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For my father, Albert Edward Harrison (1932–1973).

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Preface

This book does not follow the traditional biographical model of providing a detailed linear narrative of the life of D. H. Lawrence from birth to death. There are many scholarly and popular biographies of the author that offer more or less comprehensive accounts of his life; readers can find these listed in the Bibliography.[1] I address here some of the ways in which Lawrence's life can illuminate his writing (and vice versa). The book is organised chronologically, focusing on nine important subjects in the author's life and writing. Chapters 1–3 cover Lawrence's early life up to his completion of the first version of *Women in Love* in November 1916, while Chapters 6–9 deal with his writings from the spring of 1917 to the end of his life; Chapters 4 and 5 offer a reflective interlude, considering subjects which became particularly pressing for Lawrence during the war years, but which occupy a central position across his career, namely his treatment of taboo topics, his conflicted relationship to the literary marketplace and the censorship of his work, and his attitudes to sex, sexuality and sexual identity. In each chapter, details from the biographical record are drawn upon to provide interpretive contexts for the close analyses of texts. The coverage of texts is necessarily selective, but I have tried to offer fresh readings of Lawrence's work in different genres. Although seven of the nine chapters are strictly chronological, the issues addressed are clearly relevant to more than one period in the author's life, and I hope readers will be stimulated to extend my approach and find resonances of their own as they read (or re-read) Lawrence's writing.

Students and general readers encountering Lawrence's work for the first time could be forgiven for being intimidated by the sheer volume of his writing, and by the extensive biographical and critical industries that have grown up around the man and his work. Although Lawrence died at the age of 44, he was a prodigiously industrious author. During his lifetime, he published eleven novels, eight volumes of poetry plus *Collected Poems*, six volumes of short stories and novellas, three plays, three books of travel writings, a school history textbook, two books on psychology, a volume of critical essays on American literature, a volume of reflective philosophical essays, a volume of his paintings and four books of translations

from Italian into English. He also helped his friend S. S. Koteliansky to complete translations of two works from Russian into English. A simple list of this kind is, however, misleading, since Lawrence also published extensively in magazines, journals and newspapers, a good number of his writings were not published during his lifetime, and some works were very close to completion or in production at the time of his death. In addition, he wrote reviews plus several introductions to the books of friends and contacts. The Cambridge University Press Edition of Lawrence's works runs to 40 volumes (1980–2018). These include his unfinished and abandoned novel *Mr Noon* and early versions of four of his published novels. The Cambridge University Press Edition of his letters comprises eight volumes (1979–2000), containing over 5500 letters, and further correspondence which has come to light since 2000 is being published on an annual basis in the *Journal of D. H. Lawrence Studies* (2006–present).

In his novel *Dubin's Lives* (1979), Bernard Malamud describes the feeling of trepidation which his central character, the biographer William Dubin, feels as he contemplates beginning a book about Lawrence, and thinks of how many writings by and about his subject he will need to assimilate: 'Sometimes he felt like an ant about to eat an oak tree' (Malamud 1979: 20). Dubin is intensely aware of all the published biographies of Lawrence and volumes of criticism about him: he reflects that Lawrence is 'so vastly written about – someone had said second to Shakespeare; or if not second, third, Samuel Johnson intervening' (Malamud 1979: 19). It is sobering to think that Malamud's novel was published in the same year as the first volume of the Cambridge Edition. How much more cause for trepidation might Dubin have had if he was contemplating the task in the wake of that Edition, and with the added weight of the criticism and scholarship that has appeared since 1979?

Fortunately, the Cambridge Edition has revivified Lawrence studies. The renewed attention it has brought to Lawrence's life and work, and the different perspectives and approaches it has opened up, have made him at once a more accessible and appealing author. In the 1970s, Lawrence's reputation was at a low point. F. R. Leavis's earlier championing of him as a normative moralist in the 'Great Tradition' of English fiction had been challenged by scholars in Britain and the United States who emphasised the nihilistic qualities in his writing, and complications in his moral outlook.[2] Kate Millett's feminist attack on Lawrence in her influential 1970 book *Sexual Politics* had cast a shadow over his reputation inside and outside academia. The Cambridge Edition of his works moved the emphasis away from Lawrence as a moralist, propagandist and prophetic figure to focus instead on his painstaking methods of composition and his earnest and enterprising engagements with the publishing industry. As each new volume of the letters appeared, people began to see in detail the extent of his involvement with contemporary literary culture and the literary marketplace. Lawrence went from being

viewed exclusively as a tortured genius at odds with his contemporary society, or a troubled soul with psychological hang-ups, to being appreciated as a fully modern author just as committed to his craft as contemporaries like James Joyce and Virginia Woolf.

