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# Lady Chatterley's Lover by D. H. Lawrence



The Unexpurgated 1928 Orioli Edition

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# Lady Chat Love by D. H. La

The Complete and Unexpurgated 1928 Orioli Edition

Preface by Lawrence Durrell

Edited and with an introduction by Ronald Friedland

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## David Herbert (D. H.) Lawrence,

whose fiction has had a profound influence on twentieth-century literature, was born on September 11, 1885, in a mining village in Nottinghamshire, England. His father was an illiterate coal miner, his mother a genteel schoolteacher determined to lift her children out of the working class. His parents' unhappy marriage and his mother's strong emotional claims on her son later became the basis for Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* (1913), one of the most important autobiographical novels of this century. Lawrence completed his studies at University College, Nottingham in 1908 and taught for a few years at a boys' school. In 1912 he left teaching to devote himself to writing—and to run away with a married woman, Frieda von Richthofen, sister of the famous German World War I flying ace and wife of Lawrence's French professor at Nottingham. The elopement marked the beginning of Lawrence's lifelong ~~clash with~~ accepted morality, as well as the start of a ceaseless wanderlust prompted by the tuberculosis that would eventually kill him.

In 1915, his masterpiece *The Rainbow*, which like its companion novel *Women in Love* (1920) dealt frankly with sex, was suppressed as indecent a month after its publication. *Aaron's Rod* (1922); *Kangaroo* (1923), set in Australia; and *The Plumed Serpent* (1926), set in Mexico, were all written during Lawrence's travels in search of political and emotional refuge and a healthful climate. In 1928, already desperately ill, Lawrence wrote *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Banned as pornographic, the unexpurgated edition was not allowed legal circulation in Britain until 1960. D. H. Lawrence called his life, marked by struggle, frustration, and despair, "a savage enough pilgrimage." He died on March 2, 1930, at the age of forty-four, in Vence, France.

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## Preface

Lawrence has been the subject of so many studies now—the checklist stands at some eight hundred volumes and pamphlets—that he has begun to seem more of an academic industry than a writer, the liveliest of his time. Can anything be added, whether in praise or blame, to this vast corpus? The biography is a matter of public record; and what they have not done for him he has done for himself, brilliantly and persuasively putting on record his intentions—what writer has been more explicit about these?

This book, which may not be one of his best, is certainly his most controversial, and the dust it raised will be a long time settling. Yet if I were to choose an epigraph for it today, it might be something like “The Many Couple but the Few Mate”; Stendhal’s “Happy Few,” be it understood—or perhaps one should call them the Unhappy Few, who still stand ringed about by the fires of the puritan conscience. “The sense of guilt in Rimbaud,” observes Miller somewhere, “was not conquered, it atrophied.” And this is certainly the feeling one gets looking round upon this permissive generation; how Lawrence would have hated to be cited as an avatar of license! Yet he would perhaps have agreed with Diderot that “*il y a un peu de testicule au fond de nos sentiments les plus sublimes et de notre tendresse la plus épurée.*” It is this little neglected imp of raw sensuality which he set out to canonize, to celebrate. Of course the intention was dogmatic—for he was something of a puritan himself. He was out to cure, to mend; and the weapons he selected for this act of therapy were the four-letter words about which so long and idiotic a battle has raged. Has it been won? Presumably, for I hear that they are freely used now, even on television. Have they

at last been sanctified by such bloodless choristers as cling to the barren branches of the Sunday press? Somehow I have my doubts. "We take our pleasures sadly and wear our perversions awkwardly," observes Mr. Peter Quennell somewhere in another context. It is difficult to know what he would have felt about the public brandishing of these poor little words. But the imp is out of the bottle at last. And here it may be worth pointing out that Lawrence himself may have had to master severe internal resistances before arriving at a natural use of these words. Does this explain the several drafts of this book, his careful rewriting and reshaping? He was seeking for a naturalness of tone: he knew that if he himself had to force out these passages the result would be damage to the melodic line of the book—for nothing is so easily communicated to the reader as the repressions of his author. In this, his last version, he has brought off the trick perfectly. The prose is natural, lyrical and unforced: nowhere is he shrill and self-conscious. Though he was ill, indeed was dying, there is no falling off in the vivid, exacerbated coloring of the work. It was a surprise package of a book, and addressed to his native England. There is no need to trace out the unhappy results of this deeply serious creative act. Could they perhaps, have been predictable? When a serious artist is flushed the hunt is up with a vengeance!

