid bringing to consciousness that which is unconscious in us denies wholeness and is tantamount to death.

During psychological *nigredo* the subject experiences grief and pain. For Robert Romanyshyn, the role of love in grief is paramount. As we know, when Lou meets St. Mawr, she falls in love with him (48, 54). This love for the horse is key to understanding her emotional response to loss as she laments the passing of a world where horses, and the virtues they represent, were dominant:

A great animal sadness came from him [St. Mawr] […], and made her feel as though she breathed grief. She breathed it into her breast, as if it were a great sigh down the ages that passed into her breast. And she felt a great woe: the woe of human unworthiness. The race of men judged in the

[22] Although Carter does not analyze Lou's journey using Jung's ideas on alchemy, her Jungian analysis of the guiding metaphors in Lawrence's text is convincing. Regarding this episode, she says that: "both the flood and the tears are signs that the waters of the unconscious are beginning to flow into and undermine the rigid structures of Lou's mind and world" (69).

consciousness of the animals they have subdued, and there found unworthy, ignoble. Ignoble men, unworthy of the animals they have subjugated, bred the woe in the spirit of their creatures. (103)

When Lou first falls in love with St. Mawr, her projection is unintentional—"passive" in Jung's words—since she projects unconscious aspects of herself onto him. Then, she begins to engage in what Jung calls "active" projection, or empathy, happens (Sharp 103), and it escalates taken to the point of identification with St. Mawr and the world that he symbolizes, a world where horses and humans are powerfully connected. In such a world, humans showed greatness and nobility. They were true citizens of the cosmos (Romanyshyn 25).

St. Mawr's animal wisdom leads him to feel sorrow at the state of humanity. His pain is a measure of human decadence and becomes a guide for Lou's understanding of the horse's world. She connects with St. Mawr through grief:

And the horse, is he to go on carrying man forward into this?—this gutter? […]. The horse is superannuated, for man. But alas, man is even more superannuated, for the horse. Dimly in a woman's muse, Lou realized this, as she breathed the horse's sadness, his accumulated vague woe from the generations of latter-day ignobility. And a grief and a sympathy flooded her, for the horse. She realised now how his sadness recoiled into these frenzies of obstinacy and malevolence. Underneath it all was grief, an unconscious, vague, pervading animal grief […]. The grief of the generous creature which sees all ends turning to the morass of ignoble living. She did not want to say any more to the horse: she did not want to look at him any more. The grief flooded her soul, that made her want to be alone. She knew now what it all amounted to. She knew that the horse, born to serve nobly, had waited in vain for some one noble to serve. His spirit knew that nobility had gone out of men. And this left him high and dry, in a sort of despair. As she walked away from him, towards the gate, slowly he began to walk after her. (104)

Modern humans reject the horse based on his lack of practical utility in an industrial era, but by doing so they also reject the noble spirit of the horse and, ultimately, they come to reject the best of themselves. In *St. Mawr*, one of the horse's most significant roles is to guide humans to return home: "the appeal animals have for us in our moments of sorrow is that they call us back to some earlier sense of home. In their presence, they seem to remind us that while we have lost our way, the rest of creation waits our return" (Romanyshyn 79). Listening to St. Mawr and his "animal grief" is a sort of homecoming for Lou. In a moment of recognition of the shared grief between Lou and St. Mawr, we witness one of those moments of interspecies connectedness in which an animal consciousness interacts with a human and the latter opens "to other vibrations of consciousness, other realities and the energies of other beings" (Romanyshyn 69). It is in these moments that animals and humans truly converge. These encounters with forces of nature through grief put humans in touch with their "wild" side in the sense that they cease to be constrained by the "rational" mind as they participate "in the consciousness of all creation" (Bentov 128). This is what Lou's experience of shared grief with St. Mawr means in the context of the *nigredo* experience: an opening of her previously closed mind and a reconnection with her "wild" side, with her shadow.

Much of the emphasis in the *nigredo* phase is on the shadow: "the *nigredo* of the process of individuation… is a subjectively experienced process brought about by the subject's painful, growing awareness of his shadow aspects" (Ashton 231). The development of a "persona"—of our social self—collides with our awareness of the shadow, of the "other" in us. The shadow is constituted by "hidden or unconscious aspects of oneself, both good and bad, which the ego has either repressed or never recognized" (Sharp 123-24); it has been seen as "the source of all evil," but for Jung, the shadow is also a source of "good qualities, such as normal instincts, appropriate reactions, realistic insights, creative impulses, etc." (9: par. 423). Because avoidance of the shadow avoidance is the rule within Lou and Rico's social circle, St. Mawr is Lou's main source of help in confronting her own shadow, whose incorporation makes it possible for Lou to integrate life-enhancing "repressed vitality" into her consciousness, as well as to arrive at greater self-knowledge.