This transformation in our way of understanding Lawrence has generated revisionary interpretations of his writing. Critics have reassessed his response to a whole range of subjects, from women, his contemporaries, and creativity, to psychoanalysis, translation, science, philosophy, and travel and cultural difference. Various helpful introductory guides and volumes of essays have been published on his relationship to contemporary aesthetic and social or cultural contexts.[3] Where second-wave feminism created an atmosphere of hostility to Lawrence as a cultural icon and spokesperson on sex, the recent intensification of concern for the environment and the experience of the global Coronavirus pandemic have created renewed interest in Lawrence and ecology, and Lawrence and mental health.[4]

Scholarly biographies written in the wake of the Cambridge Edition have offered much fuller and more detailed accounts of Lawrence's writing life, reflecting the sheer energy and courage he put into supporting himself and his wife as a professional author who was never popular, and who dared to challenge attitudes to the body, sex and censorship.[5] They have also sought to correct some powerful misconceptions. The story of the working-class man who eloped with an aristocrat has been subjected to necessary revision. John Worthen has stressed the complexity of Lawrence's relationship to Eastwood and to the working class.[6] He has also established that Lawrence and Frieda's departure together to Germany in May 1912 was 'very far from being an elopement' (Worthen 1991: 393), and he has comprehensively dismantled any suggestion that the Frieda Weekley whom Lawrence met in March 1912 was an aristocrat.[7] Another enduring misconception about Lawrence is that he was in denial about the diagnosis of tuberculosis with which he was confronted in Mexico City in March 1925. David Ellis has shown just how blunt a term 'denial' is to describe the reactions of a man whose only hope was remission, and who faced not only 'the moral stigma attached to the disease' (Ellis 2008: 24) but limitations on his freedom to travel from openly admitting that he had tuberculosis.[8] Ellis has even emphasised the difficulty involved in clearly establishing the cause of Lawrence's death, since tuberculosis, recurrent bouts of bronchitis and pleurisy were all implicated in his final illness.

Despite these efforts to revise myths and misconceptions, they continue to be reproduced in literary criticism. This book aims to foreground several areas of complication and contention in the biographical record, showing how they can generate a fresh understanding of Lawrence's writing. A careful, inclusive and questioning approach to biographical sources is necessary in order to avoid condemning Lawrence as a traitor to the working class and as unequivocally sexist,

racist and fascistic, or conversely making him over into a fourth-wave feminist, an environmental activist or a mental health specialist *avant la lettre*. Acknowledging the complexity of Lawrence's relationship to the working class, his attitude to suffragism, his responsiveness to the natural world and wavering relation to discourses of otherness and race, and his concern not with conventional medical cures for physical ailments but with wholeness of being and the healing of psychic wounds, opens up his writing to discussion and renewed engagement rather than closing it down in the rush to damn the author as reactionary or praise him as prescient and forward-thinking. The approach adopted here is to move from a considered engagement with biographical detail to an alert and questioning reading of Lawrence's writing.

