

D. H. Lawrence

Edited by
R. P. Draper

The Critical Heritage



D. H. LAWRENCE: THE CRITICAL HERITAGE

THE CRITICAL HERITAGE SERIES

General Editor: B. C. Southam

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D. H. LAWRENCE

THE CRITICAL HERITAGE

Edited by

R. P. DRAPER



London and New York

General Editor's Preface

The reception given to a writer by his contemporaries and near-contemporaries is evidence of considerable value to the student of literature. On one side we learn a great deal about the state of criticism at large and in particular about the development of critical attitudes towards a single writer; at the same time, through private comments in letters, journals or marginalia, we gain an insight upon the tastes and literary thought of individual readers of the period. Evidence of this kind helps us to understand the writer's historical situation, the nature of his immediate reading-public, and his response to these pressures.

The separate volumes in the *Critical Heritage Series* present a record of this early criticism. Clearly for many of the highly-productive and lengthily-reviewed nineteenth- and twentieth-century writers, there exists an enormous body of material; and in these cases the volume editors have made a selection of the most important views, significant for their intrinsic critical worth or for their representative quality—perhaps even registering incomprehension!

For earlier writers, notably pre-eighteenth century, the materials are much scarcer and the historical period has been extended, sometimes far beyond the writer's lifetime, in order to show the inception and growth of critical views which were initially slow to appear.

In each volume the documents are headed by an Introduction, discussing the material assembled and relating the early stages of the author's reception to what we have come to identify as the critical tradition. The volumes will make available much material which would otherwise be difficult of access and it is hoped that the modern reader will be thereby helped towards an informed understanding of the ways in which literature has been read and judged.

B.C.S.

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collecting not only the extracts here reprinted, but also the much larger number that had to be studied before this selection could be made; and I should like to thank the University of Leicester for a research grant which enabled me to make visits to many other libraries.

NOTE ON THE TEXT

The materials printed in this volume follow the original texts in all important respects. Lengthy extracts from the novels and poems of D. H. Lawrence have been omitted whenever they are quoted merely to illustrate the work in question. These omissions are clearly indicated in the text. Typographical errors in the originals have been silently corrected and the form of reference to titles has been regularized.

ABBREVIATIONS

- Bk* *Bookman*
Cr *Criterion*
CP *The Complete Poems of D. H. Lawrence*, ed. V. de S. Pinto and Warren Roberts. Heinemann, London, 1964. Two vols.
In *Independent* (New York)
L *The Collected Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, ed. Harry T. Moore. Heinemann, London, 1962. Two vols.
LM *London Mercury*
MG *Manchester Guardian*
N *Nation* (London)
NNY *Nation* (New York)
N&A *Nation and Athenaeum*
Nehls *D. H. Lawrence: A Composite Biography*, ed. Edward Nehls. University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1957-9. Three vols.
NYTBR *New York Times Book Review*
NR *New Republic*
NS *New Statesman*
Ph *Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D. H. Lawrence*, ed. Edward D. McDonald. Heinemann, London, 1936—reprint of 1961
Ph II *Phoenix II*, ed. Warren Roberts and Harry T. Moore. Heinemann, London, 1968
SR *Saturday Review*
ST *Sunday Times*
T *Times* (London)
TLS *T.L.S. (Times Literary Supplement)*
WR *A Bibliography of D. H. Lawrence*, by Warren Roberts. Rupert Hart-Davis, London, 1963.

Introduction

D. H. Lawrence attracted an enormous amount of commentary during his life, of which this selection is a comparatively small part. After the suppression of *The Rainbow* in 1915 he rapidly acquired a certain notoriety to which he responded by being defiant and often contemptuous of his critics. Before then he had been more sensitive to reviews and more willing to modify his work, though he seems always to have had an intense conviction of the importance of his art and a consequent unwillingness to be deflected from his purposes even by such friendly advice as he received from Edward Garnett—and most of his critics were much less friendly. Towards the end of his life he ran into further notoriety through *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and *Pansies*, his paintings met with outright hostility, and at his death the obituarists wrote about him with an animosity rarely displayed on such occasions.

In spite of the heat thus generated some interesting and perceptive criticism was produced; few of his books were actually ignored. And although he was not a favourite among literary circles—after his initial discovery by Ford Madox Ford—most prominent critics commented on some or other of his works. In the present selection I have tried to represent this variety, and to indicate how Lawrence reacted to the critics. Several passages, of limited critical value, have been chosen for their contemporary significance. An author's relationship with his public is in itself a legitimate subject of interest, and I hope this book will do something to satisfy that interest; but I also hope that it will make available some intrinsically useful criticism that would otherwise lie neglected in the dusty files of old newspapers.

The early work

Lawrence's very first publication was *A Prelude*, entered for the *Nottinghamshire Guardian* Christmas competition, 1907, under the name 'Rosalind'. The story won first prize, and two other pieces that Lawrence submitted were also given honourable mention. The judges' comments on these entries were conventional, but encouraging. *A Prelude* had a simple theme 'handled with a freshness and simplicity

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altogether charming'; and one of the other stories, *Legend*, was praised for its 'vivid realism'.¹

For the winning entry Lawrence had used the address of his early sweetheart, Jessie Chambers (the Miriam of *Sons and Lovers*), and it was she who helped him to his first appearance in print under his own name by sending some of his poems to the *English Review*. These attracted the attention of the editor, Ford Madox Hueffer, who prided himself on his ability to spot new talent. Hueffer, better known under the name which he later adopted of Ford Madox Ford, became a considerable novelist himself. Four of Lawrence's poems were printed in the November 1909 issue of the *English Review*, where they were noticed by Henry Yoxall, editor of *The Schoolmaster*, who wrote some favourable comments on them in his 'Books and Pictures' column (No. 1). Ford claims that Jessie also sent him *Odour of Chrysanthemums*, but he is not the most reliable of memoirists, and the account he gives in *Portraits from Life* of reading the first paragraph and immediately recognizing its genius may well be a heightened version of the truth. His analysis is nonetheless brilliant, and touches on those things that would be likely to arouse the interest of a professionally minded editor (see Nehls, i, 107-9).

Another reason for Ford's interest was that he saw in Lawrence a spokesman for the working class. 'It is to be remembered', he says, 'that, in the early decades of this century, we enormously wanted authentic projections of that type of life which hitherto had gone quite unvoiced.' Gissing, H. G. Wells, Arnold Bennett and Mark Rutherford had written of the lower middle classes, but 'the completely different class of the artisan, the industrialist, and the unskilled labourer was completely unvoiced and unknown' (Nehls, i, 109). Violet Hunt, who was also on the staff of the *English Review*, and later became the wife of Ford Madox Ford (although their marriage was never properly legalized), found a similar significance in Lawrence's first novel, *The White Peacock* (1911). Her unusual review (No. 5) in the *Daily Chronicle* heralded it as a 'political document developed along the lines of a passionate romance' of great importance to the rulers of Great Britain, for it revealed to them the hitherto unsuspected intellectual capacities of the people, who now had the power to vote them into, or out of, office.