In Lawrence's text, St. Mawr's darkness is the emblematic representation of the shadow. In many instances, *St. Mawr* establishes an association between the horse and the devil—the shadow: the "eyes of that horse looked at her with demonish question" (50); or "she saw demons upon demons in the chaos of his horrid eyes" (61). St. Mawr forces Lou to confront her shadow: "I'm so afraid of St. Mawr, you know" (72). The path to self-knowledge and life that St. Mawr reveals is not easy to absorb. Accepting the psyche in its *totality* is threatening because it also includes the very aspects that humans are used to rejecting in order to create a likeable persona. From the outset, Lou senses that St. Mawr "can be dangerous" (48), and the threat persists on in the text: "St. Mawr swaying with life, always too much life, *like a menace*." (95; my emphasis). However, Lou intuitively accepts from the beginning the guidance and authority of St. Mawr from the very beginning: "It haunted her, the horse […]. She felt it put a ban on her heart: wielded some uncanny authority over her, that she dared not, could not understand" (51). Furthermore, "he seemed to her like some living background, into which she wanted to retreat" (60). From the beginning, Lou decides to stay with the dark, which is an essential part of experiencing *nigredo.*

Part of facing the shadow is the "mortification experience" (Marlan 78). For Nigel Hamilton this entails "a complete letting go of the old sense of self that was identified unconsciously with the earth nature" (6). A critical part of alchemy, the metaphorical "death experience" is essential if psychological transformation is to happen. Confronting the shadow "produces at first a dead balance, a standstill that hampers moral decisions and makes convictions ineffective or even impossible. Everything becomes doubtful, which is why the alchemists called this stage *nigredo*, *tenebrositas*, chaos, melancholia" (Jung, 14: par. 708). Thus, Lou's engagement with darkness leads her to an evocative and crucial state: she feels "a curious deadness upon her, like the first touch of death. And through this cloud of numbness, or *deadness,* came all her muted experiences" (60; my emphasis). This "deadness" (81) leads to a return of the repressed, to questioning the "materialist" point of view, and to the doubts that Jung mentions about: "Now suddenly she doubted the whole show. She attributed to it the curious numbness that was overcoming her, as if she couldn't feel any more" (61).

Finally, Lou's projection on St. Mawr during the *nigredo* phase not only leads to finding "inner guidance" but also serves to put her in touch with her *animus* "leading to the first alchemical union" (Hamilton, "Alchemical" 5). *Animus* is the inner masculine in a woman, "the figure of man at work in a woman's psyche" (Samuels 23), and "the deposit, as it were, of all a woman's ancestral experiences of man" (Jung 7: par. 336). At the *nigredo* stage, St. Mawr becomes Lou's projection of the first stage of the *animus*, that is, the very embodiment of physical power and vitality (Sharp 24)—"the splendid body of the horse" (52). As we shall see later in the text, St. Mawr becomes the embodiment of higher stages of the *animus* for Lou.

## 2. White: *Albedo*

"Out of the everlasting dark, she had felt the eyes of that horse… containing a white blade of light" (*St. Mawr* 51)

If, in the context of the *sol niger* metaphor, the *nigredo* emphasized the darkness of light, *albedo* emphasizes the light of darkness. *Albedo* is the whitening stage, which Jung refers to as "the light of darkness itself […]. Therefore it turns blackness into brightness, burns away 'all superfluities'" (cited by Marlan 97). In Lou's *nigredo* stage, the emphasis was on the dark side of St. Mawr's archetypal image of the Self—"the devil was in him" (50). In the *albedo* phase, the horse is presented as an image of light—without abandoning its dark characteristics—channeling the process toward the ideal of completeness and totality inherent to the Self archetype. In fact, Lou sees St. Mawr as a numinous entity with his god-like attributes of light and darkness simultaneously: "What was it? Almost like a *god* looking at her terribly out of the everlasting dark […]. He was one splendid *demon*, and she must worship him" (51; my emphasis).

In alchemical *albedo* the superfluous is burned and purified through fire in the process called *calcinatio*, in which matter turns white. In this sense, St. Mawr's fire—"St. Mawr looming like a

bonfire in the dark" (65)—exposes Rico as superfluous: "Rico seemed to her the symbol of futility" (71). On an excursion to the Devil's Chair, Rico is shown as the anti-centaur who is never willing to meet St. Mawr "half way" (55), that is, to integrate one of the main unconscious aspects that St. Mawr represents—the shadow—into consciousness. In fact, Rico goes beyond bad horsemanship to brutally and unnaturally force the horse—as he always attempts to do when riding St. Mawr—to submit to his will. As Mrs. Witt says to the Vyners regarding the incident: "I saw with my own eyes my son-in-law pull that stallion over backwards, and hold him down with the reins as tight as he could hold them; pull St. Mawr's head backwards on the ground" (110). This episode advances Lou's self-awareness and she becomes more conscious and purposeful regarding Rico and "his fear, his impotence as a master, as a rider, his presumption" (99).[23] *Calcinatio* leads to "heightened spiritual awareness and purpose" (Hamilton, "Alchemical" 6). Lou comes to understands now: "Poor old Rico, going on like an amiable machine from day to day. It wasn't his fault. But his life was a rattling nullity and her life rattled in null correspondence" (114).