The use of biography to inform critical readings of Lawrence's works is so entrenched within Lawrence studies that it seems strange to reflect on or attempt to justify the method. Life and writing seem so intermingled in Lawrence's case that one naturally moves between the two. Several of the leading Lawrence scholars since F. R. Leavis have written biographies of Lawrence in the course of their careers as Lawrence critics and/or editors of his works and letters. Lawrence is a writer who engaged explicitly and energetically with pressing issues in his contemporary world, and he used his writing to gain a purchase on these issues. His vocation as an author was premised upon challenging the views of readers and in the process undermining what he saw as the unthinking attitudes of the Establishment. In reading Lawrence's work, we enter a world which is clearly informed by his multifaceted perspectives. One does not need to know very much about Lawrence to be aware that what one is reading is presented through the prism of a distinctive consciousness. Richard Aldington once described Lawrence as 'the most personal of writers', suggesting that his 'books become more intelligible, more vivid, even than they are without such help, if they are related to what is known of his personality and his life history'.[9] When I first taught a module on Lawrence in 1998 at the University of East Anglia, one disconcerted student told me how much she was struggling to read Lawrence's novels because she sensed that there was a key to understanding them which she did not possess. I now see this as a very perceptive response to the way in which Lawrence's worldview is subtly embedded in the texture of his fiction. Engaging with that worldview offers keys with which to unlock his work.

Lawrence realised and worked through his responses to contemporary issues in his writing. Writing, for him, was a means of understanding his experiences, and of externalising and transforming feelings of self-division, powerlessness, disgust and rage. This is surely what Lawrence meant when he said that his motto was 'Art for my sake' (*1L* 491). Writing was also, of course, a means of adopting different voices, perspectives and personae. It offered Lawrence a way of escaping from, or critiquing, his own views and modes of life, and of considering alternative

paths he might have taken or could take in the future. The characters in Lawrence's fiction who seem most autobiographical (from Cyril Beardsall to Paul Morel, Rupert Birkin, Rawdon Lilly, Richard Lovatt Somers, Clifford Chatterley and Oliver Mellors) are often satirised or subjected to irony or harsh criticism. The speakers in his poetry must be approached as provisional voices offering particular windows onto the world, even where (as in some of the late verse) they express views in a disarmingly frank and apparently unironic manner which we might be tempted to see as unproblematically authorial.

James Joyce is said to have told his French translator that in *Ulysses* he had 'put in so many enigmas and puzzles that it will keep the professors busy for centuries arguing over what I meant, and that's the only way of insuring one's immortality' (Ellmann 1982: 521). Lawrence might have said the same about the teasing manner in which he combined fiction and autobiography. Jessie Chambers (the closest friend of Lawrence's youth, his sometime partner, and the person with whom he shared his early reading and writing) records how, as a young man, Lawrence spoke with her about George Borrow: 'He said that Borrow had mingled autobiography and fiction so inextricably in *Lavengro* that the most astute critics could not be sure where the one ended and the other began. From his subtle smile I felt he was wondering whether he might not do something in the same fashion himself' (Chambers 1935: 110). In his writing, Lawrence often drew very closely on his own life and the lives of others. Events in his fiction frequently map onto events in his life, or in the lives of family, friends and contacts; he used the names of people and places he knew, sometimes literally, sometimes in a disguised or composite form, and he modelled some of his most memorable characters on real-life individuals. His wife Frieda liked to feel that she was a powerful presence in some of his texts and welcomed being fictionalised as (for example) Ursula Brangwen in *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, Johanna Keighley in *Mr Noon*, Tanny Lilly in *Aaron's Rod* and Harriett Somers in *Kangaroo*. The Armenian author Dikran Kouyoumdjian (better known under his pen name Michael Arlen) is said to have been happy to serve as the model for the Irish playwright Michaelis in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.[10] Others were deeply hurt and angry when they recognised themselves in his work, including Jessie Chambers (depicted as Miriam Leivers in *Sons and Lovers*), Philip Heseltine (depicted as Julius Halliday in *Women in Love*), Lady Ottoline Morrell (depicted as Hermione Roddice in the same novel) and Compton Mackenzie (depicted as Cameron Gee in 'Two Blue Birds' and Cathcart in 'The Man Who Loved Islands'). Lawrence was unapologetic about drawing in his fiction on his own life and the lives of his contacts. The only piece of writing we know he had scruples about publishing because of its potentially hurtful fictionalised depiction of real-life individuals was his novella *The Virgin and the Gipsy*, which contains a cruel portrayal of Frieda's first husband, Ernest Weekley, and his family, and Lawrence apparently chose not to publish this because of the

problems it might create for Frieda's daughters by Weekley rather than the impact it might have on Weekley himself.[11]