Ford and Violet Hunt both helped to smooth the way for the publication of *The White Peacock*. Heinemann's reader accepted it with alacrity, but some changes had to be made to meet the prudish taste

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of the time²—a foretaste of the greater difficulties which were to come with *Sons and Lovers* and *The Rainbow* (published in England by Duckworth and Methuen respectively). The first English edition, consisting of 1500 copies, came out in January 1911, and must have sold quite rapidly, as it was reprinted in March. A third impression did not, however, appear until 1921. Since then the book has sold steadily, both in Heinemann's hardback edition (amounting at present to some 250,000 copies) and in the various cheap editions, including Penguin, for which the sales must be more numerous still.

Once out *The White Peacock* 'took the town', according to Violet Hunt, and Catherine Carswell, the novelist and later close friend of Lawrence, calls it 'a *succes d'estime*'. These phrases probably refer to its reception in literary society. The reviewers were more cautious. Current ideas about the well-made novel and distaste for French realism made them uneasy about Lawrence's methods and material. The *Athenaeum* (25 February 1911), not the only paper to mistake the author for a woman, found 'her' less crude than Zola, but still 'needlessly frank to a fastidious mind', and the *Nottinghamshire Guardian* (21 February 1911) thought the novel a not very happy attempt 'to write about English rural life and colliery villages in the style of the French naturalists'. The *Scotsman* (9 February 1911), by contrast, praised the presentation of country life, but completely ignored its imaginative qualities. The playwright, Allan Monkhouse (No. 3) found the book promising, but was unhappy with its narrative method, as was the *Morning Post* (No. 4)—though the latter was a sympathetic review which Lawrence himself called 'long and good'. Only the critic of the *Daily News* (No. 6) was completely hostile, and he so extravagantly that Lawrence could take his annoyance as a compliment. Nearly everybody else balanced this negative criticism with some recognition of the new writer's talent, especially for natural description, so that all in all Lawrence could count his first novel a modest success.

In view of what was said about the structure of *The White Peacock* it is interesting to note that as early as 1908 Lawrence himself, though prepared to admit many faults, declared that he would defend its construction throughout (*L* 11 November), and a hint of his method is given in the following remarks recorded by Jessie Chambers:

The usual plan is to take two couples and develop their relationships, [he said]. Most of George Eliot's are on that plan. Anyhow, I don't want a plot, I should be bored with it. I shall try two couples for a start.³

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His enthusiasm for *Anna Karenina*, also recorded by Jessie, would further support his belief that the ostensibly loose method of parallelism was well suited to a novel of personal relations. Nevertheless, he worked on his next novel, *The Trespasser*, very carefully, paying special attention to its form. To the author and critic, Edward Garnett, who was at this time acting as publisher's editor to Duckworth's, Lawrence wrote anxiously: 'I hope the thing is knitted firm—I hate those pieces where the stitch is slack and loose' (L 21 January 1912). When the book was published several critics again attacked its lack of construction, but the *Morning Post* reviewer (No. 10), praised its 'unusual artistic unity', thus showing a second time his friendliness and perceptiveness with regard to Lawrence.

The Trespasser, more so than *The White Peacock*, was an erotic book, and according to Ford Madox Ford the unrevised version 'much—oh, but much!—more phallic than is the book as it stands' (Nehls, i, 121). If published, he told Lawrence, it would damage his reputation perhaps permanently. 'Is the book so erotic?' Lawrence inquired of Garnett. 'I don't want to be talked about in an *Ann Veronica* fashion' (L 18 December 1911). In the event, either because Ford exaggerated, or because Garnett helped to tone it down, *The Trespasser* did not have this effect. The *Outlook* (29 June 1912) wrote caustically that the older artists 'who knew the value of the decent fig-leaf, could have taught Mr. Lawrence much', but the *Westminster Gazette* managed to find a moral lesson in *The Trespasser*: rightly understood it led

the mind to a deeper recognition of the inexorable physical and moral laws which, holding humanity in bondage, work out for every trespasser a certain doom.

(8 June 1912)

More to the point, the critic of the *Manchester Guardian*, Basil de Selincourt, emphasized the book's poetic and psychological treatment of love (No. 9), and the *New York Times* stressed the unusualness of Lawrence's focus upon 'the woman of dreams' rather than the traditional *femme fatale* (No. 11).

Lawrence's first volume of poetry, *Love Poems* (1913), met, on the whole, with more judicious response than his earliest novels. Two poets, one English, Edward Thomas (No. 12), and one American, Ezra Pound (No. 13), welcomed him as an ally in the cause of a new kind of expression that should be modern in subject-matter and independent of the jaded poetic diction inherited from late nineteenth-

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century verse. Pound thought Lawrence had 'learned the proper treatment of modern subjects' before he did himself (letter to Harriet Monroe, March 1913), and in the two reviews which he wrote of *Love Poems* he gave particularly high praise to the dialect poems. (The second of these is included here as it is slightly more detailed than the first.) The *Nation* also placed Lawrence in the ranks of the moderns, and praised his 'vivid, unexpected images' (No. 14). Above all, Lawrence was seen as a poet of strength and individuality—for better or for worse, a force to be reckoned with, and distinctively modern.

Sons and Lovers

It is usually supposed that with *Sons and Lovers* (1913) Lawrence 'arrived' as a major novelist. How many copies of the original edition were printed is unknown, but the book does not seem to have sold as well as Lawrence hoped. It was not reprinted until 1922, but from then onwards new editions were frequent, and sales figures for the early 1930s indicate that it was by that time the most popular of Lawrence's novels (see *WR* 23).

Reviews, however, were plentiful, and Lawrence himself said that he liked them (*L* 21 June). But, if the tone was laudatory, much of the detail was unfavourable, and few critics showed real understanding of the novel's theme. It was, for example, thought *fortunate* for Mrs. Morel that Paul supplied her husband's place (*ST* 1 June 1913), and admiration for 'the heroic little mother' (No. 21) often led critics to miss the significance of her destructive influence on her sons. The complaints made about Lawrence's previous novels were also repeated with regard to *Sons and Lovers*. He was again criticized for neglect of form and his treatment of sex was found even more distressing. Lawrence could not have been surprised at this, for he had already encountered difficulties at the publishing stage. Heinemann's, the firm to which Lawrence first sent the manuscript of *Sons and Lovers*, rejected it, and Lawrence wrote to his friend and former teaching colleague, A. W. McLeod, giving two not altogether consistent reasons which he supposed to account for the rejection: 'Heinemann refused it because he was cross with me for going to Duckworth—refused it on grounds of its indecency, if you please' (*L* ?17 September 1912). In 1925, looking back on this episode, Lawrence seemed to have decided that indecency was the main reason, for he wrote that William Heinemann 'thought *Sons and Lovers* one of the dirtiest books he had ever read. He refused

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to publish it. I should not have thought the deceased gentleman's reading had been so circumspectly narrow' (*Ph* 233). Duckworth's accepted the novel, and published it in May 1913, but not without making several cuts. Edward Garnett was given a comparatively free hand by Lawrence to make whatever omissions he thought necessary, as Lawrence urgently required money. Most of these cuts seem to have been made on grounds of length, but the correspondence between Lawrence and Garnett suggests that some passages may have been objected to because of their sexual explicitness. (For example, a paragraph was cut describing Paul's kissing Clara's breasts and knees.⁴)

