

Lawrence in my Life

The choice I made, unconsciously at school and consciously at university, to specialize on Lawrence, was the most important choice of my life. It determined not only my career, with thousands of hours spent reading, researching, teaching and writing on Lawrence, but also my thinking, my travel, my friendships, and even my marriage.

I have often been asked when my interest in Lawrence began. I can date it very precisely to the year 1949, when I was fifteen. My main interest at that time was in animals. My ambition was to be a zoo-keeper. I was saving up to buy a Royal Python I visited weekly at a pet shop in Leeds. But pythons were sold at so much per foot, and the snake grew faster than my savings. However, I did keep many other animals, including snakes and birds. One day I was browsing in the school library when a title caught my eye – *The Plumed Serpent*. How could a snake be feathered? To find out, I borrowed and read the book. Its author's name, D. H. Lawrence, meant nothing to me (not even *Lady Chatterley's Lover*). *The Plumed Serpent* was the most evocative, powerful piece of writing I had ever read. I wanted more. My second choice (for similar reasons) was *The White Peacock*, which was less interesting, but did not deter me from going on to *The Tales*: all Lawrence's short fiction in one volume, an inspired choice.

By the time I went to Cambridge in 1952 I had read everything of Lawrence that was in print, and that was a good deal, thanks to Penguin Books, who had published almost his complete works in 1950 to mark the twentieth anniversary of his death. In almost every student's room at that time, irrespective of his subject, and even if there were no other literature, you would find a few of these Lawrence Penguins. He was saying very much what we wanted to hear, especially on sexual matters.

Scrutiny was still being published in 1952, but I knew nothing of the Leavis controversy; and when my supervisor, F. L. Lucas, advised me not to bother with Leavis' lectures (without explaining why) I took his advice. In my second year I did go to them, and in my third year went to little else. Leavis helped me to learn to read, to pay proper attention to the words on the page, but I never became a hard-line Leavisite. I was much more in tune with David Daiches, who was my supervisor in my second and third years.

I stayed in Cambridge for a fourth year to do a Teacher's Training Certificate. For my thesis I wrote on 'The Educational Implications of the Writings of Plato, John Stuart Mill and D. H. Lawrence'. That course, and especially the term of practical teaching of semi-delinquents in Bradford, made me realize that I did not really want to be a schoolteacher. I consulted the Senior Tutor at King's, Patrick Wilkinson, who told me about Adult Education, of which I knew nothing. When he had finished his long description of Extra-Mural Departments and the Workers' Educational Association, he asked me what I thought. I replied: 'That sounds made for me'. At the end of that year, through Patrick, I was offered the opportunity to teach at the Cambridge WEA Summer School. I taught a course on, of course, Lawrence.

My first job, after nine inglorious weeks of National Service, was as an Administrative Assistant in the Extra-Mural Department of Leeds University. Our head of department suggested that I should take advantage of the fact that members of staff

could take further degrees without fees to do a part-time Ph.D. Apart from Shakespeare, the only author in whom I felt I could guarantee to sustain interest for five years was Lawrence. The Cambridge English tripos had contained a paper on *The English Moralists*. The title of my thesis was to be *D. H. Lawrence as a Moralist*; but the new head of the English Department, Norman Jeffares, asked me what my qualifications were in the moral sciences, and hearing that they were nil, vetoed the idea. I then came up with *Vision and Form in the Works of D. H. Lawrence*.

The Leeds EMD at that time had a splendid team of literature tutors. I joined two of Walter Stein's weekly classes, one on Shakespeare and one on Twentieth Century Literature, in which *The Rainbow* was a set-book. I never missed a meeting of either class for two years, and learned more from Walter about literature and how to teach it than I had learned in four years full-time in Cambridge. (His book, *Criticism as Dialogue*, is a neglected classic.)

After two years I moved to Chesterfield, as WEA Tutor-Organizer for NE Derbyshire. Though my thesis was critical, not biographical, I naturally wanted to see Lawrence's birthplace and the country of his heart. I had never before set foot in Nottinghamshire. Hitherto I had lived with my parents in Bradford. We had no car at that time, and Nottingham seemed a very long way. But now I was only half-an-hour away, and within days of my arrival in Chesterfield I set off for Eastwood on my faithful Lambretta scooter, with my trusty Kodak Colorsnap camera.

It is difficult now to imagine how little interest there was in Lawrence in those days. One even had to specify 'D. H. Lawrence, you know, the author of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*'. 'Oh, yes,' the response might come 'and didn't he also write *Sons and Lovers*'. If you simply said Lawrence you would be taken to be referring to Lawrence of Arabia. But I assumed that in Eastwood at least there would be some recognition. I went to the library for guidance, to be told that there was only one person in Eastwood who knew anything about Lawrence. 'Go down the other side of Nottingham Road until you come to a large shoe shop, and ask for Mrs Hopkin'. Of course I knew all about Willie Hopkin, Lawrence's close friend and mentor in Eastwood, who had died aged 90 in 1951. Olive Hopkin, Willie's second wife, whom he had married in 1925, not only gave me directions to the four Lawrence houses, Beauvale Primary School and Hagg's Farm, Lawrence's rural bolt-hole, where he had met his first sweetheart Jessie Chambers, but invited me to tea at 165 Nottingham Road afterwards. There she showed me all Lawrence's then unpublished letters to Willie and Sallie Hopkin, and many photographs. It never occurred to me to raise with her the possibility of publishing the letters, publishing of any kind being at that time something quite outside my experience. I was to visit Olive Hopkin on most of my many subsequent visits to Eastwood. She also put me in contact with her step-daughter Enid (who had helped Lawrence with the distribution of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*). I had a long correspondence with Enid, whom I was to accompany to the Lawrence festival in Santa Fe in 1980. She was then 84.