New clarity leads to "further purification of the psyche and a receptivity to our soul nature […]. Becoming conscious of our soul nature is the first real step in answering the question 'who am I?'" (Hamilton, "Alchemical" 6). As it usually happens in the *albedo* phase, after *calcinatio,* clarity leads to a higher perception of oneself that requires a degree of withdrawal from the world, and a recognition that the main forces are inward (Hamilton, "Alchemical" 6). Thus, Lou's "young-woman soul" (50) acknowledges the value of retreating to the desert while the "soul adheres to that which is life itself" (99). The darkness of grief is also purifying, and after flooding her soul, it "made her want to be alone" (104).

Part of recognizing one's soul, or spiritual nature, in the *albedo* phase is acknowledging, as Hamilton says, the fact that the soul was "incarnated free of worldly impressions" of the family, the environment, and society ("Alchemical" 6). To that end, Lou declares her independence from the major components of her world thus far, beginning with "the little house in Westminster, the portraits, the dinners, the friends, and the visits" (43). She is ready to give up Rico and begin breaking family ties: "she was prepared to sacrifice Rico" (55). She understands that her mother does not represent the path toward light: "I want the wonder back again, or I shall die. *I don't want to be like you*," she tells Mrs. Witt (82; my emphasis).

Her new psychic state leads her to abandon relationships and status: "She could not bear the triviality and superficiality of her human relationships […]. And she felt that it [the "questioning eyes" of St. Mawr] forbade her to be her ordinary, commonplace self. It forbade her to be just Rico's wife, young Lady Carrington, and all that" (51). Lou begins to see "what is important and what is not," or *sublimatio* (Hamilton, "Alchemical" 6), and she decides to give up wordly ties: "I shall just make a break, like St. Mawr, if I don't get out. I simply can't stand people" (138). In fact, she is already gone in spirit from the place: "She felt, strangely, as if already her soul had gone away from her actual surroundings. She was there, in Oxfordshire, in the body, but her spirit had departed elsewhere" (139). Her decisions to save St. Mawr from being gelded and to go to America with him represent the saving of her own soul's integrity, and they ensure a steady progress in her process of transformation. Lou's progress also illustrates how the power of St. Mawr as an *animus* figure transcends the role of being an "embodiment of physical power" and moves to another *animus* stage, a figure inspiring "initiative," "the capacity for planned action," and "independence" (Sharp 24).

[23] Rico's falls from St. Mawr can be seen as part of an age-old tradition in which a fall from a horse indicates "pride" (Kolve 240). In this sense, St. Mawr's breaks would expose Rico's pride and presumption, and also the pride of modern society, which, as Lou says, deems the horse and what he represents as superannuated. In this sense, St. Mawr connects with the myth of Pegasus. When his rider, Bellerophon, full of pride thought proudly that "he could take his place with the immortals," and attempted to make Pegasus to take him to Olympos, "the horse was wiser […], and he threw his rider" (Hamilton, *Mythology* 137).

After *nigredo*, Lou experiences purification, awareness of her spiritual nature, and a degree of withdrawal from the world leading to greater consciousness: "the soul at last becoming conscious of itself" (Hamilton, "Alchemical" 6). Lou comes to project awareness and purpose. She looks "so much younger and so many thousands of years older than her mother" (77).

## 3. Orange: *Citrinitas*

"Such a marvelous colour! Almost orange!" (*St. Mawr* 52)

In *Citrinitas*, a strong light and fire makes orange and/or yellow the dominant colors. Psychologically, this is a spiritual, disembodied phase of the process, where a "key knowledge comes to the subject" (Hamilton, "Alchemical" 7). The key knowledge that Lou reaches at this stage of her process of individuation has to do with the relationship between reality and evil, and the meaning of the latter. In this phase, Lou articulates her understanding of possessing a "real mind," and the difference between negative and positive evil. There is "vulgar evil" (101), destructive evil, or a refusal to confront the shadow. Lou becomes aware of "evil, evil, evil, rolling in great waves over the earth. Always she had thought there was no such thing—only a mere negation of good. Now, like an ocean to whose surface she had risen, she saw the dark-grey waves of evil rearing in great tide" (98). This kind of evil is opposed to the evil that St. Mawr embodies, a "positive evil," the creative evil that is identified with the shadow—which for Jung, as we know, is also a source of positive qualities, insights, and creativity. Lou articulates how this knowledge has come to her:

But some strange thing had happened, and the vast, mysterious force of *positive evil* was let loose […]. It had come to her in *a vision*, when she saw the pale gold belly of the stallion upturned, the hoofs working wildly, the wicked curved hams of the horse, and then the evil straining of that arched, fish-like neck, with the dilated eyes of the head. Thrown backwards, and working its hoofs in the air. *Reversed*, and purely evil. (98; my emphasis).