The allegory has been studied in such detail that I think the time has come to remind the reader that, though this is in some sort a tract, it is also a *novel* and has a right to be judged as such. The conscious use of allegory is always a danger to a novelist's "characterization," and Lawrence did not always escape this danger. But from this point of view this novel comes off, because the people are quite real and the situation a plausible one. The two central problems which were exercising his mind at the time constitute the thematic base—namely the problem of class in England, and that of tracing the springs of psychic awareness, psychic growth. Thus in a way the book is colored by both a theology and a rhetoric, playing about these ideas like summer lightning.

Yet, as I say, his people are real people, real portraits, whatever their symbolic function may be. Mrs. Bolton with her perverse Chatterley-worship is one of the great characters in fiction, while rarely have the emotions of a lonely woman in love been analyzed with such power and insight as in the case of Connie Chatterley. Moreover, there are important truths about sex and about loving which need to be uttered; it

is wonderful to see them set out calmly in black and white. I am thinking, for example, of the brief passage about "coming together"; people who do not, or who cannot, should suspect the quality of their loving. To be unable to "come together" suggests that the psyches involved are not chiming properly. The book is full of such small stabs of insight—full of the good news. And here the four-letter words do their job on twisted people—the four-letter souls; it is strange the effect of this taboo. I have seen people turn white with rage at a mention of this book. Moreover, it has always struck me as curious that most, if not all, the banned words seem to be of Saxon provenance, while the euphemisms constructed to convey the same meanings are of Latin-French. Does this argue some great split in the British conscience—a split occurring very far back in history when the Normans were the rulers? Historians, kindly oblige. Psychoanalysts, your attention please. I am thinking of the shorter, blunter words which my deep repression force me to transcribe as 'kcu' and 'tnc'—the only way I can smuggle them past the censor into the light of day. There is still food for reflection here, a linguistic problem to be considered.

It seems to be fairly generally accepted that *Chatterley* is not Lawrence's best novel, that it will not stand comparison with *Sons and Lovers* or *Kangaroo* or *Women in Love*. I am afraid that I share this opinion. It will do no disservice to this great man's memory if I say why. There are two factors involved here. One is: the book falls away rather sadly at the end. It had all the ingredients for a big tragedy, but it ends on a whimper. The other and much more serious consideration is centered in the character of Mellors; I find that Lawrence has failed to secure the reader's sympathy for this strange, self-satisfied little boor, so complacent about his "flamy" body and hard-worked "kcu." If, as they say, he is intended to represent Lawrence himself, then it can only be the unenviable, repressed side of the master—the heavy social inferiority which makes him "cheek" his betters and wave his "sllab" in the face of the lord of the manor. Yet Mellors is not Lawrence—for nowhere does he ever rise to his responsibilities, and whatever else Lawrence did not do, he certainly never failed to do just that; any reader of his letters will see how consistently responsible he remained for himself as both man and artist. Mellors just sits around waiting to be fished out of holes by poor Connie—how one sympathizes with this poor simpleton and frustrate! But this feeling about Mellors



alienates the reader's sympathy for the real hero of the book and in consequence leaves a gap in the masonry. The hero, for all his boasting, is never a rounded figure, never wholly a man, but a sort of abstraction pitched awkwardly between worlds; he is not a true peasant—he has finer feelings, nor is he a gentleman, though he can when he wishes talk upper class. (How loathsome that Derbyshire dialect is, reflecting the ugly, crimping, cheese-paring troglodytes who speak it!) He is also book-learned, is the gamekeeper, O yes, Latin French German and all that. One pities the poor lady when one thinks of the future she promises herself with a man like this—listening to his half-baked twaddle about putting miners into pinafores in order to save their souls: all this sort of unchewed Fabian cud. Or else being forced to commonize herself by speaking Derby whenever Mr. Mellors' social inferiority rises to the surface to remind him that she is a lady. No, there's a big blind spot somewhere here.