Lawrence's unflattering depiction in his fiction of people he knew, especially those who had offered him emotional and practical and/or financial support, still has the power to incite strong criticism of him on moral grounds. There are two points which we should consider, however, before rushing to judgement of him. Firstly, as I have noted, he frequently depicted himself in a strongly critical and satirical manner, and he upheld the right of others to depict him in any way they wished in their own creative work. Secondly, with the significant exception of *Sons and Lovers*, truthfulness to life was not a value by which he measured his art. In the process of writing *Sons and Lovers*, he asked Jessie Chambers to provide him with her own account of events in their early life together, and the notes she provided informed his revision of his novel. It is understandable, then, that she should have seen the published text as an act of betrayal. In this case, however, we might say that in the process of re-shaping his novel Lawrence moved beyond an attempt to be faithful to the past and looked instead to reflect on the ways in which his own early experiences, and those of his central protagonist, revealed the damaging nature and consequences of excessive spiritual love between mothers and sons. From this point on, Lawrence's interest would lie in exploring through his writing the important contemporary resonances of his own experiences, and of the experiences of others.

The nearest Lawrence came to drawing literally on his life in his fiction was in the second part of *Mr Noon*. This text was arguably abandoned because he failed to find in it the broader significance of his experiences, so it lacked the necessary thread or idea which would enable it to cohere as a work of art. In his published works, autobiographical elements and details drawn from life are incorporated and transformed in a manner which allows him to address themes which he considered central to his contemporary world, whether it was the restlessness and rebellion of the modern woman in *The Rainbow*, the war spirit in *Women in Love*, the need for post-war political reform in *Kangaroo*, or the need to re-connect with our bodies and sex as an antidote to the abstracting qualities of modernity and the mass media in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.

Writing was never, then, a simple matter of self-expression for Lawrence. By drawing on and embellishing in his writing the experiences and viewpoints of both himself and others, Lawrence sought to create the shifting patterns and relative significance which he came to see as central constituents of fully-realised art. In his essay 'Morality and the Novel' (1925), he declares that it is immoral for the artist to use art to project specific moral values. Art, like life, should be about realising ever-changing relationships in the moment.[12] Whether or not Lawrence always succeeds in avoiding using fiction to advance his own values is an open question, of course, but generations of students have discovered sufficient grounds

in *Sons and Lovers* for sympathising with Miriam Leivers and criticising Paul Morel, or found Rupert Birkin in *Women in Love* verbose and absurd, and gravitated towards Gerald Crich as its compelling tragic hero, or found themselves identifying at times with Clifford Chatterley and recoiling at others from the snobbishness of Constance Chatterley or the abrasive bitterness and sexual brutality of Oliver Mellors. Great art opens out onto complexity, causing us to question the grounds for our moral judgements.

Lawrence's sense of the irreducible complexity of art informed his strong reaction against literary criticism which claimed to 'explain' his writing or to paraphrase its meaning or significance. As he famously declared: 'If you try to nail anything down, in the novel, either it kills the novel, or the novel gets up and walks away with the nail' (*STH* 172). He told a friend that he 'hated' a lengthy Freudian appreciation of *Sons and Lovers* by the American psychoanalyst and critic Alfred Booth Kuttner: 'My poor book: it was, as art, a fairly complete truth: so they carve a half lie out of it, and say "Voilà". Swine!' (*2L* 655). In *Mr Noon*, the novel with an equal claim to being autobiographical, he anticipated the attentions of the psychoanalysing critic and directly addressed his reader in a combative fashion, telling her: 'you can't sniff out any specific why or any specific wherefore, with your carrion-smelling psycho-analysing nose, because there *is* no why and wherefore' (*MN* 205). This shows Lawrence's keen awareness, by early 1921, of the intrusive presumption of critics who would scan his more autobiographical fiction for symptoms of the author's psychological ailments and hang-ups, and of the prurience of censors on the lookout for salacious details with which to confirm their preconceptions about the obscenity of his mind and his work. By directly addressing his readers in this fashion, he was attempting to undermine their interpretive complacency and challenging them to discover *any* strand of meaning or logic in his text. In the case of *Mr Noon*, one could argue that the extent of his self-awareness was harmful to the text, since his determination to resist his readers' discovery of any 'why' or 'wherefore' prevented him too from discovering any central threads of significance in his use of autobiographical material.