Positive evil is the darkness of the dark sun—the *reversed* side of the sun, the shadow of our psyche—a metaphor that remains in force during *citrinitas* as the Self guides the psyche towards totality and wholeness in the alchemical process. It cannot be separated from light, in the same way that St. Mawr, a symbol and image of the Self, is both god and demon in Lou's projection. Staying with the positive evil of the shadow, whose source for Lou is St. Mawr, leads to transformation and psychic integration. On the other hand, staying in the world of *persona* without confronting the shadow constitutes true evil because it undermines "everything real" (99). Thus, Rico and his social circle are shown as "glib," people whose only concern is having "a good time," sticking "to the rules of the game," and not doing "anything that would make a commotion," while constantly showing that "there is nothing to believe in, so let us undermine everything" (99). Lou sees mankind caught up in an ocean of this kind of evil: "they had fallen under the spell of evil […]. And they were all out on the ocean, being borne along in the current of the mysterious evil, creatures of the evil principle" (98). Then, she sees "people performing outward acts of loyalty, piety, self-sacrifice. But inwardly bent on undermining, betraying. Directing all their subtle evil will against any positive living thing. Masquerading as the ideal, in order to poison the real" (99).[24] Lou is becoming conscious of an essential knowledge that leads her to her own transvaluation of values: what seems good is evil; what seems evil to most people in her world (St. Mawr)—i.e., "that horse is cruel, cruel, evil" (108)—is good because it is truly vital and does *not* "undermine the natural creation" (100), but symbolizes it.[25]

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[24] Frank Kermode, like the rest of the critics that discuss the theme of evil in *St. Mawr*, does not differentiate between the two kinds of evil that are clearly articulated by Lou (112).

[25] Lou's transvaluation of values is rooted in words by Lawrence himself in texts such as "Study of Thomas Hardy": "The vast, unexplored morality of life itself, what we call immorality of nature, surrounds us in its incomprehensibility, and in the midst goes the little human morality play, with its queer frame of morality" (Cited by Innis 17).

Thus, Lou redefines the notion of evil and articulates a course of action to resist it: "the individual can but depart from the mass, and try to cleanse himself" (99). As she fights "to preserve that which is life in him from the ghastly kisses and poison-bites of the myriad evil ones" (99), Lou is reaching the core of her own transformation. She is arriving at this inner knowledge, as usually happens in *citrinitas,* not "by study, reflection or deep thought," but by "direct revelation" (Hamilton, "Alchemical" 7). In fact, as we know, she states her mistrust for what is conventionally understood as "mind," rejecting intellectual cleverness: "one gets so tired of […] mind, as you [Mrs. Witt] call it" (79); she "would hate St. Mawr to be spoilt by such a mind" (79). But she also rejects primitivism: "I don't admire the cave man, and that sort of thing" (80-81). She wants the mystery of nature to be in both animals and humans: "He [St. Mawr] seems a 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" (80). Finally, she redefines real mind when she asks Mrs. Witt: "But what *is* real mind?" and her answer is that to begin with, a good mind is "a good intuitive mind […]. To know things without thinking them" (80; my emphasis)—and that mind is what has led her in *citrinitas* to her inner knowledge regarding the need for "real" good and "positive evil."

Finally, during *citrinitas,* the subject experiences a strong sense of the oneness of creation, of the "complete dying of the dualistic state of mind that perceives subject and object as separate" (Hamilton, "Alchemical" 7). Implicitly and in a less conscious way, Lou started to experience this rejection of dualism when she felt extremely connected with St. Mawr through grief during the *nigredo* phase. During this later stage, she articulates her rejection of dualism by recognizing that the source of life is the same for animals and for humans, and that humans must "get our lives straight from the source, as the animals do" (81).

## 4. Red: *Rubedo*

"And she was startled to feel the vivid heat of his life come through to her, through the lacquer of red-gold gloss" (*St. Mawr* 50)

In *rubedo*, body and soul come together. After the more spiritual *citrinitas*, re-incarnation at a higher level—as a new integration of body and soul—becomes the central objective and is an indication of a higher stage of consciousness. The need to be embodied is what indicates that a higher level of spiritual completeness—and psychological individuation—has been reached. As Hamilton says, at this stage, the psyche needs to be "materially spiritualized" ("Alchemical" 8). In Franz's words: "Even after the greatest process of spiritualization, there is always something which resists and wants the earth" (132). The transcendent Self that expresses the conscious and unconscious workings of the psyche is experienced as a mysterious conjunction of opposites, as a *mysterium coniunctionis*—or *coniunctio oppositorum*. The *coniunctio* experienced by Lou brings her integration of both conscious and unconscious and of body and soul. The classical version of the latter pair is the *hierosgamos*, or sacred marriage of the opposites, where matter becomes spiritualized, and the spirit becomes concrete (Samuels 14, Franz 258-59). This alchemical marriage leads to enlightenment: the understanding of our oneness with the earth, and an awareness that constitutes the culmination of the *opus*: the philosopher's stone, or *lapis*, Self-realization in the process of individuation.