Eastwood at that time was very different from Eastwood today. The mines were still in full production, and the whole area was much closer to the mining countryside Lawrence depicted. Those who have visited the area only recently might well feel that in stories such as 'Odour of Chrysanthemums', in *The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd*, in the opening of *Sons and Lovers*, in the Wiggiston chapter of *The Rainbow*, and in *Lady*

Chatterley's Lover (to name but a few examples), Lawrence exaggerated for fictional or ideological purposes the contrast between the 'old England of the forest and agricultural past' and the degradation of the mines and the villages built to serve them. That contrast was much more stark in 1959. The war and post-war austerity had ensured that, apart from the sprouting of a few television aerials, the area was much as it had been in Lawrence's day. It is easy to understand how, before he began to write or form any ideologies, the natural world must have presented itself to him as a source of the clean, the sane and the sacred by which the works of men were to be judged.

The Squares, for example, were exactly as Lawrence had described them thirty years previously in 'Nottingham and the Mining Countryside':

On the down-slope of the north side the company erected what is still known as the New Buildings, or the Square. These new buildings consist of two great hollow squares of dwellings planked down on the rough slope of the hill, little four-room houses with the 'front' looking outward into the grim, blank street, and the 'back', with a tiny square brick yard, a low wall, and a w.c. and ash-pit, looking into the desert of the square, hard, uneven, jolting black earth tilting rather steeply down, with these little back yards all round, and openings at the corners. The squares were quite big, and absolutely desert, save for the posts for clothes lines, and people passing, children playing on the hard earth. And they were shut in like a barracks enclosure, very strange. *Phoenix* 134.

To get to Lawrence's favourite countryside, at Underwood, Felley and Annesley, I had to walk, like Lawrence, through Moorgreen pit, but then, just across the road, alongside the beautiful Moorgreen reservoir. The northern horizon was still dominated by Brinsley pit, where Lawrence's father and grandfather had worked, and his Uncle James had been killed. So the colliery engines were still running just a few feet from the door of Vine Cottage, the cottage of 'Odour of Chrysanthemums' and *The Widowing of Mrs. Holroyd*. As a stranger to the area I had no idea as I came to the top of a hill whether the next valley would be totally unspoiled or sickeningly disfigured and polluted. A few miles further north there were the horrors of Selston, Jacksdale and Ironville.

My photographs were not up to much. Fortunately a proper photographer, George Roberts of the County Library, had taken a large portfolio. This was part of the excellent Lawrence collection assembled largely by Lucy Edwards in the building in Shakespeare Street which had been Nottingham University College when Lawrence attended it.

My next visit was to the University Library here, where I expected to find a significant Lawrence collection, but there was very little. I learned later that this was largely due to the influence of Emeritus Professor Ernest Weekley (whose wife Frieda had run off with Lawrence in 1912). Even after Weekley's death in 1954, there was considerable hostility to Lawrence among senior members of the university. It was not until the sixties that Professor Vivian de Sola Pinto, head of the English Department and himself a Lawrence enthusiast, was able to start to build the major collection which is there now.

My visit, however, was far from wasted. What I did find, which proved of immense importance to me, was an unpublished thesis by Gamini Salgado presented in 1955 on *The Poetry of D. H. Lawrence*. It was this work, the first full-length study of

Lawrence's poetry (until then almost completely neglected) which alerted me to the importance of Lawrence's poetry and the greatness of the *Birds, Beasts and Flowers* collection in particular. It much improved the three chapters on the poems in my thesis. Without it I might never have proposed to Penguin Books my new selection of Lawrence's poetry which has been continuously in print since 1972.

At the start of the third year of my thesis it came to light that due to an administrative error in the English department my registration had been for an MA (which I already had) rather than a Ph.D. When I pointed this out to Professor Jeffares, he asked to see the work in progress. He found it insufficiently 'critical', and prevaricated about setting right the mistake.

This was about the time when Professor Vivian de Sola Pinto staged the first significant Lawrence exhibition at Nottingham University, 'Lawrence After 30 Years'. I attended almost all the events staged in connection with the exhibition, including an inaugural talk by F.R. Leavis. As the audience waited for that lecture to begin, I noticed two Lawrence specialists, disciples of Leavis, sitting immediately in front of me, Harry Coombes and Roy Littlewood. I had met Roy at Staff meetings of the Leeds Extra-Mural Department, where he had been employed in Services Education at Catterick. I remembered only one previous conversation with him. I had asked him if he had seen an interesting article by Ian Gregor in the current *Essays in Criticism* on Lawrence's story 'The Fox'. He seemed amazed that anyone should have presumed to write on 'The Fox' at all: 'Leavis has already dealt with it'.