Lawrence was not usually inclined to explain his prose fiction, unless it was to defend the form and structure of his early work to friends and literary advisors. The published and unpublished forewords and introductions he wrote to accompany his fiction, poetry and paintings draw attention to some strands of meaning in the texts and art, and to the contexts in which we can understand them, but never in a reductive or prescriptive way. Again, however, there is a significant exception to the rule. The furore caused by *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, and the action of pirate publishers in profiteering from it, drove Lawrence to articulate his motives in writing the novel. In 'My Skirmish with Jolly Roger', first published as a foreword to the Paris Popular Edition of the novel, and then

in the revised and greatly extended version known as *A Propos of 'Lady Chatterley's Lover'*, he underscored the ambition of the novel, emphasising (for example) his desire to reclaim the four-letter words as healthy descriptive terms for the body and sex, and the urgent need to think clearly and wholesomely about sex as a means of addressing the counterfeit emotions of cinema, journalism and popular fiction. Perhaps Lawrence's sense of the author's moral responsibility to avoid using art as propaganda was offset in this case by the perceived urgency of these issues. He finally decided not to publish the extended essay, and it did not appear in print until late June 1930, over three months after his death.[13] Any attentive reader attempting to use the essay to nail down the novel will certainly find it getting up and walking away with the nail.

Lawrence was the first to admit to his own inconsistency.[14] Here, as elsewhere in Lawrence, we are confronted with complexity, contradiction and paradox. It is these qualities in the man and his writing that make him such an unsettling, provocative and enlivening subject for biography and criticism. The following chapters seek to foreground the complexities of key issues in Lawrence biography, using them to open up the writing to new perspectives and approaches, recognising contradictions and paradoxes as critical elements both in the author's identity and in the nature of his texts as fully-realised works of art.

Notes

1. The most detailed and reliable account of Lawrence's life is still that provided in the three-volume Cambridge biography (Worthen 1991; Kinkead-Weekes 1996; Ellis 1998).
2. See Spilka (1964). Widmer (1962), for example, emphasised the nihilism in Lawrence's writing, while Clarke (1969) focused on complications and paradoxes.
3. See, for example, Poplawski (1996), Becket (2002), Harrison (2018a), Brown and Reid (2020) and Grice (2024).
4. See, for example, Gifford (2023) and Feigel (2022).
5. In addition to the Cambridge biography, see Worthen (1989), Worthen (2005) and Harrison (2016).
6. See Worthen (1986) and Worthen (1991).
7. See Worthen (1995).
8. Ellis notes that shortly before Lawrence left Mexico for the United States following his diagnosis, the US 'government had . . . passed legislation aimed at preventing anyone with tuberculosis from coming into the country' (Ellis 2008: 25). Lawrence used rouge to mask the pallor of his cheeks, but he was still subjected to medical inspection at the border and only admitted back into the country on a six-month visa.

9 Transcription from 'Son and Lover: A Portrait of D. H. Lawrence', The Third Programme, BBC Radio, 8 May 1955. La Av 3/2/2 (University of Nottingham).

10 Edward Titus to D. H. Lawrence (9 September 1929): 'Mike is a tremendous admirer of you and he feels greatly elated at having served you as one of the characters in Lady Chatterly [*sic*]' (*7L* 475–476 fn. 6).

11 See *VG* xxiii.

12 See *STH* 175: 'It is the *relation itself* which is the quick and the central clue to life, not the man, nor the woman, nor the children that result from the relationship, as a contingency'.

13 See *7L* 633 (30 January 1930).

14 See Frieda Lawrence (1934: 61): 'He'd have quick changes of mood and thought. This puzzled me. "But Lawrence, last week you said exactly the opposite of what you are saying now". / "And why shouldn't I? Last week I felt like that, now like this. Why shouldn't I?"

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List of Abbreviations

Quotations from the letters and works of D. H. Lawrence in the main text and notes refer readers to the Cambridge Edition of the author's works using the short forms listed below.

