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| **Your article** |
| D. H. Lawrence (1885-1930) |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| David Herbert Lawrence was born in Eastwood, near Nottingham, England. While best known for his novels, he also composed poetry, paintings, short stories, literary criticism and plays, and several travel books. His most acclaimed works are the 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 industrialised landscape, issues of Englishness and nationhood, and gender and sexuality. The representations of sexuality in his works caused him to endure censorship and prohibition throughout his career. Unlike other writers, such as Woolf or Joyce, Lawrence is often portrayed as being on the periphery of literary modernism. However, his marginalised social position and relationship with other writers of the time also makes him central to Modernist criticism. |
| D. H. Lawrence was the fourth of the five children of Arthur John Lawrence and his wife Lydia. Lawrence’s father was a coal miner, and this greatly influenced the interrogation of social hierarchies featured throughout his son’s work. Lawrence 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 was to become his wife on 13 July 1914.  Lawrence published his *Love Poems and Others* in 1913,and in 1915 he finished *The Rainbow*, receiving unfavourable reviews. The book was withdrawn from sale, and banned for obscenity on 13 November 1915, leaving Lawrence with a profound sense of disenchantment with England. In 1916 he finished the first version of *Women in Love.* This novel was consistently rejected by publishers, 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, whilst also working on several short novels. In February 1922, Lawrence and Frieda went to Ceylon, then toured Australia and America, which was to influence the landscape in his work at that time. Lawrence suffered another episode of ill health while in Mexico in 1924, suffering from a bronchial haemorrhage in August, and eventually being 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 1 March 1930. He died the following day, and was buried in the local cemetery 4 March 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 which 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) is a valuable account of 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 sort of class prejudices which Lawrence treated 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 were unsuccessful, which allowed Lawrence’s reputation to flourish.  Various feminist critics, including Kate Millett in her critical work *Sexual Politics* (1970), have taken issue with Lawrence’s characterisation of women, whilst the publication of *The* *Cambridge Edition of the Works of D. H. Lawrence* (1979--) has revealed the extensive revisions which Lawrence conducted in relation to his work. |
| Further reading:  (Clifford)  (Fernihough)  (Fernihough, D.H. Lawrence: Aesthetics and Ideology)  (Roberts)  (Rolph)  (Ross)  (Sagar)  (Smith)  (Squires)  (Worthen) |