We began a conversation in which I mentioned the three versions of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. They interrupted me — there were only two versions of Lady C. 'But', I objected, 'all three versions have already been published in Italian edited by Professor Nardi — *Le Tre Lady Chatterley*'. This cut no ice at all — they insisted there were only two. This was typical of the disdain the Leavisites had for scholarship, for mere facts.

Leavis' talk was inspirational, especially his characteristic analysis of Lawrence's informal prose in a letter describing the death of Rupert Brooke:

The death of Rupert Brooke fills me more and more with a sense of the fatuity of it all. He was slain by bright Phoebus' shaft — it was in keeping with his general sunniness — it was the real climax of his pose. I first heard of him as a Greek god under a Japanese sunshade, reading poetry in his pyjamas, at Grantchester upon the lawns where the river goes. Bright Phoebus smote him down. It is all in the saga. O God, O God, it is all too much of a piece: it is like madness.

But the lecture was marred by Leavis's equally characteristic contempt for the work of American Lawrenceans, especially Harry T. Moore. Harry Moore was neither a particularly distinguished critic nor a meticulous scholar, but he made up for this by his utter dedication to Lawrence. No other criticism, English or American could at that time compare with Leavis' *D. H. Lawrence: Novelist*, published in 1955, but it was American critics and scholars such as Tedlock, Spilka and especially Harry Moore himself, who, at least as much as Leavis, had kept Lawrence's reputation alive through the forties and early fifties.

In the exhibition were several beautiful previously unknown photographs of Lawrence taken at the Villa Mirinda in 1926-7 by his neighbour Arthur Gair Wilkinson. I asked the university for copies, which they said they would be glad to provide given the permission of their owner, Frances Gair Wilkinson, Arthur's daughter. I wrote to her, and in her reply she told me that she had much more material than had been in the exhibition: over thirty letters and postcards from Lawrence to her family; more photographs; the diaries kept by her parents detailing almost daily meetings with the Lawrences – walks, picnics, parties, trips into Florence, countless conversations... She said that she had offered to sell the collection to Nottingham, but that de Sola Pinto had replied that the university would be glad to accept them as a gift. I suppose no funds were available for such purchases at that time.

I asked if I could visit her, and subsequently spent two days at her delightful cottage at the foot of the Quantocks, transcribing the letters and diaries, which were a joy. Here is an example from one of the letters, from Bavaria:

The woods are simply uncanny with mushrooms, all sorts and sizes and shapes and smells, in camps and circles and odd ones – the brightest red, the blackest black and the sea-weediest green – and we pick the little orange-yellow ones and eat them fried in butter. – The dark blue Autumn gentian is out – and the deer are about – little roe-buck – they fly across the paths just like a Persian picture – and then they stop fascinated by my famous little white jacket. The jays are so cheeky they almost steal the tears out of your eyes. I really like it here – but when it's dark and rainy then you sing: 'A little ship was on the sea' – for the oceans of old Time seem to sweep over you.

I was working upstairs. When I came down after my final session, Frances had spread on the table a dozen lovely watercolours by her father of the Mirinda at the time the Lawrences were there. 'Take your pick', she said. She had described picnicking with Lawrence by a stream above the Mirinda, and feeding the fresh-water crabs with their chicken bones. She drew me a map of the route from the tram terminus at Vingone, past the pagoda and the 'due cipressi'. The following year I went there with a group of WEA students I had taken to Florence. As the Mirinda came into view, there on the path in front of it was a red cart drawn by two white oxen, exactly as in the painting I had chosen.

I had no intention of intruding on the occupants of the Mirinda, but some children playing nearby ran to the Villa Poggi (where the Wilkinsons had lived) to report the presence of strangers. A couple came out, the wife from Manchester, and they insisted on taking me to meet Signor Mirinda, Lawrence's landlord, and his wife. It had never occurred to me they might still be alive. They showed me the rooms occupied by the Lawrences. I have returned to the Mirinda several times, culminating in 1995, when I took a group of Lawrenceans on an Etruscan tour. It is still a splendid walk, but the crabs are there no longer.

Professor Norman Jeffares was head of the English Department at Leeds. He had looked at my work in progress on my thesis, and expressed disquiet that it was 'not sufficiently critical' (whatever he meant by that). He was also editor of the *Review of English Literature*, which had just published the important early letters from Lawrence to

Blanche Jennings, which the Allotts had unearthed in Liverpool. I asked him if he would be interested in publishing some more new Lawrence letters. I had never before been a welcome visitor, but now it was a case of 'Come in, my dear boy. Pull up an armchair. Can I get you a sherry?' As I left he said: 'Oh, by the way, I don't think there will be any more problems about your Ph.D.' 'Lawrence and the Wilkinsons' became my first published piece on Lawrence.

Publishing these typically sparkling Lawrence letters was the beginning of an interest which led to the campaign by Harry Moore, Gerald Lacy and myself to get an edition published of all Lawrence's several thousand letters. We eventually succeeded in bringing together the Lawrence Estate and the Cambridge University Press, whose seven handsome volumes appeared over the next twenty years. With the General Editor, Jim Boulton, I edited the seventh.