The book, however, still remained too erotic for many critics. The well-known essayist and literary critic, Robert Lynd, referred to 'the hot-houses of amorous writing' and said that Lawrence had 'an exaggerated sense of the physical side of love' (*Daily News*, 7 June 1913). The *Academy* critic complained that there was 'no delicacy nor reticence about his work. . . . Evidently he has found life a very bitter, ugly thing, with no joy in it, nor any warmth but the warmth of lust' (28 June 1913). The *Nation* (No. 20) made some criticism on artistic grounds, but what lay behind the reviewer's objections was a reluctance to face Lawrence's meaning. The book was disturbing, as, in a different manner, it was for the *Westminster Gazette*, which saw in Paul an example of that modern phenomenon, the unheroic hero (No. 16). To the *Daily Chronicle* reviewer, Harold Massingham, however, this was an aspect of Lawrence's commendable realism (No. 17), and for the poet, Lascelles Abercrombie (No. 19), his power to disturb the ordinary reader's complacency was something to be applauded. Yet these last two perceptive critics joined in the fairly general condemnation of the book's 'architecture', and just as Lawrence's efforts in *The Trespasser* to shape his novel went unnoticed by all except the *Morning Post*, so only a minority (see Nos. 15 and 18) recognized the formal achievement of *Sons and Lovers*.⁵

Slight as it was, perhaps the most influential comment on *Sons and Lovers* was that made by Henry James in 'The Younger Generation' (*TLS* 19 March and 2 April 1914, reprinted in *Notes on Novelists*, 1914), where Lawrence was said to 'hang in the dusty rear' of Hugh Walpole, Gilbert Cannan and Compton Mackenzie. How carefully James read *Sons and Lovers* is open to doubt. His friend and fellow-novelist, Edith Wharton, reports him as having said, 'I have trifled with the *exordia*,' but according to another friend, Mrs. Belloc Lowndes, he had obstinately refused to read it. James's general theme was the superiority of the

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selective principle in fiction to the 'slice of life'. Lawrence, he implied, was in the line of those, like Wells and Bennett, whose realism was heavily documented, and a welcome departure from Victorian prudery, but lacked 'a controlling idea and a pointed intention'. In tortuously elusive phrasing James suggested that if *Sons and Lovers* did have a subject, then Lawrence did little to help the reader to see it.

A more carefully considered article, based on the new Freudian psychology, appeared in the next year, 1915. This was the review by the psychologist, Alfred Kuttner, in the *New Republic* (No. 22). (The revised and expanded version published in the *Psychoanalytic Review*, July 1916, is reprinted in *D. H. Lawrence and 'Sons and Lovers'*, 1965, ed. E. W. Tedlock.) Lawrence saw at least the later text, which, he said, carved a half lie out of his poor book, which as art was 'a fairly complete truth' (L 16 September 1916). Yet Kuttner's view is not unlike the well-known outline of *Sons and Lovers* that Lawrence gave Edward Garnett (L 14 November 1912). Kuttner interpreted the novel as the struggle of a man to free himself from allegiance to his mother and transfer his love to a woman outside the family circle, a struggle which in *Sons and Lovers* ends tragically. Lawrence's account stresses the mother's devotion to her sons, William and Paul, as compensation for the lack of satisfaction in her marriage. As they grow up 'she selects them as lovers—first the eldest, then the second. These sons are urged into life by their reciprocal love of their mother—urged on and on. But when they come to manhood, they can't love, because their mother is the strongest power in their lives, and holds them.' Paul's sweetheart (Miriam) tries to fight the mother, says Lawrence, but loses; the affair with Clara is seen, like William's engagement to 'a fribble', as involving sexual 'passion', but not his 'soul', and so a fatal 'split' takes place. Lawrence concludes his outline of the novel by saying that after his mother's death Paul 'is left in the end naked of everything, with the drift towards death'.

It can be argued that both Lawrence's interpretation and Kuttner's are inadequate to the greater complexity of the novel itself, that they over-emphasize the destructive influence of the mother, leaving out of account the grit and determination, the honesty and the capacity for sheer enjoyment of life that Paul also derives from his mother. Nevertheless, both views provide an important corrective to the 'heroic little mother' theme, and since Kuttner's was the only one actually available to the general reading public of the day he must be considered as having made a useful contribution to the understanding of the novel.

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What he wrote might well be a half lie, but the corollary is that it also contained a half truth, and one which evidently required to be given prominence in 1915-16.

*The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd, The Prussian Officer
and The Rainbow*

Lawrence's next major work was *The Rainbow*, but before that appeared *The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd*, in April, and *The Prussian Officer*, in November 1914. Lawrence's first play was well received in 1914 (cf. *T* 24 April and *NS* 6 June). It was not produced, however, until 1926—by which time it was still admired, but Lawrence's reputation had changed, and the play was thought to show how well he might have written had he stuck to the working-class life he knew, instead of theorizing about relations between the sexes (Ivor Brown, *SR* 18 December 1926). The only other of Lawrence's plays to be produced in his life-time was *David*. As Sean O'Casey says (*NS* 28 July 1934), he never received the sort of encouragement from the theatrical world that would have enabled him to develop his dramatic gifts, and it was not until the revival of his plays at the Royal Court Theatre, London (1965-8) that his achievement as a playwright was fully appreciated.

Some of the short stories collected in *The Prussian Officer* belonged to Lawrence's early period, and these, particularly *Odour of Chrysanthemums* and *Daughters of the Vicar*, were much praised, but the reaction to the more recent tales, *The Prussian Officer* itself and *The Thorn in the Flesh*, was puzzled and even hostile. One reviewer found the killing of the officer by his orderly in the title story 'a very powerful, if at the same time quite horrible, piece of writing' (*No.* 23); others, disturbed by the atmosphere of passion and violence, wrote of 'the queer dark corners' that Lawrence too much concerned himself with (*NS* 26 December 1914), or spoke of him as 'the Salvator Rosa of modern psychologists' who 'takes the most ordinary human beings and thrusts them into a veritable tempest of emotion' (*Bk* March 1915).

Critics were beginning to find Lawrence's work strange and unnatural. To one reviewer it seemed that his characters were 'almost unconscious of right and wrong' (*MG* 10 December 1914); and the misgivings to which this aspect of *The Prussian Officer* gave rise were greatly increased by the appearance of *The Rainbow* (published 30 September 1915 in an edition of 2,500). The jingoism and moral

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cant which had begun to afflict war-time England also provided a climate peculiarly ill-suited to the sexual emphases of this novel, producing a note of hysteria in some of the critical reactions. Robert Lynd, for example, denounced *The Rainbow* as 'a monotonous wilderness of phallicism' (No. 26), and to the *New Witness* (18 November 1915) it suggested 'a world of monotonous bestiality in which men and women are chained to a treadmill of vice'. But the two most extravagant outbursts (which may have led the National Purity League to the book, and so to its prosecution and suppression in England)⁶ came from James Douglas, literary critic of the *Star*, and Clement Shorter, editor of the *Sphere* (Nos. 27 and 28). Shorter professed not to be an 'opponent of frankness and freedom in literature', but the 'viciousness' of the book was beyond justification, while Douglas saw in it 'a greater menace to our public health than any of the epidemic diseases which we pay our medical officers to fight. . . .' In so far as there was any serious critical argument in Douglas' article it attacked *The Rainbow* for retarding man's progress from sensuality to the life of the spirit. Basically, however, it was a case of what Lawrence, in his Introduction to *Pansies*, was to call 'taboo-insanity', in which 'certain words, certain ideas are taboo, and if they come upon us and we can't drive them away, we die or go mad with a degraded sort of terror'.