Letters of D. H. Lawrence

1L	*The Letters of D. H. Lawrence Volume I: September 1901–May 1913*, ed. James T. Boulton. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1979.
2L	*The Letters of D. H. Lawrence Volume II: June 1913–October 1916*, ed. George J. Zytaruk and James T. Boulton. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1981.
3L	*The Letters of D. H. Lawrence Volume III: October 1916–June 1921*, ed. James T. Boulton and Andrew Robertson. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984.
4L	*The Letters of D. H. Lawrence Volume IV: June 1921–March 1924*, ed. Warren Roberts, James T. Boulton and Elizabeth Mansfield. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987.
5L	*The Letters of D. H. Lawrence Volume V: March 1924–March 1927*, ed. James T. Boulton and Lindeth Vasey. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989.
6L	*The Letters of D. H. Lawrence Volume VI: March 1927–November 1928*, ed. James T. Boulton and Margaret H. Boulton with Gerald M. Lacy. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991.
7L	*The Letters of D. H. Lawrence Volume VII: November 1928–February 1930*, ed. Keith Sagar and James T. Boulton. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993.
8L	*The Letters of D. H. Lawrence Volume VIII: Previously Uncollected Letters and General Index*, ed. James T. Boulton. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000.

Works of D. H. Lawrence

A	*Apocalypse and the Writings on Revelation*, ed. Mara Kalnins. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1980.
AR	*Aaron's Rod*, ed. Mara Kalnins. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988.
BB	*The Boy in the Bush*, with M. L. Skinner, ed. Paul Eggert. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990.
EmyE	*England, My England and Other Stories*, ed. Bruce Steele. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990.
FLC	*The First and Second Lady Chatterley Novels*, ed. Dieter Mehl and Christa Jansohn. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999.
Fox	*The Fox, The Captain's Doll, The Ladybird*, ed. Dieter Mehl. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992.
FWL	*The First 'Women in Love'*, ed. John Worthen and Lindeth Vasey. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998.
IR	*Introductions and Reviews*, ed. N. H. Reeve and John Worthen. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005.
K	*Kangaroo*, ed. Bruce Steele. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994.
LAH	*Love Among the Haystacks and Other Stories*, ed. John Worthen. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987.
LCL	*Lady Chatterley's Lover and A Propos of 'Lady Chatterley's Lover'*, ed. Michael Squires. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993.
LEA	*Late Essays and Articles*, ed. James T. Boulton. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004.
LG	*The Lost Girl*, ed. John Worthen. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1981.
MEH	*Movements in European History*, ed. Philip Crumpton. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989.
MM	*Mornings in Mexico and Other Essays*, ed. Virginia Crosswhite Hyde. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009.
MN	*Mr Noon*, ed. Lindeth Vasey. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984.
Paintings	*The Paintings of D. H. Lawrence*. London: Mandrake Press, 1929.
PFU	*Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious and Fantasia of the Unconscious*, ed. Bruce Steele. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004.
Plays	*The Plays*, ed. Hans-Wilhelm Schwarze and John Worthen. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999.
PM	*Paul Morel*, ed. Helen Baron. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003.
PO	*The Prussian Officer and Other Stories*, ed. John Worthen. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983.
Poems	*The Poems*. 3 Vols., ed. Christopher Pollnitz. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013, 2018.
PS	*The Plumed Serpent*, ed. L. D. Clark. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987.

Q	*Quetzalcoatl*, ed. N. H. Reeve. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011.
R	*The Rainbow*, ed. Mark Kinkead-Weekes. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989.
RDP	*Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine and Other Essays*, ed. Michael Herbert. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988.
SCAL	*Studies in Classic American Literature*, ed. Ezra Greenspan, Lindeth Vasey and John Worthen. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003.
SEP	*Sketches of Etruscan Places and Other Italian Essays*, ed. Simonetta de Filippis. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992.
SL	*Sons and Lovers*, ed. Helen Baron and Carl Baron. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992.
SM	*St. Mawr and Other Stories*, ed. Brian Finney. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983.
SS	*Sea and Sardinia*, ed. Mara Kalnins. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997.
STH	*Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays*, ed. Bruce Steele. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985.
T	*The Trespasser*, ed. Elizabeth Mansfield. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1981.
TI	*Twilight in Italy and Other Essays*, ed. Paul Eggert. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994.
VG	*The Virgin and the Gipsy and Other Stories*, ed. Michael Herbert, Bethan Jones and Lindeth Vasey. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006.
VicG	*The Vicar's Garden and Other Stories*, ed. N. H. Reeve. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009.
WL	*Women in Love*, ed. David Farmer, Lindeth Vasey and John Worthen. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987.
WP	*The White Peacock*, ed. Andrew Robertson. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983.
WWRA	*The Woman Who Rode Away and Other Stories*, ed. Dieter Mehl and Christa Jansohn. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995.