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I later acquired a portable photocopier, and returned to Somerset to copy the Wilkinson letters. Frances had in the meantime become Mrs. Miller. As I was leaving she asked if I had ever met her uncle Walter. Walter was a puppeteer, author of 'The Peep Show' which Lawrence reviewed in *The Calendar* in 1927. It had not occurred to me that he could be still alive. I was told that he was very much alive, and that his wife Winifred, also in her eighties, had just published her first novel *God in Hell*. They lived not far away, at Selworthy. She rang them, and I was invited to tea. They were a delightful couple. After tea Walter disappeared upstairs and returned wearing a tight, worn and stained silk jacket, once white. He had been a frequent visitor to the Mirenda, and on one occasion had arrived there sweltering in an English worsted suit in Tuscan mid-summer. Lawrence greeted him: 'For goodness sake, Walter, go and change into something more comfortable'. Walter replied that he would love to, but had left his luggage in Florence to follow next day, and had nothing but what he stood in. Lawrence took off his jacket and handed it to Walter: 'Keep this. It's time I had a new one'. As I was leaving, Walter took off the jacket and handed it to me: 'It's more use to you than to me'. Christopher Miles borrowed it from me ten years later, and Ian McKellen wore a copy of it playing Lawrence in the film *The Priest of Love*.

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Soon after my arrival in Chesterfield I had met Lawrence's nieces, Peggy Needham and Joan King, daughters of his sister Emily. After my move to Manchester in 1963 I would usually stay with Peggy on my visits to the Lawrence country. At her house at Heanor, she had all Lawrence's letters and postcards to her mother and herself, many photographs, and many of his early paintings. Joan had yet more photographs and paintings. Emily had recently died, but on my first visit to Joan at South Muskham I met Emily's husband Sam King. Sam told me that while Lawrence was visiting them in 1926, Sam was leaving the house one morning, and Lawrence asked him where he was going. He replied that he was going to see his solicitor in order to make his will. Lawrence commented that he ought to do the same while he was in England, since he had never made a will; yet his widow Frieda and Middleton Murry had persuaded a court in 1930 that Lawrence *had* made a will in 1916 leaving everything to Frieda and nothing to his

family. Peggy remained an active advocate of Lawrence into her nineties. Joan, happily, is still with us, probably the only person living who knew Lawrence.

At that time it was still possible to obtain Lawrence first editions at reasonable prices. I bought a lovely copy of *The Rainbow* from a Cornwall bookseller for £15. When it arrived there was a note saying: 'You might as well have the enclosed Lawrence postcard, the only one which remained unsold from my previous catalogue'. My first Lawrence manuscript! It was Lawrence's first communication on his return to Florence in 1919: 'Italy is a good bit spoilt by the war'. I also obtained a copy of the Mandrake edition of the paintings, and my favourite first edition, the Black Sun Press *Escaped Cock*, with Lawrence's delightful watercolours, before they became unaffordable.

Enthusiasm for Lawrence as a 'priest of love' peaked in 1960 with the *Lady Chatterley Trial*. Not only did that trial vindicate Lawrence's views on sex, it marked the last gasp of Lawrence's England, the England of censorship, mealy-mouthed Puritanism, and class-distinction; the England in which it was still possible to say in all seriousness: 'Would you wish your wife and servants to read this book?'. The sexual revolution which followed (though entirely lacking the religious element in Lawrence's view of sex) largely removed the appeal of that area of his work, especially for younger readers, who could not see what all the fuss had been about.

The early feminists chose Lawrence as an easy target, demonstrating his male chauvinism by means of highly selective quotation and by ignoring his major contribution to female emancipation, especially in *The Rainbow*.

My own interest did not decline, because I had already moved on to a more literary interest in Lawrence's mastery of a living prose and verse, and of so many diverse literary forms. My work on him moved gradually away from the novels towards the poems and novellas.

I finished my thesis in 1962, and began to rewrite it as a book. Boris Ford, Professor of Education at Sheffield University at the time, and editor of the influential Pelican Guide to English Literature, gave a lecture at Leeds, which I attended. He had a return train ticket to Sheffield, but when I offered him a lift (I was going to Chesterfield), he gratefully accepted. On the journey it came up that I was looking for a publisher. He suggested that I should approach Michael Black at the Cambridge University Press. After unstinting guidance from Michael, the book was published, as *The Art of D.H. Lawrence* in 1966, and remained in print for about twenty years. Michael later claimed that it was the chronologies of Lawrence's writings in this book which first engendered the huge and still continuing Cambridge University Press enterprise of the Complete Works of Lawrence, meticulously edited in about fifty volumes.

Harry Moore had also been a speaker at the 1960 Nottingham conference. After his lecture I had joined a queue of people waiting to question him. I asked him two questions: why there were no British contributors to his recently published critical anthology *A D. H. Lawrence Miscellany*, and whether he knew the whereabouts of any of Lawrence's paintings. Little did I imagine that this brief encounter would be the beginning of a relationship which would last until Harry's death twenty years later.

I had a friendly correspondence at this time with F. R. Leavis. He soon insisted on first name terms. He fulminated against Graham Hough for trying to get *The Dark Sun*

published before his own *D. H. Lawrence: Novelist*. I sent Leavis two framed unpublished photographs of Lawrence. He was delighted with them and gave them pride of place on his piano. I had eight letters from him in all. When my book was published I sent him a copy, which was unacknowledged. My next project was to have been to edit a collection of essays on *Wuthering Heights*. Michael Black told me that the Leavises had just returned from a lecture tour in the States during which Queenie had been lecturing on *Wuthering Heights*, and suggested I should invite her to contribute it to my anthology. I wrote to her, sending also my greetings to her husband. She replied in a single sentence: 'Neither my husband nor I remembers ever having met you. Q.D.Leavis'. This charming rebuff was just as well because her essay, subsequently published, was so bad that I would have had to reject it.