During *rubedo*, a place densely populated by symbols of the Self takes up the role of St. Mawr in Lou's process of transformation. The heat in the *rubedo* phase is even hotter than in the previous phases, and its clearest manifestation, in accord with the substitution of the New Mexico landscape for St. Mawr, is the image of "the horses […] struck by lightning" (163) that we read about when Las Chivas is being introduced. Before Lou arrives at the ranch, the Texan environment proves beneficial for St. Mawr. He is pleased by the Texan cowboy's "rough handling" (151), and he recovers his lost sexual instinct. For Lou, however, the Texas experience is not wholesome. While she recognizes that visually the place is "wildly vital" (150), she cannot identify with the lack of "substance of reality […]. No deeper *consciousness* at all" (150; my emphasis). This vital environment, devoid of "consciousness," works for St. Mawr, who can now be a horse, but Lou overcomes her projection

onto St. Mawr—"the illusion of the beautiful St. Mawr was gone" (157)—as he ceases to stimulate the archetypal power that he did during the previous three stages of the process. However, it is at this point that the text makes possible the metamorphosis between St. Mawr and Las Chivas, and the sacred place acquires the properties that have characterized the horse: mystery, paradoxes, and numinosity. [26]

In *rubedo*, the subject tries to live a life more in accordance with his/her true nature (Hamilton, "Alchemical" 8). Lou, who has become much more aware of her need for "deeper consciousness" while guided by the Self archetype—and consequently is "caught up in big ideas and visions" (Stein 100)—formulates her goals clearly: first, "she wanted to escape from the friction which is the whole stimulus in modern social life. She wanted *to be still*: only that, to be very, very still, and *recover her own soul*" (157; my emphasis); second: "I want to learn. I am out to know" (173). Becoming more deeply conscious of unconscious energies and of the marriage of body and soul leads her to face the recovery of her soul through knowledge and awareness. From the moment she sees the New Mexico landscape, her own *coniunctio* is to be intimately connected to *place*.

## a. Sacred Place and Narrative Language

Lou declares the place whose name is clearly reminiscent of Pan—the Greek god with the horns, hindquarters, and legs of a goat—Las Chivas (The Goats) "sacred to her" (160). She can feel the intense heat of *rubedo* there: "the hidden fire was alive and burning in the sky […] [as] she felt a certain latent holiness […]. 'For me,' she said […]. '*For me, this place is sacred. It is blessed*'" (159-60; my emphasis). Lou feels the ecstasy experience that Marghanita Laski articulates regarding sacred places: "a personal experience of great intensity which involves an inward turning stimulated by contact with some environmental condition which seems to trigger the onset of transcendence" (cited by Swan 86). Thus, as was the case with St. Mawr, Lou immediately wants the ranch to be hers: "it was the place Lou wanted. In an instant, her heart sprang to it…. '*This is the place*,' she said to herself" (160). Las Chivas possesses the features of a sacred place according to Mircea Eliade:

(a) A sacred place constitutes a break in the homogeneity of space; (b) this break is symbolized by an opening by which passage from one cosmic region to another is made possible (from heaven to earth and vice versa; from earth to the underworld); (c) communication with heaven is expressed by one or another of certain images, all of which refer to the *axis mundi*: pillar […], ladder […], mountain, tree, vine, etc.; (d) around this cosmic axis lies the world (=our world), hence the axis is located "in the middle," at the "navel of the earth"; it is the "Center of the World" (37).

The mountains circling the *axis mundi*, the sacred place, are "peering in *from another world altogether*" (165; my emphasis). They connect "earth with heaven," as Eliade suggests (37). Las Chivas also contains the "opening" between worlds: a passage through 'far-off rocks, thirty miles away, where the canyon made a *gateway between the mountains*" (165; my emphasis). The communication with heaven is established by several of the images mentioned by Eliade. Namely, the pillar and column: "the dust whirled in tall *columns*, traveling across the desert far away, like *pillars* of cloud by day, tall, leaning *pillars* of dust hastening with ghostly haste" (166; my emphasis); or the

[26] Regarding the disappearance of St. Mawr, Wilde summarizes most positions on the subject. For him, St. Mawr represented the "source" of life in England, but he becomes unnecessary in America because Lou is now "prepared to confront the source herself" (167). He also explains that St. Mawr ceases playing a role in the text because he becomes "too negative a symbol" (168). Although it is true that Lou is ready to confront the source herself, Wilde does not take into consideration that St. Mawr, as I argue in my essay, *is* that source as well; he is part of the very essence of what Las Chivas represents, and one of the reasons for this is precisely that he symbolizes the shadow, an aspect of "negativity"—the "positive evil" that I have already discussed—that is part of the Las Chivas landscape. Widmer (22) and McDowell (96) see the continuity between horse and landscape from a perspective that is not related to my alchemical interpretation of the text.

column and the tree: "The *pine-tree* was the guardian of the place […]. A non-phallic *column*, rising in the shadows of the pre-sexual world, before the hot blooded ithyphallic *column* ever erected itself […]. Past the *column* of that pine-tree, the alfalfa field sloped gently down, to the circling guard of *pine-trees* […]. Strange those *pine-trees*!" (164; my emphasis); and, the mountain and the tree: "The motor-car climbed up, past the *pine-trees,* to the foot of the *mountains*, and came at last to a wire gate, were nothing was to be expected" (160; my emphasis). Within the ranch, there is a *sancta sanctorum* protected by the mandala symbol of the *circle of pines*: "The *circle* of pines, with the loose trees rising high and ragged at intervals, this was the barrier, the fence to the foreground. Beyond was only distance, the desert a thousand feet below, and beyond" (165; my emphasis).[27] Thus, Las Chivas is presented as the "navel of the world," the "cosmic axis," or center around which is the less-sacred, less-blessed world—"our world," the modern world of action that Lou rejects. In addition to these characteristics, the sacredness of Las Chivas also results from the overwhelming presence of symbols of the guiding Self archetype. These round symbols of wholeness signifying the unification of body and soul are mandala symbols (Stein 161): "the *round* hills" (163), "the *ring* of pine tress standing so still" (163), "the *round* concrete basin" (164), "the *circling* guard of pine-trees" (164), or "the great *circling* landscape" (166).