Yet Lawrence is big enough to afford such blind spots and still carry the work to a triumphant conclusion—for in its way it is a triumph, this original book. But whatever Mellors' limitations as a figurehead who remains untrue to his fictional responsibilities, his symbolic role is made perfectly clear, and we are forced to accept the fact of his sensuality as a pivotal factor in determining the action. We recognize his function as a sort of Noble Savage even if we are often in doubt as to his reality as a man.

But he has quite a long pedigree inside Lawrence's work; in a previous and excellent introduction to this work, Mark Shorer the critic has found several emergent gamekeepers in other books by Lawrence—brief cartoons which suggest that Mellors was conceived long before *Chatterley*, and slowly emerged into the light of day over several successive sketches, suddenly to find his proper function in this enlarged conception of the central importance of sex, plus the need to clear the decks about it in order to release the vital, affective male-female flow which, rightly or wrongly, Lawrence felt had been dammed up and poisoned by the terms of reference imposed on us both by puritanism and technology. It is doubtful whether anyone today could doubt the rightness of his diagnosis or deplore the means he used in order to dynamite the English psyche into some sort of response.

But if the gamekeeper has a pedigree, so has the preoccupation with the four-letter words; I think that in the dialect poems of Lawrence, some of which are really splendid, mov-

ing and naturally coarse, we can see a sort of mock-up, a try-out, for the use of the English ones later on in this book. If one wishes to revive one's sympathy for Mellors, one should read these poems and imagine that he had written them; they follow very closely the theme of *Chatterley*, and the unselfconscious freedom of the banned words here—strangely robbed of their electric charge by being spelt out in dialect—is both effective and moving. It is a pity that he did not somehow weave them into the story. If Mellors has been as well-educated as we are told he was, he might at the end of the book have produced some of these. It would have given body to the fiction and increased our sympathy for him.

But who are we to impose our own views upon those of a master? I have no doubt that this book, so carefully written and rewritten, is exactly the way Lawrence meant it to be, and we must accept the fact. Writers of this size impose their vision upon us even if it does not always conform to what we believe to be our own.

It would be folly, after so much has been written, to try to rehash the biographical facts which might lend support to some of these criticisms; equally it would be superfluous to rephrase the excellent and discriminating criticism which has gone before, and which has devoted special attention to the key themes in Lawrence's work, of which those explored in *Chatterley* form part. My job has been to try and turn up a few of the doubts, speculations and reflections which might legitimately cross the minds of those readers lucky enough to come fresh to this brave work. Nobody concerned with the novel in our century can afford not to read it; and those who do with a sympathetic eye and an open mind will find it full of meat and wine.

*Chatterley* will be with us for a long time yet.

LAWRENCE DURRELL

## Introduction

RONALD FRIEDLAND

LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER | BY | D. H. LAW-  
RENCE | PRIVATELY PRINTED | 1928

Mulberry coloured paper boards, printed in black on upper cover: [*the Lawrence phoenix*]; white paper label on spine printed in black: LADY | CHATTERLEY'S | LOVER | D. H. | LAWRENCE | [*enclosed within single rule*] The leaves measure  $8\frac{15}{16}$ " x  $6\frac{3}{8}$ ". Top edges rough-trimmed; fore and bottom edges untrimmed.

[i]–[iv] + 1–[368], as follows: [i] blank; [ii] This edition is limited | to One Thousand copies. | No 703 [*autograph number in blue ink*] | signed D. H. Lawrence [*autograph signature in blue ink*]; [iii] title-page as above; [iv] Florence—Printed by the Tipografia Giuntina, directed by L. Franceschini.; 1–365 text; [366]–[368] blank.