1

Lawrence, Eastwood and Working-Class Experience

The story of D. H. Lawrence's first meeting with Ford Madox Hueffer[1] in September 1909, and of how Hueffer accepted Lawrence's work for publication in the journal he was then editing, the *English Review*, and became Lawrence's mentor, has often been told. This was one of two truly transformational events in Lawrence's early life, the other being his meeting with Frieda Weekley in early March 1912. They were pivotal moments in Lawrence's development as a person and an author, and as such they feature centrally in the biographies.

For their accounts of the context to Lawrence's meeting with Hueffer, biographers have had to rely on Jessie Chambers's memoir, *D. H. Lawrence: A Personal Record* (1935), while the only source which deals with the meeting itself is Hueffer's essay on Lawrence in his *Portraits from Life* (1937). Jessie recalls how Lawrence introduced the *English Review* to her family when he returned to Eastwood, the mining town on the Nottinghamshire-Derbyshire border where he was born, to spend Christmas with his family at the end of his first term as an elementary school teacher at Davidson Road School in Croydon, south-east London. This would have been sometime between 23 December 1908 and 10 January 1909. He must have shown them the first number of the journal, of December 1908, which contained contributions from (among others) Thomas Hardy, Henry James, Joseph Conrad, John Galsworthy and H. G. Wells. Jessie notes that they were 'delighted' with the *English Review*, and with her father's backing they decided to subscribe to it. She 'soon noticed that the Editor was prepared to welcome new talent' (Chambers 1935: 156) and she 'begged' Lawrence to submit some of his work, 'but he refused absolutely', stating that he was not anxious to 'get into print', and in any case the journal would 'never take it'. He agreed, however, to let her submit on his behalf any of his work she chose, so long as she gave him a *nom de plume*, since he said he did not want 'folk in Croydon to know I write poetry'.

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Jessie picked out what she thought were the best poems Lawrence had sent to her since he left Eastwood to take up his teaching post in early October 1908. She copied them out ‘one beautiful June morning’ in 1909. She chose ‘Discipline’, ‘Dreams Old and Nascent’ and ‘Baby-Movements’, plus ‘several other poems whose titles I don’t remember’; she placed ‘Discipline’ first because she thought ‘the unusual title might attract the Editor’s attention’ (Chambers 1935: 157). ‘Discipline’ and ‘Dreams Old and Nascent’ were poems dealing with Lawrence’s early experiences as a teacher; ‘Baby-Movements’ was inspired by his affection for Hilda Mary Jones, the second daughter of John and Marie Jones (the couple in whose home he lodged in Croydon). In her cover letter, Jessie described Lawrence as ‘a young man who had been writing for a number of years, and who would be very grateful for any recognition’; she gave his name ‘but said that if any of the poems were printed they should appear under the *nom de plume* of Richard Greasley (Richards was an unacknowledged name of Lawrence’s, and Greasley was his home parish)’ (Chambers 1935: 158).[2]

Hueffer’s reply arrived at some point between 1 and 14 August, while Lawrence was on holiday with his family on the Isle of Wight. Hueffer found the poems ‘very interesting’ and felt that the author had ‘undoubted talent’, but he injected a note of caution into his praise, commenting that ‘nowadays luck played such a large part in a literary career’. He said that if Jessie would get Lawrence ‘to come and see me some time when he is in London perhaps something might be done’. Jessie replied that when Lawrence was back from his holiday she was ‘sure he would be glad to call on Mr Hueffer’. Soon after 14 August, she gave him Hueffer’s letter. He murmured to her ‘*You* are my luck’ and took it to show his mother. Jessie ‘never saw it again’ (Chambers 1935: 158–159).

