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| **D.H. Lawrence** |
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| David Herbert Lawrence (1885-1930) was born in Eastwood, near Nottingham, England. He composed poetry, several travel books, paintings, short novels and stories, literary criticism, and plays. However, he is best known for his novels: *Sons and Lovers* (1913) *The Rainbow* (1915), *Women in Love* (1920), and *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* (1928). His writing focuses on social class, the tensions between the rural and the industrialized landscape, issues of Englishness and nationhood, as well and gender and sexuality. In representing sexuality, Lawrence endured the censorship and prohibition of some of his key texts. Unlike other writers, such as Woolf or Joyce, Lawrence is often portrayed as being on the periphery of literary modernism. However, his marginalized social position and relationship with other writers of the time also makes him central to Modernist criticism.  D. H. Lawrence was the fourth of five children. His father, Arthur John Lawrence, was a coal-miner, and his mother, Lydia, was from the middle-classes. Lawrence’s parental influences contributed to his interrogation of social hierarchies featured throughout his work. He initially pursued a career as a teacher, but in 1909 published his first poems with Ford Madox Hueffer’s *English Review.* In 1911, *The White Peacock* was published. During March 1912, he met Frieda von Richthofen, who he married on July 13, 1914.  Lawrence published *Love Poems and Others* in 1913,and in 1915 he finished *The Rainbow*. Initial reviews of *The Rainbow*, however, were unfavourable, and the book was withdrawn from sale. It was banned for obscenity on November 13, 1915, leaving Lawrence with a profound sense of disenchantment with England. In 1916 he finished the first version of *Women in Love.* Publishers consistently rejected the novel, and he rewrote the text in 1917. Lawrence’s health was often precarious, and in 1919 he was perilously ill with influenza. That year he left England for Italy, as he felt his home country could offer him nothing artistically. He began to write travel books, including *Sea and Sardinia* in 1921, while also working on several short novels. In February 1922, Lawrence and Frieda went to Ceylon, then toured Australia and America. It was in Mexico during 1924 that Lawrence suffered another episode of ill health. In August he suffered a bronchial haemorrhage, and was later diagnosed with tuberculosis. Despite his illness, he revisited England during a coal strike in 1926, which provoked the first draft of what would become *Lady Chatterley’s Lover.* The novel was privately published in 1928 in Florence, but it was also pirated in the States and Europe, which prompted Lawrence to pursue the publication of a cheap edition in Paris. At this time, the typescript of *Pansies* was seized by police, along with paintings from his art exhibition in London. He also finished *Apocalypse* and *Last Poems* (published posthumously by Frieda in 1932). Suffering from ill health, he attended the Ad Astra sanatorium in Vence, France, but discharged himself on March 1, 1930. He died the following day, and was buried in the local cemetery on March 4, 1930.  Lawrence’s posthumous status is frequently linked with the problems of obscenity in relation to the literary representation of sexuality. In the essay ‘Pornography and Literature’ (1929), Lawrence offered a critique of the hypocrisies of twentieth-century censorship. *The Rainbow* was not the only novel by Lawrence that faced the accusation of obscenity. In 1960 Penguin Books printed *Lady Chatterley’s Lover,* in accessible paperback form, resulting in the publisher facing criminal charges brought under The Obscene Publications Act (1959). C. H. Rolph’s *The Trial of Lady Chatterley: Regina v Penguin Books Ltd* (1961) outlines the court proceedings, including transcriptions from figures like Raymond Williams, Helen Gardner, E.M. Forster, Rebecca West. Kenneth Muir, and C. Day Lewis. The trial itself highlighted the class prejudices treated by Lawrence throughout his work: the Chief Prosecutor, Mervyn Griffith-Jones, maintained that this was not the sort of book ‘you would wish your wife or servants to read’ due to the use of four-letter words and explicit sex scenes. The prosecution was unsuccessful, thereby allowing Lawrence’s reputation to flourish. Various feminist critics, including Kate Millett in her critical work *Sexual Politics* (1970), have taken issue with Lawrence’s characterization of women. The publication of *The* *Cambridge Edition of the Works of D. H. Lawrence* (1979) has revealed the extensive revisions that Lawrence conducted throughout the course of his career. |
| Further reading:  (Black, Boulton and Poplawski)  (Clifford)  (Fernihough)  (Fernihough, D.H. Lawrence: Aesthetics and Ideology )  (Roberts and Poplawski)  (Rolph)  (Ross and Jackson)  (Sagar)  (Sagar, D.H. Lawrence's Paintings )  (Smith)  (Squires and Cushman)  (Worthern, Kinkaid-Weekes and Ellis) |