Published July 1928 at £2; the first printing consisted of 1000 copies.

Although the bibliographic description of the Orioli first edition of 1928 accurately details the physical appearance of the volume, it in no way suggests the outrage, frustration, and physical agony the book caused its author. The previous year, while completing *The Plumed Serpent* in Mexico, Lawrence had become so ill with tuberculosis and malaria that he feared he would be buried in the local cemetery. Frieda Lawrence's comment, "It's such an ugly cemetery, don't you think

of it," and his own unconquerable vitality pulled him through the excruciating train ride to Mexico City, three weeks of serious hemorrhaging in a hotel there, and two days of bitter argument with Texas immigration officials who were "most insulting and hateful" in refusing to permit Lawrence to return to the only place he could recover, his ranch at Taos, New Mexico. Finally, more dead than alive, he reached the cool air and quiet foothills of the Sangre de Cristo mountains. Weak with loss of blood, thin, physically devastated, he confessed that he would never have the strength to write another novel. He repeated that conviction a year later, in October, 1926, after returning to Italy. Yet nothing, disease, pain, public condemnation, or government persecution could prevent him from writing. Eleven days later he had written forty-one pages of his last major work, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.

Lawrence began the first manuscript of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (he completely rewrote the novel three times) at the Villa Mirenda, in the vineyard covered hills of Tuscany. As he described the place to a friend, it was an:

old square whitish villa on a little hill of its own, with the peasant houses and cypresses behind and the vines and olives and corn on all the slopes. . . . Away in front lies the Arno valley and mountains beyond. Behind are pine woods. The rooms inside are big and rather bare—with red-brick floors; spacious, rather nice, and very still.

It was in the woods behind the house that Lawrence began writing. Frieda remembers that, "After breakfast—we had it at seven or so—he would take his book and pen and a cushion, followed by John the dog, and go into the woods behind the Mirenda and come back to lunch with what he had written." Sitting against a tree in the shade of the umbrella pines, with his knees drawn up, a child's thick exercise notebook resting on them almost touching his beard, with the dog asleep in the morning sun, Lawrence wrote what was to be called "the foulest book in English literature."

It is because of Lawrence's companion, John the dog, that we can date the beginning of composition. Some irreverent smudges and prints on the manuscript were identified by Lawrence as having been made by John on October 26, 1926. Gaining energy from his work, Lawrence at this time also felt strong enough to begin a series of paintings, write

some short stories and articles, and, over the holiday season, to give the peasants and their children a real old-fashioned German-English Christmas celebration. With all of these activities, Lawrence continued to work on his novel, finishing it after only three months, in February of 1927.

The first manuscript of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* complete, Lawrence spent a week in early April touring the Etruscan sites which were to form the subject of his brilliant travel book, *Etruscan Places*. The trip tired him, and when he returned he came down with a bad cold and a recurrent attack of malaria. Nevertheless, he immediately began the second complete version of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Painting, writing stories and travel essays, visiting the Huxleys at their sea-coast villa, he inevitably overworked himself into a dangerous state of irritation and fatigue. One stifling July afternoon in that hot summer of 1927, Lawrence went into the garden to gather a basket of peaches. After proudly showing them to Frieda he went to his room and, a few minutes later, hearing him call her "in a strange gurgling voice," she went inside to find him lying on the bed looking at her "with shocked eyes, while a slow stream of blood came from his mouth." It was the most serious bronchial hemorrhage he had yet suffered, and as a consequence he went to the mountains of Austria to recover. While there, Lawrence was examined by Hans Carossa, one of the few doctors Lawrence ever trusted, a tuberculosis specialist and a fine Bavarian poet. Although he did not tell his patient the worst, Carossa did admit to a friend that anyone else in Lawrence's condition would have died long before, but that with an artist of Lawrence's intensity the usual factors were not involved. However, he did say that no medical treatment could save him, and that Lawrence would be dead in two or three years. He was, the friend later observed, "cruelly right."

