

D. H. LAWRENCE

A B I O G R A P H Y



JEFFREY MEYERS

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Preface

Though Lawrence's life and works have been subject to intensive scrutiny, my own research—and the use of unpublished essays and letters of Lawrence and his circle—has revealed significant new information about the influence of coal mining and Congregationalism on Lawrence's life, his parents' background and social class, the circumstances of his mother's death, Lawrence's physical sterility, the reasons for the suppression of *The Rainbow* and his exhibition of paintings, his friendship with Robert Mountsier and Esther Andrews, his homosexual relationship with the Cornish farmer William Henry Hocking, Ford Madox Ford's role in Lawrence's expulsion from Cornwall, the origins of his connection with Alfred Knopf and the clinical history of his tuberculosis. I also provide new interpretations of several works, including "England, My England," "The Rocking-Horse Winner" and "The Princess."

I have tried to emulate Lawrence's great gift of perceiving and revealing the inner life of people, to illustrate his complex method of mingling autobiography and fiction, and to show (as F. R. Leavis observed) that there was no separation between the artist who wrote and the man who lived.

Acknowledgments

Biography is a cooperative enterprise, and I am pleased to acknowledge the assistance of a great many people and institutions. I had generous hospitality from Kenneth and Ellen Meyers in Berkeley, Ben and Judith Lindfors and Joan Sanger in Austin, Robert and Lynn Piper in Washington, William and Gladys Froggatt near Nottingham. Ross Parmenter was extremely helpful and sent many valuable pages about Lawrence in Mexico. Lewis Sawin and Gene DeGruson gave me copies of unpublished Lawrence letters. My wife, Valerie, rigorously criticized each chapter and compiled the index. The Inter-Library Loan office at the University of Colorado was extremely helpful. And a grant from the University of Colorado enabled me to visit libraries in America and England.

The librarians at the following archives allowed me complete access to their collections of Lawrence letters and manuscripts, and guided me through the complex task of reading them: in America, the University of California at Berkeley, UCLA, University of New Mexico, Stanford University and the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas in Austin; in England, the British Library, Greater London Record Office, National Sound Archive, Nottingham County Library, Public Record Office and University of Nottingham Library.

During the last decade I interviewed a number of people, no longer living, who knew Lawrence: Dorothy Brett, A. S. Frere, David Garnett, Sir Julian Huxley, Richard Murry, Montague Weekley and Rebecca West. For more recent interviews I would like to thank Michael Asquith,

Barbara Weekley Barr, John Carswell, Dr. Mary Saleeby Fisher, Walter Forster, John Geister, Brewster Ghiselin, Rachel Hawk, Enid Hopkin Hilton, Francis Huxley, Lady Juliette Huxley, Frederick Jeffrey, Jan Juta, Yvonne Kapp, Saki Karavas, Margaret King Needham, Harwood Brewster Picard, Roy Spencer and Julian Morrell Vinogradoff.

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I received useful information from the following institutions: Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, American Jewish Archives, Bow Street Magistrates Court, Brandt & Brandt, BBC Written Archives Centre, British Coal Corporation (which arranged my trip down a mine near Doncaster), British Medical Association, Cornwall County Council, D. H. Lawrence Society of England, Fairchild Publications, Federal Records Office (St. Louis), General Medical Council (London), General Synod of the Church of England, *Hampstead and Highgate Express*, Harvard University Archives, Lake Erie College, Las Palomas de Taos, New Mexico State Records Center, Newspaper Guild, Radcliffe College Library, Royal Danish Academy of Art, Royal Danish Embassy, *Smith Alumni Quarterly*, Smith College Archives, Southern Illinois University Library, Taos County Clerk, United States Department of State, University of Tulsa Library, University of Virginia Library, University of Wisconsin Library, University of Wisconsin Press, Williams College, Writers Guild of America, Yale University Alumni Records Office and Yale University Library.

Life went straight into his work.

— JESSIE CHAMBERS

Very few books of DHL's are fully comprehensible unless one knows the personal circumstances; for, like Goethe's, nearly all DHL's "creative" writing is a projection of his own life. His opera omnia are huge autobiography embroidered.

— RICHARD ALDINGTON



1. (ABOVE) During hard times, when laid off or on strike, the miners would scavenge for usable coal among the slag heaps. In the background, the refuse burned like the pits of hell.
2. (BELOW) In this family portrait of c.1893, Lydia Lawrence looks much older and frailer than her vigorous, bearded husband, Arthur. Ada, seated on the far left, gapes at the unfamiliar camera while Emily tilts toward the center. Young Lawrence, in an Eton collar, is surrounded by the good-looking George and by the slightly simian Ernest.