Among the few who tried to retain critical sanity were Catherine Carswell (No. 30), the reviewer for the *Standard* (No. 25), and, more doubtfully, H. M. Swanwick (No. 29), but even these were uncertain in their interpretations and assessments. Catherine Carswell, for example, grasped the importance of relationships for Lawrence, but she failed to note the significance of his attack on 'mental consciousness' and the dehumanization of man by industrialism. She praised those scenes which could be understood in realistic terms, but got no nearer Lawrence's ultra-realistic purposes than to deplore some of the stylistic means by which he sought to achieve them.

On 13 November Methuen's were summoned to answer a charge made against *The Rainbow* under the Obscene Publications Act of 1857. As a result of the ensuing court case all copies of the novel were ordered to be destroyed, reported in *The Times* (No. 31). After this judgment no further reviews of *The Rainbow* appeared, although some comments were made on the censorship issue, and the *New Statesman*, in particular, debunked the moral pretensions of Douglas and Shorter. So far as the artistic merit of the book was touched upon it was condemned, both publicly and privately. The novelist, John Galsworthy, was

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revolted by its 'perfervid futuristic style' and Lawrence's treatment of sex left him with the 'painful impression of a man tragically obsessed' (No. 33). The literary critic, John Middleton Murry, and Katherine Mansfield, the short story writer, both close friends of the Lawrences at this time, were doubtful. Katherine, says Murry, 'quite definitely hated parts of it', and he himself writes of his bewilderment, both then and later, in *Reminiscences of D. H. Lawrence* (1930):

There were realms of experience which Lawrence knew into which I had not entered. Nor, even now, can I say that I have ever really entered them. Even now, I cannot pretend that the fearful struggle between Anna Lensky and Will Brangwen in *The Rainbow* is a thing I understand; and since it was of such experience that he was full, and trying to speak, at this time, it is not surprising to me that I groped in a mist after his meaning.

Arnold Bennett referred to 'Mr. Lawrence's beautiful and maligned novel, *The Rainbow* . . .' (*Daily News*, 15 December 1915),⁷ but, if one can judge from Lawrence's letter to his literary agent, J. B. Pinker, of 16 December, he was very critical of the novel's construction (see No. 24 (i)). James and Wells also seem to have been adverse (L 23 November). Lawrence, in reply, recognized that the difference between himself and James went deep: 'subtle conventional design was his aim', he said of James; but of Wells he could say, 'He admires me really, at the bottom . . . '.

Lawrence had thus to be supported mainly by his own belief in his work—which was considerable. He had taken great trouble over the composition of *The Rainbow*, still submitting his work to Garnett's scrutiny, although it became increasingly apparent that the older man's preference for novels of 'character' conflicted with the 'something deep evolving itself out' in Lawrence, and finally they parted company. The letters that Lawrence wrote during this period (1913-15) are full of comments on the themes and methods that were running in his head (see No. 24), and there is a fundamental self-confidence in them. This was not destroyed by his novel's reception. What was destroyed, however, was his hope that any accommodation might be reached with 'the world which controls press, publication and all'. In his own words he 'put away any idea of "success", of succeeding with the British bourgeois public, and stayed apart' (*Ph II*, 302).

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Poetry (1916–19)

Although he was working on *Women in Love*, Lawrence published no further novels during the war. Apart from *Twilight in Italy* (1916), his books were all verse: *Amores* (1916), *Look! We Have Come Through!* (1917), *New Poems* (1918), and *Bay* (1919). It was the second of these which reviewers found hardest to accept, partly because of the nature of its contents, described by the *Athenaeum* as consisting of 'dialogues of the passionate, but not always harmonious pair, self-communings, morbid ecstasies, repulsions, and ravings' (February 1918), but also because of its seemingly loose, undisciplined free verse. The *New Statesman* (26 January 1918) accused Lawrence of resorting to this kind of verse because it was easy, which possibly provoked him to deny, in his Preface to the American edition of *New Poems* (1920—Preface dated 1919), that breaking 'the lovely form of metrical verse' and dishing up the fragments as *vers libre* was, in fact, any way to compose free verse. His point was that free verse had its own nature and its own law, which, however, 'must come new each time from within'.

Already in private correspondence with Edward Marsh, the editor of *Georgian Poetry*, Lawrence had argued his case for more flexible rhythms even in traditional verse forms, emphasizing instinct rather than the mechanical rules of scansion dictated by 'craftsmanship' (*L* 18 August 1913), and 'the hidden *emotional* pattern' rather than 'the obvious form' (*L* 19 November 1913); and these views led on quite naturally to the defence of free verse as the appropriate medium for poetry of the 'immediate present', as expounded by Lawrence in his 1920 Preface. But the poet, Conrad Aiken, as well as the *New Statesman*, may have had something to do with the particular shape that the Preface took, for he, too, had attacked the kind of poetry Lawrence wrote in *Look! We Have Come Through!* (see No. 37). Aiken's criterion for judging poetry was what he called 'the melodic line'. His definition of this was vague, but his Arnoldian touchstones seemed to indicate that it was a grace achieved primarily by traditional methods and dependent on that crystallizing of emotion in durable verbal form which Lawrence called 'exquisite finality'. Incidental dissonance might be allowed, but 'the melodic line' was a norm to which the poet must return. Lawrence, however, rejected the imposition of such a norm, and for him discord was a natural accompaniment of reality:

There is some confusion, some discord. But the confusion and the discord only belong to the reality, as noise belongs to the plunge of water. It is no use

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inventing fancy laws for free verse, no use drawing a melodic line which all the feet must toe. Free verse toes no melodic line, no matter what drill-sergeant . . . (CP, i, 184.)

Among more favourable critics of Lawrence's verse were the American poets, Amy Lowell, Babette Deutsch and Louis Untermeyer. Amy Lowell had tried to recruit him to the Imagist movement, of which she was a leader, but in her review of *Look! We Have Come Through!* (NYTBR 20 April 1919) she admitted that 'Mr. Lawrence, in spite of his inclusion in the Imagist Anthologies, cannot be confined within the boundaries of any school.' Untermeyer singled him out as the most notable of a group of poets, including Hardy and Rupert Brooke, who spoke of love with a new frankness (*The New Adam*—quoted by Deutsch in the *Dial*, January 1920). The English critic, Francis Bickley, in a review of *Amores* (No. 34), similarly linked him with 'the militant honesty of some contemporary poets'; but it was another American poet, John Gould Fletcher, who, in possibly the most intelligent appreciation of Lawrence's poetry at this time, explained why this 'fine, intolerant fanatic' was to be regarded as a major figure (No. 36).