Another man, upon recovering from such an attack, would have rested, followed doctor's orders, and abandoned any previous work. Not Lawrence. Back at the Villa Mirinda in October, he began the third and final version of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, rearranged and rewrote his *Poems* for the collected edition of 1928, and managed to find time for more painting. He finally completed the manuscript, which was to become the Orioli first edition, on January 10, 1928, an incredible three months later. With so much tiring work behind him, one would have hoped that the actual publishing, and subsequent public reception, would bring him satisfaction and

pleasure. On the contrary, the composition of the novel, laborious and physically debilitating as it may have been, was the easiest part of the ordeal to come. The problems of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* had only begun.

That Lawrence himself foresaw some of the trouble is suggested by Frieda, who recalls in her memoir that: "Lawrence asked me: 'Shall I publish it, or will it only bring me abuse and hatred again?' I said: 'You have written it, you believe in it, all right, then publish it.'"

But Lawrence knew that it was not to be that simple. He wrote to one friend:

I've got on my conscience a novel I wrote, and which is much too shocking—verbally—for any publisher. Says shit! and fuck! in so many syllables. So if it's going to be published I'll have to do it myself. . . . But it's a good novel—love, as usual—and very nice too, but says all the things it shouldn't say.

The first difficulty came from an entirely unexpected quarter. A woman in Florence who had agreed to type the manuscript got as far as Chapter Six and then refused to go farther because she felt the book was too indecent. In some excitement, Lawrence wrote to Catherine Carswell in England asking that she find someone to complete the typescript for him on time. Unable to do so, Mrs. Carswell sat up nights, despite an influenza attack, and typed half the book. Maria Huxley volunteered to type the other half, against the objections of her Swiss sister-in-law, who was morally outraged and suggested with disgust that Lawrence call the novel *John Thomas and Lady Jane*, the terms he uses in the book to refer to the male and female sex organs. For a short time he did so. At last, on March 3, 1928, he could write to Pino Orioli, his Italian publisher, that he had the complete typescript of the novel ready for printing.

Since his British and American publishers could not legally release the unexpurgated text, nor could booksellers in those countries market it, Lawrence's plan was, with Orioli's help, to print *Lady Chatterley's Lover* privately in Florence and distribute it by subscription only. There were to be 1,000 signed copies to be sold for £2 in the first edition, and another 200 copies to be printed on cheaper paper in a less expensive second edition. Order forms were sent to friends in Europe and America who circulated them to others who might

be interested in buying the book. Lawrence himself wrote a receipt which was then printed: "Mr. Orioli begs to thank you for your order for *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, with enclosed cheque for ———, and will forward the book by registered post immediately it is ready." In the light of Lawrence's aversion to commerce and profit, and his long-standing feud with the business world, he proved, during this period, to be a surprisingly astute and successful businessman. With Orioli he handled all aspects of the printing, distribution, and finance of the book.

Giuseppe "Pino" Orioli was an Italian antiquarian bookseller, born in Alfonsine, Italy, who had met Lawrence in Cornwall during the war. In 1920 Orioli returned to Florence, where he opened a bookshop much frequented by the Lawrences. His exact function in the project was ambiguous, for he acted as manager, clerk, and errand boy, frequently losing half a day going out to the Villa Mirinda to consult Lawrence about some new problem. As with so many of Lawrence's friends, considerable controversy and confusion have subsequently arisen about this relationship. In his autobiography, *Adventures of a Bookseller*, which appeared seven years after Lawrence's death, Orioli expressed great bitterness and resentment:

Looking back at my long relationship with Lawrence I come to the conclusion that it was on the whole unsatisfactory. One had golden moments with him: no doubt of that. One had also the reverse. . . . In matters of business he was more troublesome than any one I have ever dealt with, and as a friend so incalculable and often so disappointing, so disheartening, that now and then I wonder how many of those who knew him well were really sorry when he died.