3. Jessie Chambers, 1909. "She has black hair, and wonderful eyes, big and very dark, and very vulnerable."



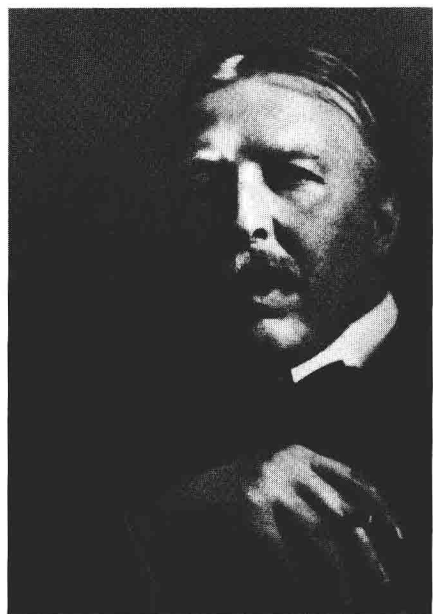
4. Louie Burrows, c.1910. "She is a glorious girl: about as tall as I, straight and strong as a caryatid ... swarthy and ruddy as a pomegranate."



5. Alice Dax and her daughter, c.1916: "a strange, brilliant and very peculiar-looking woman, with large hands and feet, and wispy, disordered blond hair."



6. Lawrence, Nottingham, 1908, when he graduated from the university and was about to start teaching in Croydon. "His face was rough, with rough-hewn features, like the common people's; but his eyes under the deep brows were full of life."



7. (ABOVE) Ford Madox Ford, c.1909, with gaping mouth, rabbit teeth and a ragged lemon moustache.

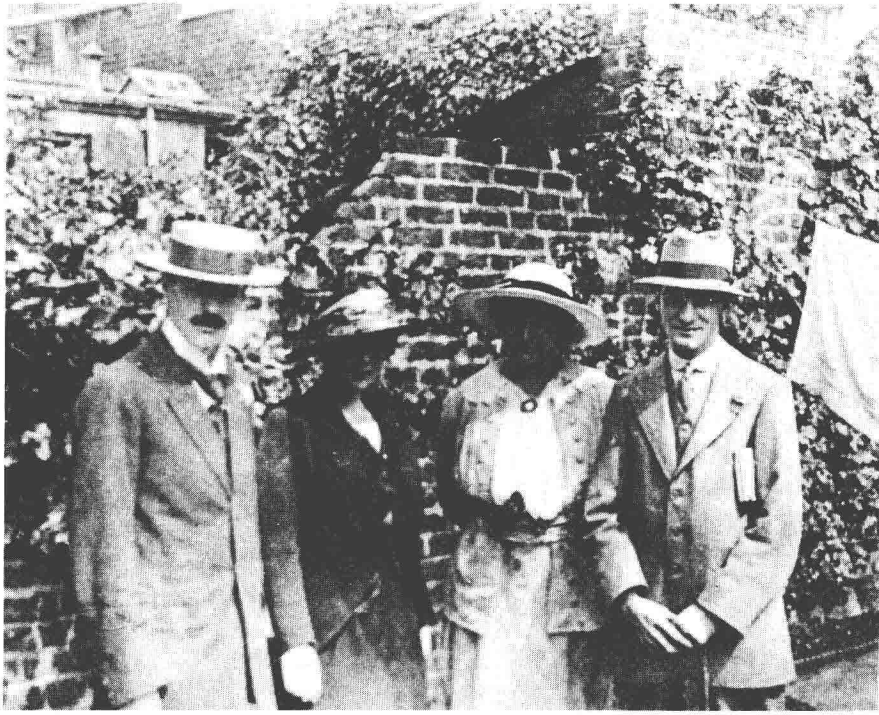
8. (RIGHT) Edward Garnett, c.1908. The bespectacled Edward, with hair and chin parted in the middle, wears a heavy wool suit and a dreamy expression.





9. (LEFT) Frieda Weekley with her son, Montague, 1901: a tall, strikingly handsome, golden-haired woman with a magnificent figure. 10. (BELOW) Lady Cynthia Asquith, c.1915. "Her face was lovely, fair, with a soft exotic white complexion and delicate pink cheeks. Her hair was soft and heavy, of a lovely pallid gold colour, ash-blond."





11. (ABOVE) Lawrence, Katherine Mansfield, Frieda and Middleton Murry, London, July 13, 1914, the Lawrences' wedding day. The group looks unusually somber, despite their summer apparel, and only Murry (books under his arm) attempts a smile. 12. (RIGHT) Catherine Carswell, c.1914: a strikingly attractive but unhappy woman who aroused Lawrence's sympathy and inspired his fiction.





13. S. S. Koteliansky, c.1910.
Kot "looked like some Assyrian king ... with an impressive hooked Semitic nose, a fine head of coarse black curly hair, massive features and very dark eyes."



14. Mary Cannan, c.1910:
"hair dyed a reddish-brown, thin mouth and fine features beautifully made up."

15. Lady Ottoline Morrell, 1903. "Her long, pale face, that she carried lifted up, somewhat in the Rossetti fashion, seemed almost drugged, as if a strange mass of thoughts coiled in the darkness within her."



16. Dorothy Brett, self-portrait, 1922. "The colour still was high in her young, delicate cheeks, but her odd, bright, round, dark-grey eyes were fearless above her fear."