General comments

From about 1914 comments began to appear taking account of Lawrence, not only as a subject for reviews, but also as a recognized modern author with a number of works to his credit. Among these Edward Garnett's 'Art and the Moralists: Mr. D. H. Lawrence's Work' (No. 35), first printed in 1916, attempted a discussion of what had become the most frequent topic with regard to Lawrence—the question of the artist's right to go outside the bounds of the publicly accepted 'idealistic' morality. Garnett made some sensible observations, and his distinction between 'the morality of nature and the morality of man' has affinities with Lawrence's *Study of Thomas Hardy* (written 1914, but at that time unpublished). But Garnett's critical comments tend to be along more familiar lines, with highest praise reserved for the working-class verisimilitude of *Sons and Lovers*. Similarly conventional judgments were made by two academic writers, J. W. Cunliffe and Abel Chevalley. In *English Literature During the Last Half Century* (1919) Cunliffe stated that *The Rainbow* had 'nothing like the grip the novelist had shown of the more familiar material in the colliery village'. Abel Chevalley's comments on Lawrence, in *Le Roman Anglais de Notre Temps* (1921—No. 45) are interesting chiefly as a first example

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of French critical response. The novelist, Arthur Waugh (*Tradition and Change*, 1919), Louis Untermeyer (No. 38) and the novelist and playwright, Douglas Goldring (No. 39), tended to emphasize Lawrence as poet—which, paradoxically, led Untermeyer at least to a higher estimate of *The Rainbow* than most novel critics were prepared to make. In his view it was 'possibly the most poetic and poignant novel of this decade'. Goldring, on the other hand, in spite of his friendly enthusiasm for Lawrence, thought it one of the least artistically successful of Lawrence's books; his chief interest was in *Look! We Have Come Through!*

Such surveys were a tribute to Lawrence's growing reputation. He had become a writer whose complete works had to be taken into account. But it cannot be said that these critics, who presumably had leisure to consider his books with care, showed a much better understanding of his purposes and achievement than the reviewers who had to write more hastily for weekly or monthly publications.

The Lost Girl and Women in Love

The Lost Girl and *Women in Love*, both published in November 1920, were partly the work of an earlier Lawrence (though reviewers did not know this), *Women in Love* having been written in 1916, and the first half of *The Lost Girl* in 1913. After the affair of *The Rainbow* none of the regular publishers was willing to run the risk of printing its sequel, and so *Women in Love* had to be privately printed in New York (1,250 copies, 50 of which were issued in England). The first trade edition, of 1,500 copies, was published by Secker in London, 1921, and the American firm of Seltzer issued an edition of 15,000 copies in 1922, since when it has been quite steadily reprinted (*WR* 45). *The Lost Girl* was published in the usual way, by Secker, to whom Lawrence confessed some uneasiness about the public's likely reaction to it: '... I find it good—a bit wonderful, really. But when I get a sort of "other people" mood on me, I don't know at all. I feel I don't know at all what it will be like to other people' (*L* 12 June 1920). He hoped at least that it might make some money, which he still badly needed. But by the beginning of 1921 no more than 2,300 out of an exceptionally large edition of 4,000 copies⁸ had been sold (*L* 12 February 1921), and 841 out of the 1,500 copies that Secker reprinted in 1925 were remaindered in 1930 (*WR* 47). Only the award of the James Tait Black memorial prize in 1921 made the novel financially rewarding for Lawrence.

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Reviewers were split in their opinion of *The Lost Girl*. It was generally recognized to be indebted to 'the Bennett manner' (*N* 22 January 1921), and Garnett compared it to the tales of the *Five Towns* (No. 42). In a letter to Pinker (16 December 1920) Bennett himself praised it highly. But to some critics this was a change for the better—a welcome sign of recovery after the deplorable aberrations of *The Rainbow*—while to others, including Virginia Woolf (No. 40) and Edward Shanks, assistant editor of the *London Mercury* (December 1920), it seemed that Lawrence had surrendered his distinctive originality to produce a book that any of his contemporaries might have written. Katherine Mansfield and Middleton Murry (Nos. 41 and 43) were gloomier still. To them it seemed that the 'decay' of imaginative power since the earlier work was accompanied by a perverse misrepresentation of life as 'mysteriously degraded by a corrupt mysticism'. A notable exception to both schools of thought was the associate editor of the *New Republic*, Francis Hackett (No. 44). He was not happy about Lawrence's work in general, but the emotional honesty of *The Lost Girl* deeply impressed him. Lawrence, he said, 'flings this case of Alvina in the face of an England full of surplus women, and he finds extraordinary and wonderful the woman who can support the insupportable . . .' This remark suggests that of all the reviewers of *The Lost Girl* Hackett was the one who came nearest to appreciating that the novel was a rejection of that false sense of tragedy which Lawrence in 1912 (shortly before writing the first part of *The Lost Girl*) had associated with 'England and its hopelessness' and 'Bennett's resignation' (*L* 6 October 1912).

The smaller number of reviews of *Women in Love* may be due, as Martin Green suggests,⁹ partly to its being at first privately printed, and partly to an attempt by the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice to get it banned. Two other books were prosecuted along with *Women in Love*, but Magistrate George W. Simpson, who presided over the case, declared that he could find no obscenity in any of the three books: 'On the contrary, I find that each of them is a distinct contribution to the literature of the present day' (*Nehls*, ii, 469). Most of the critics, however, were hostile, as Lawrence seems to have expected them to be. In his Foreword to the novel (intended for the first edition, but not actually printed till 1936) he had already replied in advance to attacks on his eroticism, subjectivity and repetitive style (*Ph II* 275-6). Of these critics W. Charles Pilley, assistant editor of *John Bull*, was the most extreme; he called the book 'dirt' and hinted

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at homosexual horrors (17 September 1921, reprinted Nehls, ii, 89-91). In a different vein was the bantering review of the *Saturday Westminster Gazette* (No. 48). The *T.L.S.* (9 June 1921) performed the curious feat of citing the rabbit episode in Chapter XVIII as an example of Lawrence's 'unconvincing pen-craft' (cf. also No. 58), similar distortions came from Murry (No. 49), who quoted from Birkin's meditation on the process of sensual dissolution without referring to the specific rejection of that process in favour of 'the way of freedom' (Penguin ed., 287), and from Rebecca West, whose apparently well-intentioned review (*NS* 9 July 1921) still managed to give the impression that *Women in Love* was an abnormality to be read only as a series of 'desperately devised symbols'.

The best of the reviews were those written by the American critic, John Macy, and the American novelist, Evelyn Scott (Nos. 46 and 47). Macy, the more conventional of the two, saw affinities between Lawrence and the earlier generation of poetic novelists such as Meredith and Hardy; surprisingly, he thought that *Women in Love* lacked the social context given to sexual relations in *The Rainbow*.¹⁰ Evelyn Scott, with more originality, but with greater obscurity, developed the thesis that Lawrence was a type of the affirmative artist whose convictions were too urgent for his art. Scott was also one of the first of Lawrence's critics to see the importance, and paradox, of his anti-intellectualism, calling him 'the priest of an age almost intolerably self-aware'.

Lawrence in the early twenties

In the early 1920s Lawrence's output was prolific. He had no less than twelve books published in the three years from 1921-3. These included two collections of short stories, *England, My England* and *The Ladybird* (published in America as *The Captain's Doll*) which attracted some of the most complimentary reviews to be published in Lawrence's lifetime (Nos. 54-7). In general the shorter form was thought more suitable to Lawrence's genius than the novel, and was judged to act as a brake on his theorizing. Thus the reviewer for the *Nation and Athenaeum* was able to write 'When at his top pitch of creative excitement, and therefore beyond fumbling and philosophizing Mr. Lawrence is a writer of the first rank' (23 February 1924).