The sacred space is also marked by a clear change in the kind of narrative language that contrasts Lou's stage of psychic development with that of other people who faced the landscape with a very different psychological disposition. In the three previous phases of the *opus*, temporal language was dominant. This kind of language stresses the importance of actions and events in which decisions are made by characters about their fates and activities. In temporal narratives, humans are in control. In *rubedo* the prevailing narrative is spatial. In spatial narratives, place acquires great importance, challenging the trepidations of "modern social life" (Kort 10), which agrees with Lou's desire "to escape from the friction [of] […] modern social life" (157). These narratives show "environments that become distinguishable from human control" (14), milieus that are a major character in themselves. In *St. Mawr,* the land clearly becomes independent from the people that inhabit it prior to Lou's arrival. This is what we see in the relationship between Las Chivas and the settlers that attempt to "tame" and "humanize" it. Lawrence's text establishes a contrast between Lou and the last of those settlers, the New England wife of a trader. Her experience at Las Chivas shows that "people cannot conquer a new land until they have made peace with its spirits" (Jung cited by Swan 75). The New England woman never makes peace with the spirits of Las Chivas—the dark and the luminous, the intelligible and the unintelligible—because she has never made peace with her own dark side, the less comprehensible part of her psyche. The unintelligibility of phenomena in sacred places is due to the dissolution of the laws of the empirical and temporal world that characterizes them (Swan 33). Thus, to the understandable obstacles found by settlers—lack of water, mountain lions, coyotes, insects, poison weeds, and even the sheer cost of transforming nature—Las Chivas becomes an "antagonist," adding other phenomena that bring together the menace and danger of the sacred place and the corresponding narrative approach.[28] These phenomena are:

Always, some *mysterious* malevolence fighting, fighting against the will of man. A *strange* invisible influence coming out of the livid rock-fastnesses in the bowels of those uncreated Rocky Mountains, praying upon the will of man, and slowly wearing down his resistance, his onward-pushing spirit. The curious, subtle thing, like a mountain fever, got into the blood, so that the men at the ranch, and the animals with them, had bursts of queer, violent, half-frenzied energy, in which,

[27] The tree is a powerful symbol in the characterization of the sacred place. The tree in Jung "symbolizes a living process as well as a process of enlightenment," it also signifies "the creative unfolding of the soul" (Marlan 135).

[28] In many spatial narratives, place becomes the antagonist of characters, in the same way that Las Chivas becomes the antagonist of the New England woman: "when place takes on characteristics of an antagonist, characters find themselves attacked not by other human beings but by pervasive, indefinable, and malignant spatial conditions, and they are not likely to know how to contend with them" (Kort 17).

however, they were wont to lose their wariness. And then, damage of some sort […]. A *curious* disintegration working all the time, a sort of *malevolent breath*, like a stupefying, irritating gas, coming out of the *unfathomed* mountains. The pack-rats with their bushy tails and big ears, came down out of the hills, and were jumping and bouncing about: symbols of the *curious* debasing malevolence that was in the *spirit of the place*. (163; my emphasis)

In this clash between *genus loci*, or the spirit of the place, and the civilizing efforts of the human will, the human "onward-pushing spirit" of achievement and modernity faces "mysterious," "strange," and "curious" forces that defy the laws of the empirical world. A Dionysian force manifests itself in the "bursts of queer, violent, half-frenzied energy" that constantly undermines the attempt to tame nature. This "frenzied energy, that took away one's intelligence as alcohol or any other stimulus does" (164) is part of the "disintegration" process that opposes the shaping of the land in a civilized way. The spirit and materiality of nature fights back to impose its own will on a human will attacked by "pervasive, indefinable, and malignant conditions, and they [people] are not likely to know how to contend with them" (Kort 7).

Once the text has established the mysterious nature of occurrences at Las Chivas, it moves on to show the other two features that make the metamorphosis between St. Mawr and the sacred place complete. Like mystery, paradox and numinosity are the key features of the Self (Marlan 168), sacred places possess a spiritual power that includes both light and darkness. This means that they also possess—like St. Mawr—numinosity and a paradoxical quality: they inspire awe, at once fear and wonder (Otto 8-11). These traits of the Self are illustrated in the experience of the New England woman. She is in awe as she contemplates the perfection of nature's beauty:

Ah, that was beauty!—perhaps the most beautiful thing in the world. It was pure beauty, *absolute* beauty […]. It was beauty, beauty absolute, at any hour of the day […]. It was beautiful, *always*! It was always great, and splendid, and, for some reason, natural. It was never grandiose and theatrical. Always, for some reason, perfect. And quite simple, in spite of it all. (165-66)