However, these remarks—hardly credible considering that Orioli remained Lawrence's close friend for many years and, after *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, published two more of his books—have since become suspect. Richard Aldington, in *Pinorman*, a book about Orioli and Norman Douglas, establishes that these statements do not give the publisher's true feelings of affection and respect, but that those sections antipathetic to Lawrence were written into Orioli's book by Douglas, who despised both Lawrences. However this may be, it was in the company of Frieda and Orioli that Lawrence went for

the first time to the shop of the Florentine master-printer Franceschini.

Lawrence's initial reaction to the shop was delight; it was only later that the difficulties of publishing an English novel in Italy became apparent. Lawrence described the establishment in a letter:

My novel, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, or *John Thomas and Lady Jane*, is at the printer's in Florence: such a nice little printing shop all working away by hand—cosy and bit by bit, real Florentine manner—and the printer doesn't know a word of English—nobody on the place knows a word—where ignorance is bliss! Where the serpent is invisible!

But their ignorance was not bliss for the author. Not only did no one know any English; some of the compositors couldn't read or write Italian. The result was both exasperating and amusing. Writing to Aldous Huxley, Lawrence remarked:

I've corrected 41 pages of proofs, and it was *almost* Maria's typing all over again. Dear Maria, all those little mistakes you made, and I followed like Wenceslas's page so patiently in your footsteps: now it's a Florentine printer. He writes *dind't*, *did'nt*, *dnid't*, *dind't*, *din'dt*, *didn't* like a Bach fugue. The word is his blind spot.

Elsewhere he records that, "The printer would do fairly well for a few pages, then he would go drunk, or something. And then the words danced weird and *macabre*, but not English." Although he managed to catch most of the errors, the book finally appeared full of spelling and punctuation mistakes.

There were those who, finding out that the printers knew no English, thought that, Lawrence had deceived the poor men into publishing a book whose contents, had they been able to read it, would have shocked them. Lawrence answered any such criticism by carefully explaining to the master-printer what the book was about:

A white-moustached little man who has just married a second wife, he was told: Now the book contains such-and-such words, in English, and it describes certain things. Don't you print it if you think it will get you into trouble! "What does it describe?" he asked. And when told, he said, with the short indifference of a Florentine: 'O! *ma!* but we do it every day!' And it seemed, to him, to settle the matter



entirely. Since it was nothing political or out of the way, there was nothing to think about. Every-day concerns, commonplace.

Unfortunately other readers, who did know English, were not to respond in such a sensible and honestly human way.

If the printer was sympathetic, however, he was to prove inefficient as well. It was soon clear that the little shop did not have enough type to print the entire book. Consequently the first half was set up, both the first and second editions run off, and then the type was distributed, and the second half printed. A further difficulty was that they ran out of the fine handmade paper for the first edition. Between the exceedingly slow hand setting of the type, and the delay waiting for more paper to be made, the production of the finished book took quite some time. When it at last appeared it was, considering the circumstances, an amazingly handsome edition. Lawrence was exceptionally pleased with it, and Orioli began sending out copies to subscribers at once. It was with the distribution of the novel that the difficulties which were most to sap Lawrence's remaining strength began.

The first edition of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was published in the spring of 1928. Orioli had finished sending out all the orders by the end of July. However, Lawrence was not able to help him. Even during the printing he had been so ill that Orioli had often to stay overnight with him at the Villa Mirinda. By the spring his condition had so deteriorated that he decided to go with friends to Switzerland in June. Motor-ing north through France they stopped for a few days at a lovely inn in the mountain village of St. Nizier. After the first night they were asked to leave because of Lawrence's coughing; consumptives were not allowed by law to stay at public hotels. He continued on to Gsteig-bei-Gstaad where, high in the Alps, he somewhat regained his strength. It was there that Lawrence learned of the first problems Orioli was having with distribution of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. He had written to his publisher from Switzerland a month earlier:

I'm so anxious to know what milady is doing, and what you are doing about her. People pelting me with letters now, to know when they'll get her.—Somehow I feel it will be safe to post to England day by day: start about a week after the American copies have gone off. But once you start sending out, go straight ahead, until something stops you.