By the same law the theoretical works were damned. The pseudo-technical terms used in *Psycho-analysis and the Unconscious* and *Fantasia of the Unconscious* provoked reviewers either to laughter or disgust. Even a reasonably sympathetic critic, such as George Soule (he is the

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one referred to in the Foreword to *Fantasia*), who felt that there was some sense beneath this 'terrifying exterior', could only regret that Lawrence had not used 'the imagery of fiction or poetry instead of the intellectual terms which he distrusts' (*NNY* 27 July 1921). Middleton Murry (Nos. 51 and 53), however, came out, as he had done for *Aaron's Rod* the year before, in favour of *Fantasia*, professing to find in it a new gaiety and assurance that marked Lawrence's re-ascent to the light after his harrowing of hell in *Women in Love*. The critical grounds for this remarkable change of opinion are obscure; the reviews probably have more to do with the history of the personal relationship between Murry and Lawrence than with the objective qualities of the books themselves.

Critics of the novels (*Aaron's Rod*, 1922; *Kangaroo*, 1923; and *The Boy in the Bush*, 1924) were equally unwilling to take Lawrence seriously as a thinker. H. W. Boynton, reviewer for the *Independent*, described *Aaron's Rod* as an attempt 'to knock up a nice new world for us on the spur of the moment' (27 May 1922), and with regard to *Kangaroo* Raymond Mortimer of the *New Statesman* (29 September 1923) considered that the philosophy had stifled the more worthwhile poetry. Lawrence's mistake, according to the novelist, Alyse Gregory (No. 61), was in trying to turn himself into a socio-political commentator like H. G. Wells. His views on the relations which ought to exist between the sexes were found particularly unacceptable. His insistence on male domination, wrote the American critic, Louise Maunsell Field, was rooted 'in the well-known complex of male sex-fear—the man's fear of the woman and of her power' (*NYTBR* 30 April 1922). Even Lawrence's travel writing was deplored when it betrayed this note (see, for example, No. 50, Francis Hackett's review of *Sea and Sardinia*). Though there were exceptions, such as the *T.L.S.* reviewer of *Kangaroo* (No. 60), most critics felt that the intrusion of Lawrence's half-baked ideas spoilt his work unnecessarily. Why did he not simply leave them out? The answer was given by Edward Shanks (No. 58) who was able to see that Lawrence's convictions—including those with which Shanks could not agree—were inseparable from the art which embodied them:

It is possible to say that the solutions he offers of the great problem oppressing him are empty and false. . . . He may be wrong on looking at this life as a pit. But, if so, out of his error comes a flame of poetry, smoky, strange and disconcerting as it may be, which is at least genuine and which is hardly paralleled by any of the novelists of his generation.

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Lawrence's own venture into literary criticism with *Studies in Classic American Literature* (1923) was received as a partly stimulating, partly presumptuous and annoying, but essentially amateur effort, in which the subjectivity and eccentricity sometimes deplored in the novels were seen to be magnified. The breezy, colloquial style was much disliked. 'Here is Mr. Lawrence,' said one reviewer, 'writing in the staccato style developed by Mr. Hearst's newspapers and getting badly mixed now and then in his American slang' (*New York Evening Post*, 13 October 1923). The American critic and editor, Stuart P. Sherman (No. 59), also commented ironically on the style of the book, but his main attention was given to what he called the 'cave-man philosophy' that Lawrence found latent in American literature, and the question of its relevance to contemporary America. This he doubted; but not so Herbert J. Seligmann, author of the first book on Lawrence (*D. H. Lawrence: An American Interpretation*, 1924), for whom *Studies*, and the whole of Lawrence's work to date, was a highly relevant challenge to an America that lived 'off the top, thinly'. Seligmann's, however, was an exceptionally favourable opinion. Other critics praised Lawrence's particular insights, but with serious reservations. Indeed, at least two reviews of *Studies* opened with statements which suggest that critics made reservations before they even began to read. 'The authorship of this book', wrote an English reviewer, H. C. Minchin, 'is a sufficient indication of its queerness' (*ST* 6 July 1924); and Conrad Aiken began: 'Mr. Lawrence's book on American literature is perhaps even more singular than one now expects a book by Mr. Lawrence to be' (*N & A* 12 July 1924). Such comments illustrate not only the critical reaction to *Studies*, but the very state of Lawrence's reputation at this time.

1925-7

This was the period of Lawrence's Mexican writings, in which he carried to the furthest extreme his rejection of conventional Western values and almost completely alienated his critics. *The Plumed Serpent* (1926) especially seemed devoid of normal human interest—Katherine Anne Porter (No. 72), the novelist and short story writer, called it a 'catastrophe'—but the reviewer for the *Manchester Guardian* (29 May 1925) also found *St. Mawr* disturbingly indifferent to the world of 'decent folk who do a considerable amount of honest work, enjoy their lives, and try to behave themselves', and the Scottish poet and critic, Edwin Muir, in a general article (No. 67) on Lawrence printed

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early in 1925, was already arguing that his marvellous ability to penetrate the instinctive life was achieved at the cost of his sympathy with 'the conscious life of mankind'. Lawrence seemed set irretrievably on a downward path, and critics found him increasingly provocative and perverse.

Lawrence, however, took little heed. His books were meant to disturb. 'Do you think', he wrote to his friend, Carlo Linati,

that books should be sort of toys, nicely built up of observations and sensations, all finished and complete?—I don't. . . . A book should be either a bandit or a rebel or a man in a crowd. People should either run for their lives, or come under the colours, or say *how do you do?*

(L 22 January 1925)

He was grateful if a critic seemed to 'care about the deeper implication in a novel' (L 11 July 1925), as he felt Sherman did in his long review article for the *Herald Tribune* (No. 68), but he was impatient with adverse criticism, and especially with criticism like Muir's which adopted a lofty tone and spoke of his gifts as 'splendid in their imperfection'. 'Ugh, Mr. Muir,' he wrote, 'think how horrible for us all, if I were perfect! or even if I had "perfect" gifts!—Isn't splendour enough for you, Mr. Muir? . . . For "perfection" is only one of the attributes of "the normal" and "the average" in modern thought' (*Ph* 803).

Lawrence was led by his own consuming purpose, and this in the Mexican books was to try to express the uniqueness of the religious experience which he had encountered among the Indians. Yet almost the only critic to read him in this spirit was the *Manchester Guardian* reviewer of *The Plumed Serpent*, for whom it was 'an intensely religious book' (No. 70). Katherine Anne Porter declared that, fascinated as he was by the Indian experience, Lawrence could not penetrate it, and other critics echoed this judgment in their remarks on Lawrence's treatment of the Indians in *Mornings in Mexico*. According to the English novelist and controversialist, Wyndham Lewis, Lawrence merely attributed to the Indians qualities which derived from the 'evolutionist, *organic* philosophy' of Bergson, Spengler and Whitehead, who were foolish enemies of the white man's superior intelligence. Lewis' ideas, first published in *The Enemy*, September 1927, and reprinted in *Paleface* (1929), were superficial, and the style in which they were expressed was crude and bluff, but several later critics treated them with great respect, and quoted them approvingly.

More thoughtful critics nevertheless recognized that the religious

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question was very relevant to Lawrence's work. Murry, for example, comparing Lawrence with Proust, James Joyce and E. M. Forster, concluded that Lawrence was the most significant because he possessed the quality of 'religiousness' and was 'in permanent rebellion against a society and an age that has it not' (*Adelphi*, September 1926). From another point of view the Cambridge University lecturer, I. A. Richards (whose article probably influenced Sackville West's review of *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine*, No. 69), criticized Lawrence, along with Yeats, for failing to face the problem of maintaining attitudes without the support of the traditional beliefs which had been eroded by scientific truth. Lawrence, said Richards, seemed to be reverting to a primitive world-picture 'similar to that described in *The Golden Bough*'. Yet the refusal of Lawrence and Yeats to envisage poetry without beliefs was also for Richards evidence of their seriousness, since 'the temptation to introduce beliefs is a sign and measure of the importance of the attitudes involved' ('A Background for Contemporary Poetry', *Cr* July 1925).