Later, in an article, Leavis berated me for revealing in my book that when Lawrence spoke of his work in progress as 'really a stratum deeper than I think anybody has ever gone, in a novel' he was referring to *The Insurrection of Miss Houghton* (an early version of *The Lost Girl*). Leavis insisted that anyone with a grain of critical sense should see that it was obviously about *The Rainbow*. It was a test case for Leavis. His critical sense told him that it *must* refer to *The Rainbow*, and this overruled the mere fact that the letter in question was written several months before Lawrence conceived of the novel which was to become *The Rainbow*.

Fortunately, my book was well received by the Lawrence establishment, one of the most generous reviews being by Professor de Sola Pinto, who described it as marking the beginning of serious Lawrence scholarship in England.

1966 was also the year in which I bought my first house. Now my interest in animals which had brought me to Lawrence in the first place began to rival my interest in him. The freedom to keep whatever livestock I pleased went to my head. I converted the garage into a menagerie in which I kept a large stud of exhibition Himalayan cavies, an aviary of Australian finches, and a bank of breeding cages of new-colour canaries. In the house I had two large aquaria of marine tropical fish and one of freshwater tropicals. Humming-birds were flying free in the hall. I travelled far and wide exhibiting my cavies and buying and selling creatures. My academic work inevitably suffered, and my eight years in that house yielded only *The Art of Ted Hughes* and some editing of Lawrence for Penguin Books. When I moved house I decided that I must curb this animal-keeping frenzy, and settled for just two marine aquaria. One reason for preferring fish to cavies or birds was that I could combine fishkeeping with my growing interest in photography. In the mid-seventies I published *The Love of Tropical Fish* and *The World Encyclopedia of Tropical Fish*. These two books earned more money than my twenty academic books put together, but they delayed my return to serious work on Lawrence by another couple of years.

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One great benefit of following in Lawrence's footsteps is that one has the motivation (and even sometimes the funding) to visit some of the world's most beautiful spots. I had already seen most of Lawrence's Italian homes, culminating in the magical

Fontana Vecchia in Sicily, surrounded by lemon groves, with Etna smoking behind and the Calabrian Sea sparkling in front. In 1967, having had no contact with him since the Leavis lecture, I received a postcard from Roy Littlewood postmarked Taos, New Mexico, saying that I must go there. I had never been outside Europe, and it had not occurred to me that New Mexico was a place one could actually go to. Air fares had recently plunged, so I started to plan my first trip to the States.

I wrote to Harry Moore. He not only remembered me from Nottingham, but remembered the exact questions I had asked him there. He also provided me with an invaluable list of contacts for teaching and lecturing engagements.

My best friend from Cambridge had emigrated to the Bay area, and had several times invited me to visit him. I now took up this invitation, and was able to arrange a five-week course on Lawrence with the Continuing Education Department at Berkeley. I wanted to take the opportunity to work on the *Sons and Lovers* manuscripts at Berkeley, particularly to see exactly what Edward Garnett had deleted from the novel, but I was denied access on the grounds that Mark Schorer was working on them. He had been sitting on them for about ten years. I did not get to see them until several years later, when Carl Baron obtained copies for his work on the Cambridge University Press edition. My initial response was to approve of Garnett's pruning; but over the next decade I gradually came to see the importance of much of the excised material, particularly about Paul's older brother William. The novel is, after all, not *Son and Lover*, and Lawrence called it 'the tragedy of thousands of young men in England'.

After five weeks I boarded a Greyhound bus in Berkeley and set off for Taos, stopping for a night in Angel Creek lodge, overlooking the Grand Canyon.

I stayed at La Fonda de Taos, where the owner, Saki Karavas, had the world's largest collection of Lawrence paintings, most of those which had survived from the 1929 Warren Gallery exhibition, in his poky, smoky office, where they could be seen for a dollar. Saki had been a great friend of Frieda's third husband, Angelo Ravagli. Angie hated Lawrence's paintings, and after Frieda's death simply wanted them out of the house, so he sold them to Saki for a song. I knew the paintings from reproductions, but the originals were another matter. I could express what they meant to me only in little poems (as Lawrence himself wrote a few Pansies corresponding to some of his paintings). I had written a few poems at school, and published a couple in the school magazine, but reading English at Cambridge had soon cured me of that, and I had then written not a single poem for sixteen years. The five I wrote on my return from Taos kick-started me again as a poet.