But this is beauty seen at a *distance* (166), a disintegrated view. Nearness, however, is inescapable: "she finds herself juxtaposed to the near things, the thing in itself. And willy-nilly she is caught up into the fight with the immediate object. The New England woman had fought to make the nearness as perfect as the distance: for the distance was absolute beauty" (167). She brought water to the ranch and "into her wash-basin"—"*There*! she said. I have tamed the waters of the mountain to my service" (167), but the wilderness of the land attacks her will and consciousness: "the invisible attack was being made upon her. While she reveled in the beauty of the luminous world that wheeled around and below her, the grey, rat-like spirit of the inner mountains was attacking from behind. She could not keep her attention" (167). The *genus loci* assaults her will, as the place's fire strikes animals and trees (167), and she begins to recognize the numinosity of the place—its god-like and demon-like qualities, its characteristic light and darkness:

> "*There is no Almighty loving God. The God there is shaggy as the pine-trees, and horrible as the lightning…. What nonsense about Jesus and a God of Love, in a place like this! This is more awful and more splendid*" (168; emphasis Lawrence).

It is, however, too late for her. She cannot bear the reality of the "natural god," of "a world before and after the God of Love" (169), and her "illusion […] of love, universal love" was destroyed: "There was no love on this ranch. There was life, intense, bristling life, full of energy, but also, with an undertone of savage sordidness" (168) that she was incapable of making her own. She is overwhelmed and unprepared for the energy of the land and its spirit: "the cruel electricity of the mountains. And then, most mysterious but worst of all the animosity of the spirit of place" (170). The mystery (unintelligibility) of the place and its paradoxical, numinous nature—luminous and sordid, awful and splendid—defeat the woman, who is unable to absorb the dark side of the place's spirit and incorporate it to herself—unlike Lou, who was ready to grapple with the equivalent frightening darkness in St. Mawr during the *nigredo* phase. Thus, the New England woman's one-sided belief in

light "and herself with it, was a corpse" (170)—just as Rico becomes a vanished corpse after his latest (and always unsuccessful) attempt to impose his will on St. Mawr's wild nature. [29]

### b. *Coniunctio Oppositorum*: Consciousness and the Unconscious, Body and Spirit

While the New England woman is defeated by the *genus loci*, Lou embraces the primordial, fierce, and full spirit of the place by recognizing the sacredness of the land. This is an intuitive recognition—that is, true knowledge, according to Lou, as we know—of the qualities that define Las Chivas, like they defined St. Mawr. Opening up herself to the mysterious, dark forces present in the Las Chivas landscape shows the "spiritual consciousness" (Swan 81) of an individuated ego in its relationship with the unconscious. Earlier in the text, there is a discussion of the meaning of Pan. A character in the novel, Cartwright, says: "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," and that is not only the light of "daytime," but what is "within the thin," its "darkness" (85). Lou immediately identifies Pan with St. Mawr: "Do you think I might see Pan in a horse, for example?" And Cartwright's answer is: "Easily. In St. Mawr!" (85). Pan in *St. Mawr* means seeing in *full*, and it is, first of all, a metaphor for the incorporation of the unconscious into consciousness, and for the integration of darkness and light—the great tasks that Lou accomplishes to a great degree, and the one that Rico and the New England woman are unable to confront. Lou's alchemical journey has led her to develop the ability to see and integrate all: good and evil, conscious and unconscious, and, as we are about to see, spirit and body. For Eric Neumann, Pan is, in a modern sense, the prototype of the "Christian Devil," the "custodian of the secrets of nature"; after Faust, he "is not refused but accepted" in Western culture (116). The modern human accepts evil, and in doing so s/he "accepts the world and himself in the dangerous double nature which belongs to them both" as an "affirmation of our human totality, which embraces the *unconscious as well as the conscious mind, and whose center* […] [is] *the Self*" (117; my emphasis).

As we know, the Self gives cohesiveness to our whole being—body and soul—"in a symphony of mutual interdependence" that involves "the totality of the organism" (Neumann 117). At the *rubedo* stage, *coniunctio* as *hierosgamos,* or the sacred marriage between body and spirit, occurs as part of the process of individuation. Neumann emphasizes that the Self requires the participation of the body. There cannot be *coniunctio* without the body: "all psychic processes have […] their physical correlates" (Neumann 118). At this stage of individuation, the body is spiritualized as the spirit is materialized. The instinctual part of ourselves alone has been left behind. After her psychological trajectory and her recognition of the sacred earth, Lou declares that: "mere sex, is repellant to me" (158). As opposed to the spiritual *citrinitas, rubedo* is a physical stage as well, and it is not surprising that the sacred place is an expression of the senses and sexuality, as the case of the New England woman illustrates:

> The breath of the curious, frenzied energy, that took away one's intelligence as alcohol or any other stimulus does […]. The woman loved her ranch, almost with *passion*. It was she who felt the stimulus, more than the men. It seemed to enter her like a *sort of sex*, intensifying her ego, making her full of violence and of blind female energy. The energy, and the blindness of it! A strange and blind frenzy, like an *intoxication* while it lasted. (164; my emphasis)

While the spiritual and physical power of the land's mysterious energy crushes the New England woman, Lou feels herself embraced by and identifies with its great power:

> 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 to do with wild America.

