

farm for 'a fuller relationship between oneself and the universe, and between oneself and one's fellow man and fellow woman' (*Letters* 5, 553); but there is at least the little flame of himself and Connie in the heart of Mellors. This flame could have saved Aaron from his long illness in London and Somers from his abortive commitment to Kangaroo's cause; this flame does save Kate from the inertia, emptiness, and indifference of mechanical civilization. Had there been the warmth of the little flame in the leadership novels, violence, misanthropy, and unrealistic (often self-contradicting) social visions could have been modified, if not saved, and Lawrence might have been able to achieve a fuller relationship between the leaders and followers and between man and woman. The articulation of this vision makes *Lady Chatterley's Lover* the triumph of Lawrence's art.

NOTE

1. Keith Sagar believes that in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, 'Lawrence is emerging from his misanthropy' (178), but a quotation like the following qualifies Sagar's assertion: "'They [the people] are animals you don't understand, and never could. Don't thrust your illusions on other people. The masses were always the same, and will always be the same. Nero's slaves were extremely little different from our colliers or the Ford motor-car workmen. I mean Nero's mine slaves and his field slaves. It is the masses: they are the unchangeable.'" (182)

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Book Reviews

John Worthen, D.H. Lawrence: *The Early Years 1885-1913* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991; pp. xxx + 626; cloth £25.00).

Lawrence's reputation has been in recession for two decades. The decline started with Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* (1971) and Raymond Williams subsequently led a group of left-wing critics who, in his words, had 'got much harder about Lawrence over the years'. The double barrels of feminism and socialism have been gunning for Lawrence ever since, blowing large holes in the notion that Lawrence consumption is an unquestionably wholesome activity. For many readers, consequently, Leavis's number one isn't even in the charts any more.

The mainstream Lawrence industry, however, has reacted throughout these hard times as if there were no threat to its product whatever. For the last decade and a half it has ignored critical controversies entirely and embarked instead upon a programme of reverential monument-building: The Cambridge Edition of the Letters and Works of D.H. Lawrence. Indeed, the effect of this monument building has been to subvert critical debate on Lawrence's importance. The monuments are being erected. They wouldn't be being erected if Lawrence weren't of absolute importance. Therefore there is no need to argue his importance. That alarming confidence seems to buttress the CUP's substantial Lawrence investment.

In what is increasingly coming to look like the strategy of a corporate monopoly, the CUP is now supplying the demand for a bumper biography which its own editions of the Letters has stimulated, and John Worthen, who has devoted virtually the whole of his academic endeavour to this one author, has written the first of its three volumes. Dubious as one may be about the Cambridge project in which Worthen is a central editorial figure, the excellence of this particular volume in itself is not in doubt.

It is not simply a scholarly synthesis of already existing sources, as Worthen has cast his net much wider than previous biographers. His investigation of Lawrence's antecedents has been painstaking and precise and does truly render all other accounts obsolete. It also disposes of a key myth about Lydia Lawrence in proving that *both* parents were working class. As just one further example of demystification, Worthen shows that Lawrence's meeting with Frieda Weekley was not a whirlwind romance leading to a passionate elopement. In fact, there was no elopement at all: Frieda intended to return to Ernest Weekley after a sojourn with Lawrence in Germany in 1912, and may well have done so had Lawrence himself not revealed their affair to her husband. Worthen's biography clarifies and deepens all that we already know from previous biographies as well as presenting much that has

emerged only in the recent editions of the Letters. This and the two remaining volumes of the Cambridge Biography are thus bound to form the standard reference for Lawrence's life.

Given this fact, certain of Worthen's emphases and omissions deserve scrutiny. When he remarks (251) that Jessie Chambers 'was only the first of a number of women to whom Lawrence would go for sex' in 1910 and 1911, he is quite clearly giving an impression which he knows the evidence alone does not substantiate. It can be established that Lawrence had (extremely unsatisfactory, clandestine and fleeting) sexual relationships only with Jessie Chambers and Alice Dax before meeting Frieda. Speculation about how far his relationships with Helen Corke and Marie Jones (his Croydon landlady) went is of limited value; wild guesses about a mystery woman called 'Jane' and a possible prostitute called 'Pauline' have none at all. Lawrence's relative lack of sexual experience is, of course, embarrassing for an entire generation of Lawrence readers who assumed that his sexual pronouncements had authority, but this alone cannot justify Worthen's inferences that there was more than meets the eye.