Lawrence travelled back to Croydon on Sunday 29 August and began teaching the following day. Jessie states that Lawrence went to see Hueffer in September. If so, the meeting happened at some point between Wednesday 1 September and Saturday 11 September. Unfortunately, Hueffer’s account of the meeting, which took place at 84 Holland Park Avenue, his flat above a fishmonger and poulterer’s shop which doubled as the offices of the *English Review*, is very brief and unreliable, for reasons which will soon become clear. He recalled that after Lawrence’s arrival was announced by his secretary, Olive Thomas, his visitor stood in the doorway, like a fox ‘going to make a raid on the hen-roost before him’ (Ford 1937: 76). Hueffer records Lawrence saying ‘This isn’t my idea, Sir, of an editor’s office’. When Hueffer defended his room, describing the ‘feeling of thankfulness and satisfaction’ he got from coming to it from outdoors, Lawrence is said to have replied: ‘That’s all very well. But it doesn’t look like a place in which one would make money ... The room may be all right for your private tastes ... which aren’t mine, though that does not matter. But it isn’t one to inspire confidence in creditors. Or contributors’ (Ford 1937: 77–78).

What else passed between them, he does not say. Surviving letters suggest, however, that Hueffer was encouraging and supportive. On his twenty-fourth birthday, 11 September, Lawrence reported to Louie Burrows, a friend whose family lived in the village of Cossall, around six miles south-east of Eastwood: 'It is supposed to be a secret, but I guess I shall have to tell you. The editor of the *English Review* has accepted some of my Verses, and wants to put them into the *English Review*, the November issue ... The editor, Ford Madox Hueffer, says he will be glad to read any of the work I like to send him – which is a great relief, is it not?' (*1L* 137–138). He told Jessie that Hueffer was 'fairish, fat, about forty, and the kindest man on earth', and he boasted about the invitations to dinner with 'celebrities' and 'two R.A.s' (Chambers 1935: 163) that accrued from Hueffer's support.

Hueffer stresses Lawrence's 'shynesses' (Ford 1937: 76) in their first meeting. It is quite plausible that Lawrence hid his nervousness about meeting Hueffer by adopting the kind of confident, assertive, even brash demeanour that Hueffer ascribes to him. However, the phrases he puts into Lawrence's mouth are transposed in a revised form from Jessie's account in her memoir of her visit to Croydon almost three months later, on the weekend of 27–28 November, when Lawrence took her to meet Hueffer at his flat before they all went together to have lunch with Hueffer's partner, Violet Hunt, at her home, 'South Lodge', 80 Campden Hill Road.[3] Most of the rest of Hueffer's essay is unreliable too. He states that he read 'The Fox' shortly before writing his essay, which accounts for the image he used for Lawrence's attitude as he stood in the doorway.[4] Hueffer weaves together details from his recent reading of Jessie's memoir and some of Lawrence's writing with vaguely recalled information about Lawrence's early life (perhaps drawing in part on *Sons and Lovers*); he even erroneously suggests that he once met Lawrence's father.[5]

Setting aside the inaccuracies and inventions, however, the main problem with the essay is Hueffer's determination to present the Lawrence he first met as a working-class writer. He takes issue with Jessie by stating that she first wrote to him to ask if he 'would care to see anything – and then should it be poetry or prose' (Ford 1937: 72); he says he requested both, so she sent him the poems together with 'Odour of Chrysanthemums', a story of mining life set in Eastwood which Lawrence actually began writing later in the year. Ford therefore describes his own trepidation on meeting Lawrence as being all to do with class: 'If he really was the son of a working coal-miner, how exactly was I to approach him in conversation?' (Ford 1937: 75). Jessie notes that at Violet Hunt's gathering, Ezra Pound asked Hueffer 'How would *you* speak to a working man?', and Hueffer replied 'I should speak to a working man in exactly the same way that I should speak to any other man, because I don't think there is any difference' (Chambers 1935: 174). Ford repeats the anecdote as a sign that he 'automatically regarded every human being as my equal' (Ford 1937: 75), but his essay is full of class consciousness and class condescension.