Saki's paintings were always for sale, about to be bought by Greeks or Japanese. But the price kept rising, always just ahead of any possible sale. Saki did not really want to lose what he called his 'spiderweb'. He loved the daily flow of visitors, especially the glamorous young women. Saki was waiting to take me to breakfast every day, and would then offer to chauffeur me wherever I wanted to go, even several miles into the mountains to the Lawrence ranch, still kept (by the immortal Al Bierce) much as it was when Lawrence lived there in 1924-5. He would take me to the best restaurants for miles around for dinner. And he knew everybody, and was liked by everybody. One of the few good things Richard Nixon can be remembered for is having given back to the Taos

Indians their sacred Blue Lake. Saki was the only non-Indian invited to the grand ceremony. As if that were not enough, there was a film crew at La Fonda making a film for the BBC on Lawrence in Taos, and they took me around with them, meeting everyone still in Taos who had known Lawrence. Brett, who was the main focus of the film, was 85 and still painting – beautiful paintings of the fish she had seen a boy catching in Mexico. Having just lost her driving licence because of her failing sight, she was talking of getting a motor-bike, apparently in the belief that she wouldn't need a licence. Brett, who was living with the Lawrences at the ranch in 1924, had typed out *St. Mawr* day by day as Lawrence wrote it. She told me that he pronounced the name 'Seymour'. Since 'mawr' is Welsh for big or great, and Lewis, St. Mawr's groom, pronounced it 'with a Welsh twist', this seemed highly unlikely, despite coming, as it were, from the horse's mouth. When I got home I looked up Seymour in a dictionary of surnames, to find that it derives from the Norman French 'de St. Maur'. St. Benedict, the founder of Western monasticism, had founded the great monastery at Monte Cassino. St. Maurus was his disciple and successor. This information triggered my interpretation of *St. Mawr* in 'The Monk and the Beast'. Joe Foster befriended me, and took me to see the cave at Arroyo Seco which Lawrence used for the ending of 'The Woman Who Rode Away'; also to see the herds of buffalo which the Indians had reintroduced to the plains under Taos Mountain. 'Spud' Johnson was running the office for the Eugene McCarthy presidential campaign next door to La Fonda.

When the time came to leave La Fonda, I went to pay my bill, and was handed a note by the cashier saying 'No Charge'. I remonstrated with Saki that he couldn't run a hotel that way, but he insisted that whenever I wanted to stay there it would never cost me a cent. I stayed there as Saki's guest every year for the next thirteen years, and would gladly have paid the going rate. My love affair with New Mexico culminated in a book, *Lawrence and New Mexico*, in which I arranged in chronological order, with commentary, everything Lawrence had written about New Mexico.

When Saki died a few years ago he left both the hotel and the paintings to his friends the Sahds, who have had the paintings restored and now display them in a properly appointed room at La Fonda. But seeing them crammed together with many of Saki's other fascinating paintings, photographs and mementos, through a haze of cigar smoke, with Saki's twenty pairs of immaculately polished shoes lining the wall, had been a different experience altogether.

I met few natives in Taos. Most of the people I met had come as visitors and simply stayed. I asked how long it took for the magic to wear off, and they all gave the same answer, 'Never'.

From Taos I headed for Texas. The most important of the introductions Harry had given me was to Warren Roberts, the Director of the Humanities Research Centre at the University of Texas at Austin, where I was subsequently to spend a great deal of time working on the huge Lawrence collection. Warren in turn introduced me to one of his graduate students called Gerald Lacy, who was looking for a Lawrence topic for his Ph.D. I had dinner with him and suggested he should make a calendar of all Lawrence's extant letters. This calendar was later to form the basis of the seven-volume Cambridge edition of Lawrence's collected letters.

At the HRC there were yet more Lawrence paintings, including two of the finest, *Boccaccio Story* and *Resurrection*. The Lawrence collection was so vast that I spent my

whole week in Austin working on the catalogue. Obviously many more visits would be needed. There was still at that time much unpublished and unstudied material. One thing which particularly interested me was the large number of unpublished photographs. I obtained copies of a great many of them. Together with the photographs I had obtained from Peggy and Joan, these formed the basis of the collection from which I was able to illustrate so fully my biography of Lawrence a decade later.

My 1970 visit to Taos was to attend a Lawrence conference at the ranch. I was not a speaker, but felt obliged to speak up in defence of *St. Mawr* when David Garnett dismissed it as 'that story where a woman falls in love with a horse'.

On some of my later visits to the States, Harry Moore arranged lectures for me at Southern Illinois and put me up at his home.

At the end of 1969 I had decided to try to find out a little more about the Pagans, a group of young Eastwood men and women of which Lawrence was a leading member. The Pagans turned out to be less subversive than the name suggests—they did little but organize rambles — but my enquiries led me to the home, in Eastwood, of the only surviving Pagan I could locate, Steve Bircumshaw. He was a man of amazing memory, not only about Lawrence but also about the whole life of Eastwood and the history of the mining industry in which he had spent his working life. All his recollections which could be checked have proved to be accurate to the smallest detail.

Lawrence, George Neville and Steve Bircumshaw were the effective leaders of the Pagans, which also included Ada Lawrence, Jessie and Alan Chambers, Louie Burrows (to whom Lawrence was engaged throughout 1911), Richard Pogmore and Kitty Holdemess (both teachers at Albert St. School at the same time as Lawrence), Emmie and Mabel Limb, Polly Goddard, and the five Cooper sisters (four of whom were to die in their twenties of consumption). Steve's cousin Blanche Bircumshaw, who lived at 144 Lynn Croft (the Lawrences lived at 97) was a student-teacher at the same time as Lawrence; they helped each other with their homework. Steve's girlfriend Agatha Kirk (later his wife) also lived in Lynn Croft (109), was a close friend of Ada Lawrence and taught at the same school. She was born in the same month as Lawrence. Agatha Kirk and Steve Bircumshaw appear in *Mr. Noon* as Agatha Sharp and her 'best boy' Freddie.