[29] As opposed to the New England woman, Lou is ready for Las Chivas after her journey. While Wasserman sees no reason to believe that she will be successful in New Mexico (121), Wilde thinks rightly that Lou "enters into her inheritance in a more mature and more Lawrentian spirit" (169).

And it's something to do with me. It's a mission, if you like…. But 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. (175)

The spirit of the physical land mirrors the human psyche. It is not a "tamed" spirit, but a wild one, a spirit of light and darkness that affirms body and soul. It is, *mutatis mutandis*, the same spirit—wild and numinous—that makes Lou feel so close to St. Mawr at the *nigredo* stage. But to embrace the spirit of the earth is in fact to embrace the body. Neumann draws attention to the fact that inclusion of unconscious, spiritual earth forces:

> always entails inclusion of the body at the same time. When we speak of the earth, then this *'earth' is symbolically identical with the body*—just as flight from the earth is always at the same time flight from the body. But the totality of the body, in its unitariness and centeredness, works unconsciously as a natural phenomenon in everything organic. (118; my emphasis)

Thus, as Lou embraces the earth and its spirit, her spirituality becomes embodied and vice versa, making *coniunctio* as *hierosgamos* possible. She reaches this point by both evaluating her situation with respect to Phoenix—who remains in the realm of the instinctual end of the psychic spectrum—and by her openness to the spiritualization of the body.[30] When she tells Mrs. Witt that: "sex would matter, to my very soul, if it was really sacred" (174), Lou is sharpening her *animus* profile further. Clearly, Lou is expressing the most "positive encounter with […] [her] inner *animus*" (Hamilton, "Alchemical" 5), and she recognizes that "love can't really come into me from the outside" (159). The "marriage with the earth nature" (Hamilton, "Alchemical" 5) results from both Lou's recognition of the sacredness of the place and from the spirit of the land that has been waiting for her: "a wild spirit wants me […]. It needs me […]. It craves for me. And to it, my sex is deep and sacred, deeper than I am, with a deep nature aware deep down of my sex" (175). Through God needing "our poor heart… in order to be real" (Franz 155), earth and spirit—like consciousness and the unconscious—come together in *rubedo*. C*oniuctio opositorum* is possible through a process of individuation guided by and toward the Self archetype.

## Conclusion: The Alchemical *Opus* as Masterpiece

From one of the first alchemical texts, the *Emerald Tablet* of ancient Egypt, to Carl Jung, the "great art of alchemy" has been about transformation. *St. Mawr* displays multiple transformations. First of all, there is the psychological transformation of Lou Witt that leads the character in her process of individuation. In this process, the archetypal power manifested in the image of St. Mawr is re-embodied in Las Chivas. In this metamorphosis, horse and earth—nature—share their essential characteristics: paradox, mystery, and numinosity. Also, the narrative language of the text organically transforms itself according to the stage of the *opus* that Lou is experiencing. In *nigredo, albedo,* and *citrinitas*, humans are more in control of events, and a temporal narrative language is dominant. In *rubedo,* when the land controls the fate of the humans who search to dominate it, a spatial narrative is prevalent. Finally, as Lou reaches *coniunctio oppositorum,* consciousness and the unconscious, body and spirit, and temporal and spatial narrative meet in *hierosgamos,* and a balance is restored, even if *St. Mawr*, fittingly, ends without covering Lou's actual life in Las Chivas. The text ends with a touch of Kierkegaardian irony as Mrs. Witt points out how a dry land that has cost so little can yield so much for Lou. Indeed, Las Chivas represents the culmination of a process in which Lou has found the horse within and is now on her way to a life of plenitude.

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[30] In this sense, Jerry Wasserman's interpretation would be very different from mine. For Wasserman, Lou "rejects sexuality" (114), and that is her "final decision" (119). For Wilde (168) and McDowell (95), however, the possibility of sex remains open. In my own reading, given what St. Mawr and Lou share from the very beginning—being victims of a certain society, and celibacy—the disappearance of St. Mawr from her life, and the return of his stud powers foreshadow not only Lou's openness to sexuality but the likelihood of sexual fulfillment for her. In fact, this disappearance and foreshadowing also explains why St. Mawr must stay in Texas and Lou must go elsewhere.

In *St. Mawr,* as in an entire group of works that spans cultures and eras, the presence of a horse at the center of a work of art has made balance and completeness possible. Lawrence's intentions are clear: he titled his novel "*St. Mawr*"— even if such a title has puzzled critics who, suddenly, found themselves deprived of the physical St. Mawr.[31] But Lawrence knew better: he understood that through narrative art and its power of transformation and the "specific mysterium" that the horse represents (Hannah 4), important aspects of the human soul and mind could be reached and revealed. Thus, by a merging of art and the law of nature—which the horse symbolizes so elegantly—we can transform ourselves and develop our own laws as individual human beings.

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[31] Alan Wilde exemplifies this position about *St. Mawr*: "It is a matter for regret that Lawrence gave his novel the title he did" (164).

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