In 1927 E. M. Forster and T. S. Eliot made the first of their various comments on Lawrence. In *Aspects of the Novel* Forster grouped him with Dostoevski, Melville and Emily Brontë as a novelist of 'prophecy'—meaning, rather vaguely, 'a tone of voice', something residing in the rapt quality of untranslatable symbolic scenes. After Lawrence's death Forster also became involved in an exchange of letters with Eliot and Clive Bell, who disputed his claim that Lawrence was 'the greatest imaginative novelist of our generation' (*N&A* 23 and 30 March, 12 and 26 April 1930), and in April of that year Forster gave an obituary talk on Lawrence for the B.B.C. (No. 95).

Eliot, in an article for *La Nouvelle Revue Française* (No. 74), used Lawrence as an example of the false seriousness and limited sense of reality produced in the English novel by the fashionable preoccupation with Freudian psychology. Like Wyndham Lewis, Eliot represented Lawrence's interest in the primitive as a betrayal of civilization:

When his characters make love—or perform Mr. Lawrence's equivalent for love-making—and they do nothing else—they not only lose all the amenities, refinements and graces which many centuries have built up in order to make love-making tolerable; they seem to reascend the metamorphoses of evolution, passing backward beyond ape and fish to some hideous coition of protoplasm.

This theme was further developed in *After Strange Gods* (1934), 'a

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primer of modern heresy' in which Lawrence was made to play a part as one of the principal heretics. There was an obvious clash of temperament between Eliot and Lawrence—the former's academic and orthodox attitudes made him particularly unsuited to be a critic of Lawrence's work. Perhaps, too, like Henry James, he was not very fully conversant with Lawrence's work. Certainly, it is hard to account on any other basis for the astonishing statement in 'The Contemporary Novel' that 'No line of humour, mirth or flippancy ever invades Mr. Lawrence's work; no distraction of politics, theology or art is allowed to entertain us.'

In 1961, however, Eliot remarked (in 'To Criticize the Critic'): 'I find myself constantly irritated by having my words, perhaps written thirty or forty years ago, quoted as if I had uttered them yesterday.' And he added that whenever he allowed an essay to be re-published he made a point of indicating the original date of publication. With this in mind, it should be stated that Eliot's views on Lawrence were modified in later years, and that, despite some slighting references to *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in *After Strange Gods*, in the 1960 obscenity trial he expressed his readiness to appear as a witness for the defence.¹¹ In the same passage of 'To Criticize the Critic' where he made this fact public Eliot also stated that even in 1931 he was 'wagging [his] finger rather pompously at the bishops who had assembled at the Lambeth Conference, and reproaching them for "missing an opportunity for dissociating themselves from the condemnation of two very serious and improving writers"—namely, Mr. James Joyce and Mr. D. H. Lawrence.' Yet Eliot also confessed that Lawrence was a figure about whom his mind would 'always waver between dislike, exasperation, boredom and admiration', and that his antipathy to Lawrence remained, on the ground of what seemed to him 'egotism, a strain of cruelty, and a failing in common with Thomas Hardy—the lack of a sense of humour'.

Lady Chatterley's Lover

Lady Chatterley's Lover, the most celebrated, or notorious, but neither the best nor the worst, of Lawrence's novels, was first published privately at Florence in July 1928. As trouble was expected from the English police, this edition, of 1,000 copies priced at £2 each, was distributed mainly through Lawrence's personal friends; by December,

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however, all copies had been sold, and a cheaper edition of 200 copies was printed in November 1928. The book soon appeared in several pirated editions, and in an attempt to compete with these Lawrence issued the Paris edition of 3,000 copies in May 1929, which was also sold out by August 1929 (WR 91-2). The expurgated editions published in 1932, after Lawrence's death, consisted of 3,440 (English ed.) and 2,000 (American ed.). Not until 1959 was an unexpurgated trade edition available in America (15,000), and in England it was thanks to Penguin Books, who in 1960 deliberately tested the revised obscenity law by publishing the complete text of *Lady Chatterley* (200,000), that the novel became generally available.

With the publication of this novel Lawrence brought down on himself the fury of British public outrage, exemplified in the fulminations of *John Bull* under the sensational headline, 'Famous Novelist's Shameful Book' (No. 75). An attack also appeared in the *Sunday Chronicle*, the background to which is interestingly discussed by James Drawbell, former editor of that paper, in *The Sun Within Us* (1963). It was Drawbell who made the decision to denounce Lawrence, even though he was an admirer of his work. 'He had given me countless hours of enchantment,' he says, 'enlarged my experience of life. But in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* he had delivered himself to us in our newspaper office; and in a newspaper office there is little mercy' (p. 281).

Lawrence's purpose was taken as being merely pornographic, but in several letters written during the composition of the book, and, more fully, in 'A Propos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*' (1929), he stated that he was fighting on behalf of 'the phallic reality, as against the non-phallic cerebration unrealities' (L 13 March 1928). In writing a description of 'the whole act' (which Edward Garnett had originally suggested to him (L 24 August 1928)) he was doing something which he felt had to be done in order to counter the essentially barbaric view of sex as 'nothing but a functional act and a certain fumbling with clothes' (Ph II 497); and he maintained the so-called 'four-letter words' were equally necessary. For the sake of his English and American publishers he attempted an expurgated edition (though always intending to print the complete text as well), but found it impossible: 'I might as well try to clip my own nose into shape with scissors. The book bleeds' (Ph II 489). And when, in 1932, Frieda Lawrence authorized the expurgated text, most reviewers endorsed Lawrence's view (see Nos. 77-9). Most interestingly of all, W. B. Yeats, in a letter to a friend (No. 81), wrote that the coarse language of Mellors, accepted by Connie 'becomes a

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forlorn poetry uniting their solitudes, something ancient, humble and terrible'.

Reviews of the 1928 edition of *Lady Chatterley* were, of course, few. The most distinguished was by the American critic, Edmund Wilson, whose comments on the language were eminently sane, and who recognized that, despite certain excesses and absurdities, the characters had an 'heroic dignity' and 'symbolical importance'.¹² Murry (No. 76) also welcomed the novel, calling it 'a cleansing book', but for him it represented only a half-truth. A third review, by H. J. Seligmann, was printed in the *New York Sun* (1 September 1928), which then remade its literary page to get rid of this 'contaminating essay' from its later editions (Seligmann, quoted Moore, *The Intelligent Heart*, Penguin ed. 478).

One other discussion of *Lady Chatterley* is printed here: that of the distinguished French author and politician, André Malraux (No. 80). In his view, the novel was an attempt to revise the Western myth of sexuality, substituting impersonal passion for the consciousness of personality on which modern love is based. Like Eliot and Lewis, Malraux distrusted the undermining of intellect by instinct, and this distrust led him into some tendentious judgments, but his recognition of the mythical implications in *Lady Chatterley*, and the accompanying concession that myth is extra-rational, marked an important advance in Lawrence criticism.