There was no privacy in Lynn Croft. There could be no secrets. We can see, for example, in *A Collier's Friday Night*, how freely and frequently neighbours would come in and out and be drawn into the family's most intimate concerns. Anything that happened at 97 Lynn Croft would soon be known to the whole street, and hence to the whole town. Steve Bircumshaw and his wife were certainly in a position to know what they claimed to know. This is the story they told me in April 1970.

Lawrence began a two-year course at Nottingham University College in September 1906. He respected only one of his teachers, Ernest Weekley, Head of the Modern Languages Department. It did not take Weekley long to realize that he had a genius in his class. He invited Lawrence to his home for private tuition. There Lawrence met Weekley's German wife, fifteen years younger than her husband. Frieda decided she

would have Lawrence at whatever cost. During the next few years she and Lawrence met regularly, and during Lawrence's holidays from teaching in Croydon, she made frequent visits to the Lawrence home, usually on Saturdays. The houses on that side of Lynn Croft overlooked a field anyone walking from the station would cross. Many a neighbouring family, including the Kirks, would watch Frieda, a striking figure in her Burberry coat and floppy tam-o'shanter with enormous pom-pom, a little girl on each hand (she never brought Monty) approaching the Lawrence house. Lawrence's sister Ada loved the little girls but hated Frieda. Ada would sulk all day at school, and Agatha would eventually get out of her: 'Frieda's coming again this weekend. How I hate her!' Mrs. Lawrence condoned the relationship because she saw it as more of a threat to Jessie than to herself. Lawrence was 'unofficially engaged' to Jessie Chambers at the time, and his mother was intensely jealous. Jessie knew of the relationship between Lawrence and Mrs. Weekley and spoke of her anxiety to her friend Mabel Thurlby, who was also a friend of Lawrence. Indeed, the whole of Eastwood knew of it. When it came to the attention of Thomas Wilson, headmaster of New Eastwood School where Ada taught, he told Ada: 'Miss Lawrence, I can't stop your brother coming to meet you and Miss Kirk outside the school, but please don't bring him on the premises again'.

Ada told Agatha that Ernest Weekley followed his wife one day. She met Lawrence and they went to Colwick Woods, a beauty spot near Nottingham. There Weekley confronted Lawrence and gave him a thrashing. Unable to ride his bicycle, Lawrence walked home, arriving in the early hours. He accounted for his bruises by claiming to have fallen off his bicycle. He stayed in bed for two or three days. But Frieda was not deterred. Her visits continued.

This story was told with great conviction and sincerity and was fleshed out with many fascinating details of Eastwood life at that time and stories about other people not directly involved. It was told mainly by Steve with occasional nods, prompts, and footnotes from his wife. It did not occur to me at the time to doubt the absolute truth and accuracy of everything they told me. It would have needed great cleverness and meticulous research to have concocted the story, and they had no motive for so doing.

My inclination to believe was reinforced when, later the same day, I visited Mabel Thurlby, then Mrs. Collishaw, at Beeston, a suburb of Nottingham. The Thurlby family had been very close to the Lawrences at one time. In the summer of 1897 the two families were packed into a carrier's cart in their Sunday best to be taken to Nottingham to have their photographs taken. The men went ahead on foot so that they could call for drinks. These photographs survive, and the Lawrence family photograph has been often reproduced. Mabel's father was a miner who, having lost an arm in a pit accident, was found a job as level-crossing keeper at Moorgreen crossing. On one occasion, while Mabel and Lawrence were waiting for a train to pass. Major Thomas Philip Barber, the local coal owner, rode up on horseback and demanded to be let through. Mr. Thurlby said: 'Are you going to make that horse's mouth bleed?' and made him wait. Many years later Lawrence used this incident in *Women in Love*. Mrs. Collishaw confirmed all the Bircumshaws had told me.

At this point I wrote up the story and sent copies to Frieda's children for their comments. All three disbelieved it, but Montague Weekley seemed a good deal less certain than his sisters. I continued to look for further evidence or testimony.

In October 1970 I met Enid Hilton, formerly Enid Hopkin, who told me that Lawrence brought Frieda to meet her mother Sally 'considerably more than six weeks — perhaps several months' before the elopement. In that same month I obtained from the B.B.C. the script of a programme broadcast in 1961 called *Portrait of Frieda Lawrence*, devised and presented by Alfred Alvarez, who had married one of Frieda's grand-daughters. The programme included an interview with Ida Wilhelmy who had been nurse to the Weekley children from 1906. She recalled Lawrence's first visit, but mentioned no date. It seems strange that Ernest Weekley should speak of bringing (in Miss Wilhelmy's words) 'a young genius from the university' if Lawrence had left the university four years previously. Also there is Mr. Alvarez' puzzling statement that Lawrence appeared on the scene 'after eleven years of marriage' — i.e. in 1910.

