



Illustr.1. Lawrence's grave, circa 5 March 1930, against the wall of Vence Cemetery. It is covered with flowers and foliage, the withered carnation wreath being propped up in place of a headstone. According to Joan Budgen, her mother Francine recalled her embarrassment, when she and her party returned to the Cemetery to take photographs, at finding their tribute had been given such prominence.

**D.H.Lawrence: *The Woman Who Rode Away and other stories*, edited by Dieter Mehl and Christa Jansohn, C.U.P, 1995.**

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This volume contains the eleven stories published by Lawrence in May 1928 under the title *The Woman Who Rode Away* (though *The Man Who Loved Islands* appeared only in the American Edition). Two additional stories which appeared in the posthumous collection "The Lovely Lady" are included, together with a fragment entitled "A Pure Witch". In a short review it is impossible to do full justice to the detailed and meticulous editing by Dieter Mehl and Christa Jansohn of a work of such biographical, bibliographical and compositional complexity. By cutting a clear path through this multiplicity of detail, the Editors have thrown valuable light on this period of Lawrence's great maturity as a writer.

In this collection the stories are printed in the order originally suggested by Lawrence whose advice was, "Let us start with a lighter story" - "Two Blue Birds", in fact. But the main theme of this volume is an analysis of the background of these stories which were all - including, "The Lovely Lady" and "The Rocking Horse Winner" - written between 1924 and 1928. So that in the Introduction the stories are discussed chronologically in groups which reflect the experiences of Lawrence's various sojourns in England, France, Germany, New Mexico and finally Italy. Thus we find "The Borderline" reflecting, the Germany of 1924 when Lawrence and Frieda were travelling to Baden Baden via Strasbourg, "Sun" reproducing the Italian scene, and "The Two Blue Birds"

and "The Man Who Loved Islands" influenced by his Italian friendships. At the same time, the Editors have placed the stories which were often written as light relief from more serious commitments or for remuneration, or in response to some publisher's specific request - within the framework of Lawrence's oeuvre as a whole -, so that we are not surprised to find *The Woman Who Rode Away* linked chronologically with "St. Mawer" and *The Plumed Serpent*, and "In Love" being written at the same time as *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. One of the fascinating details of the Introduction is the description of a manuscript notebook (see E.W.Tedlock's *Lawrence MSS*) purchased presumably in Mexico in 1923 and used "more or less concurrently from both ends". Though pages have been cut or torn from the MS, it is possible to reconstruct the order of some of the compositions owing to the existence of stamped leaf-numbers; so that the fragment "A Pure Witch" (53-57) can be dated with a degree of certainty to late February 1924, whereas the date of "The Woman Who Rode Away" (63-86 of the MS) is most likely to be June 1924, after the return to New Mexico. Added complications arise from the existence of revisions by Lawrence of earlier versions, and seven Appendices provide the reader with texts showing the significant differences in various versions of "Sun", "The Border-line", "The Last Laugh", "In Love", "The Man Who Loved Islands", "Glad Ghosts" and "The Lovely Lady". "A Pure Witch" is published for the first time, in Appendix VIII, thus providing, Lawrence's readers with the unique experience of reading, a completely new story written in the first person from the point of view of a young girl of nineteen on the point of being seduced by a dark Italian aged 30.

Discussing the reception of *The Woman Who Rode Away*, the Editors suggest that some reviewers "praised the stories at the expense of the novels

and were surprisingly blind to what later criticism has found to be Lawrence's achievement in this volume". One reviewer regretted the prophet and seer had "slit the throat of the artist". On the other hand, a German critic bracketed Lawrence with Freud as a "true diagnosis of Europe's sick condition, to be neglected by the modern reader at his peril". But we can give the last word to Arnold Bennett who proved to be one of D.H.Lawrence's most enthusiastic admirers, saying he was the "strongest novelist writing today... What freshness! What force! What a series of small masterpieces!" (New Statesman:23.6.28)