After Lady Chatterley

In 1928 Lawrence's *Collected Poems* were published and in 1929 *Pansies*. The first of these was widely reviewed without adding anything new to the judgments already made on Lawrence's poetry. *Birds, Beasts and Flowers* had appeared in 1923 and was included along with the earlier work in *Collected Poems*, but on both occasions reviewers tended to rate the earlier verse more highly. It was not until after Lawrence's death that justice was done to the importance of *Birds, Beasts and Flowers*. *Pansies*, on the other hand, though condemned by one reviewer as 'the low-water mark' of Lawrence's career (*MG* 27 August 1929), received some discriminating praise in the *T.L.S.* and *Herald Tribune* (Nos. 85-6).

In 1929 there was also an exhibition of Lawrence's paintings at the Warren Gallery which shocked some people, and was raided by the police. From the literary point of view interest centred on Lawrence's

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Introduction to the volume of reproductions which accompanied the exhibition (reviewed by the art critic, T. W. Earp, No. 84), and the question of censorship which the subsequent prosecution aroused. The publication of two pamphlets on this topic, *Do We Need A Censor?* by Lord Brentford (Sir William Joynson Hicks), who was British Home Secretary at the time of the seizure of the *Pansies* MS, and *Pornography and Obscenity* by Lawrence, gave an interesting opportunity to compare the arguments for and against censorship, which E. M. Forster and the *New Statesman* did very skilfully (Nos. 87-8).

Obituaries

Lawrence died at Venice, 2 March 1930, and the news was printed in most English papers on 3 March. The image presented by the obituaries was, as Catherine Carswell complained (*Time and Tide*, 14 March), that of 'a man morose, frustrated, tortured, even a sinister failure', and the comments on his literary career emphasized the familiar theme of his decline, as we see, for example, in No. 89. The *Glasgow Herald* varied this by saying that 'while he wrote more splendidly in each succeeding volume, he wrote less truly' (No. 91). Even his positive qualities were presented almost as the liabilities rather than the assets of genius, and the occasion of his death was taken by J. C. Squire, literary critic of the *Observer*, to prophesy that in another generation he might be regarded as 'preposterous and even boring'. A 'precious residuum' of his work would remain, but the rest would 'easily be forgiven and even forgotten'¹³ (No. 92). These were the characteristic judgments, by comparison with which the comments of Arnold Bennett and E. M. Forster (Nos. 94-5) have the air of extreme generosity.

The monthlies and quarterlies were more restrained, though not, on balance, more favourable. The English critic, John Heywood Thomas in 'The Perversity of D. H. Lawrence' (*Ct* October 1930) began by saying that Lawrence had died 'before we could tell him how much we admire the profound seriousness of his work', but the main body of the essay was concerned with the derogatory thesis that Lawrence forced himself into sensual contacts as a way of making himself feel his essential spirituality. The appreciation of his work by the American critic, Dayton Kohler, in *Sewanee Review* (January-March 1931), turned out to be a further contribution to the prevalent 'tortured spirit' view, and another American, A. R. Thompson (No.

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96), wrote a kind of plain man's retort to the sympathetic account of Lawrence's work given by the young Englishman, Stephen Potter, in *D. H. Lawrence: A First Study* (1930). Against these one may set the warm, if not judicious, tribute of the poet and novelist, Richard Aldington (*Everyman* 13 March 1930), whose enthusiasm for Lawrence was well known from his earlier criticism (here represented, for example, by No. 73), and the intelligently critical survey of Lawrence's work by the American literary and music critic, Paul Rosenfeld (No. 93).

Spread of Lawrence's reputation

No distinction has been made between Lawrence's reputation in Britain and America, since his work from the very first was published in both countries, and, as this selection shows, reviews and critical comments also appeared simultaneously. In other countries, judging by translations, interest in his work began in the 1920s, but did not become considerable until after his death. The first of his novels to be translated into a foreign language was *The Rainbow*, which appeared in German in 1922. This was followed in 1925 by *Jack Im Buschland* (*The Boy in the Bush*), translated by Else Jaffe-Richthofen, the academic elder sister of Frieda Lawrence (née Richthofen), who also translated *The Fox* (1926) and *The Woman Who Rode Away* (1928). Other translators produced German versions of *Sons and Lovers* (1925), *Women in Love* (1927), *Fantasia of the Unconscious* (1929), *Lady Chatterley* (1930), *St Mawr* (1931) and several other works between 1932-9.

Surprisingly, it was the Japanese who next paid attention to Lawrence, translating *Women in Love* (1923), *The Rainbow* (1924), *The Captain's Doll* (1924) and eighteen more items in Warren Roberts' list in the 1930s. Russian interest was also early (*Aaron's Rod* and *The Rainbow* both translated in 1925), but does not seem to have continued. The first French translation was *Le Renard* (*The Fox*), 1928, followed by *England, My England* (1930), *Sons and Lovers* (1931), *The Plumed Serpent* (1931), *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1932), *St Mawr* (1932), *Women in Love* (1932), and, again, a long list of other works in the 1930s. Italian interest began, like the French, with *The Fox* (1929), and in 1933 five of the novels were also translated: *The Trespasser*, *The White Peacock*, *Sons and Lovers*, *St Mawr* and *The Lost Girl*. Under the editorship of the distinguished Italian biographer of Lawrence, Piero

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Nardi, the complete works have now been translated into Italian, including the otherwise unavailable second version of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (translated by Carlo Izzo).

In other languages the most popular of Lawrence's books have been *Sons and Lovers*, translated into Swedish (1925), Roumanian (before 1930?), Czech (1931), Spanish (1933), Croatian, Finnish and Hebrew (1934), and Danish and Norwegian (1935); and, as might be expected, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*—Czech, Danish, Polish and Spanish (1932), Hungarian (1933), and Hebrew and Portuguese (1938).

Later critical reputation

The subsequent history of Lawrence's reputation can only be sketched very briefly. In the 1930s the pattern of Lawrence criticism was set partly by Middleton Murry's seemingly definitive study, *Son of Woman* (1931), given the influential endorsement of T. S. Eliot in his *Criterion* review (No. 97), and partly by the changing political climate. Murry offered the portrait of an artist whose life-long obsession with his mother distorted his entire treatment of sex and invalidated his art. Aldous Huxley's edition of the *Letters* (1932), which included his own excellent Introduction, did something to counteract this view, but the spate of reminiscences between 1932 and 1938,¹⁴ useful though several of them were in themselves, confirmed rather than changed Murry's emphasis on the biographical-subjective approach to Lawrence. To critics who were increasingly preoccupied with the political and economic problems of the 1930s it was this approach which made Lawrence seem virtually outmoded. 'The world', wrote Horace Gregory (himself the author of a book on Lawrence, *Pilgrim of the Apocalypse*, 1933), 'is moving away from Lawrence's need for personal salvation; his "dark religion" is not a substitute for economic planning . . .' (*NR* 14 December 1932). To specifically socialist critics like John Strachey and Christopher Caudwell the significant thing about Lawrence was that he was a critic of capitalist society who refused to follow through the logic of his own work.¹⁵

But in 1930 the man who was later to become Lawrence's best advocate and critic, F. R. Leavis, also published his first essay on Lawrence, emphasizing the correctness and relevance of Lawrence's criticism of modern industrial civilization ('D. H. Lawrence', reprinted in *For Continuity* 1933). It was a valuable essay, but immature compared with the later *D. H. Lawrence, Novelist* (1955), in which