Worthen brilliantly relates Lawrence's sexual ambitions to his social mobility (368-70), but revealingly stops short of drawing the conclusions which a socialist or feminist commentator would find inevitable. He shows that Jessie Chambers and Alice Dax had attitudes to sex that were determined by their social position. For such women, economic emancipation and sexual liberation did not go hand-in-hand: Jessie Chambers would have lost her job were it known that she had slept with Lawrence. At pains to avoid judgmental conclusions, Worthen fails to make the obvious point that the kind of sexual life which Lawrence demanded was deeply bourgeois. In fact, it was a minor aristocrat (who never did a day's work in her life) who provided him with it. Lawrence's marriage may have been an immense personal gain, but it was also a profound social loss, for it signified his definitive break with the working class and the beginning of a journey into an appalling morass of right-wing politics.

Worthen, however, ignores politics almost entirely. The political organisation of Lawrence's community is bypassed. His interest in socialism is treated as a flirtation (which is at least arguable), but can this justify an almost total neglect of his relationship with the Hopkins? Enid Hilton, the Hopkins' daughter, has stated that Lawrence met Philip Snowden, Ramsay MacDonald and Sydney and Beatrice Webb, among others, at the Hopkin household, but this, amazingly, is not cited by Worthen. The Guild Socialism espoused by Orage (whose *New Age* Lawrence read regularly during 1908 and 1909) goes unmentioned, as does Lawrence's reading of William Morris. Arthur Lawrence's membership of the Miners' Federation is ignored, and the industrial unrest of the late Victorian and Edwardian periods hardly

explored. Most revealingly, Lawrence's active involvement in the 1912 national miners' strike (the only evidence we have that he was ever involved in a practical left-wing cause) is suppressed: on 2 April 1912 he went 'round with a friend delivering Relief tickets' to strikebound families (see *Letters*, vol.1, 380).

If there is room for generous speculation about possible prostitutes, surely there ought to have been space for such known facts? A more profound point is that these facts are extremely important for an understanding of Lawrence's work and development. Knowledge of his active commitment to the 1912 strike puts into sharp relief that later document of astonishing class betrayal, 'Return to Bestwood', written in the aftermath of 1926. Knowledge of early contact with metropolitan political figures similarly qualifies our sense of Lawrence's provincialism. If Worthen synthesises various sources effectively, he does not by any means give the whole story. Readers interested in Lawrence's politics in particular will find that *The Cambridge Biography* is less than reliable.

Macdonald Daly

D.H. Lawrence, *Sons and Lovers*, ed. Helen Baron and Carl Baron (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992; pp. lxxxi + 675; cloth £70.00).

Sons and Lovers has perhaps been the most keenly anticipated volume in the Cambridge edition. In part this has to do with the special place the novel occupies both in the minds of Lawrence's readers and in the canon of his work. Often, it is the first (sometimes the only one) of Lawrence's novels to be read. Its subject matter and themes of the growth from childhood to adulthood, family life, conflict between the generations, class and education have a compelling interest, especially for English readers. Furthermore, because of its supposedly 'autobiographical' content, however much that may have been challenged by research into Lawrence's life, readers are still inclined to regard *Sons and Lovers* as the book in which they are most likely to be able to 'read' Lawrence himself. The eagerness with which this new edition of the novel has been awaited, however, also has much to do with its textual history, some of whose details have been known to students of Lawrence for many years, but which is now set out in its full, troubled complexity for the first time.

The novel was first conceived in the autumn of 1910 and occupied Lawrence, with two or three breaks of some months, for two and a half years. Those thirty months saw his life change dramatically with the death of his mother, the publication of his first two novels, his engagement to Louie Burrows, his own serious illness, his break with Louie, his resignation from his teaching post and, finally, his meeting and departure for Germany, in May 1912, with Frieda Weekley. The manuscript of the novel, then called 'Paul Morel', travelled with him to Germany. It was by now in its