George Henry ('Diddler') Neville was for several years Lawrence's closest male friend and was regarded as one of the family. An idea of their relationship and joint philandering is given by Lawrence's play *The Married Man*, written early in 1912. If Lawrence confided in anyone about his sexual life during the period 1907-1912 it was in George Neville. James G. Neville kindly allowed me to see, in 1972, his father's memoir of Lawrence. There Neville claims that he could have written the full story of those early days, but had refrained from doing so because living people might be hurt. But he does say, speaking of the year 1912: 'Lawrence knew the woman who was afterwards his wife long before that time'.

Though story seems to me very convincing, so does the very different story told independently and consistently by Lawrence and Frieda. Perhaps decisive evidence will yet emerge.

By 1970 Gerald Lacy was well into the daunting task of tracing and describing as many as possible of Lawrence's letters. I gave him what help I could on this side of the Atlantic. I knew that Lawrence and Frieda had visited Sir George and Lady Ida Sitwell at Montegufoni, near Florence, and that Sir George had suggested that Lawrence should make contact with his children and visit Renishaw Hall, the Sitwell family home in Derbyshire. He would almost certainly have told Lawrence of the battle his son Osbert was fighting to save Sutton Scarsdale Hall, which Lawrence knew well. At least one of the excursions of the Pagans had been there. Yet I noticed that no correspondence had come to light between Lawrence and any of the Sitwells. I wrote to Sir Reresby Sitwell, son of Sacheverell, and the present incumbent of Renishaw, to ask if he knew of any such correspondence among the family papers. He did not, but our subsequent correspondence led me to an exciting discovery about the origins of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. It is obvious from the topography of the novel that Wragby, the Chatterley home, was to some extent based on Renishaw Hall, which Lawrence had visited on his last visit to England in 1926; but I did not suspect a much closer connection. Sir Reresby suggested that I should talk to Harold Taylor, 'self-instructed village historian', who knew more than anyone else about the history of Sutton Scarsdale Hall.

Harold Taylor told me the story of William Arkwright, grandson of the famous inventor, and last of the Arkwrights to live at Sutton Scarsdale, which he sold in 1920. Born in 1857, educated at Eton and Oxford, William had suffered terrible injuries when thrown from his horse at the age of twenty. He lay unconscious for six weeks, and had a silver plate inserted in his head. He recovered sufficiently to write three books and become an expert linguist, but the accident had left him impotent. Seven years after the accident, against the advice of his family, he married a beautiful young woman from an aristocratic family, Agnes Mary Summers-Cox. The marriage was unhappy, and they lived apart for most of their lives. Sir George must have told this story to Lawrence. Though no gamekeeper appears in it, it clearly contains the germ of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.

1971 saw the first of a series of four summer schools on Lawrence held on the Nottingham campus. The initiative came from Michael Draper of Hull Extra-Mural Department and myself, and Michael directed the first, on *Lawrence and England*. The tutors included Bridget Pugh and Graham Martin. When I mentioned the school to Harry Moore he expressed great interest. I explained to him that the school would be nothing like an international conference. It was simply an Adult Education residential course run primarily for the students of the Extra-Mural Departments of three northern universities, Nottingham, Hull, and Manchester. Yet Harry insisted on coming at his own expense. He had no regrets, stating afterwards that he could not remember ever having experienced a more genuinely Lawrencean atmosphere. He was particularly struck by the depth of knowledge and interest in Lawrence for his own sake among both tutors and students. That this was no mere gesture was attested by the fact that Harry subsequently attended both the 1975 and 1980 summer schools. Harry had to be wherever Lawrence was being discussed or celebrated or performed. (Can we imagine Leavis attending a summer school?)

At the 1975 school Harry was upstaged by a lady from Chicago called Lois Ascherman. We were alerted to something out-of-the-ordinary in Mrs. Ascherman when her application arrived in a bright pink and highly scented envelope. The school was held at Derby Hall during a sweltering heat-wave. Arriving early, I went out into the courtyard for some air, and picked up from the ground the longest cigarette I had ever seen. It had been lit but not smoked. As I walked on I found another identical one. Then another. Eventually I caught up with a large lady and saw her take a cigarette from her bag, light it, and throw it away. I presented her with my handful, saying: 'I believe you dropped these'. 'Oh, I've finished with them', she said. I pointed out that they did not improve the appearance of the courtyard, and she apologized profusely. Later, I found myself seated next to her at dinner. She was holding forth about how excited she was, and how she had promised all her friends Lawrencean souvenirs. I suggested that she should collect several of the paper napkins which we had had specially printed with the letters DH, and she began to do so until someone pointed out that DH stood for Derby Hall. She took this in very good part. After dinner everyone repaired to the bar. When I entered, Lois was sitting with her back to the door, complaining about the heat. I took an ice-cube with a pair of tongs and pretended that I was about to drop it down the back of her dress. Seeing from the faces in front of her that something was happening at her back, she turned and dared me to drop it. So I did. She went rigid. Then an expression of ecstasy crossed her face and she said: 'that is the most beautiful thing anyone ever did to me'. That was the beginning of a lasting friendship. Lois attended every subsequent Lawrence summer school and conference, and enlivened them all with her wit. She proved to be the best reader I have come across of Lawrence's satirical poems from *Pansies* and *Nettles*.

The most memorable of my visits to Taos was in 1977, when I had study leave and a Fulbright grant to work at the Humanities Research Centre at the University of Texas at Austin. Most of Lawrence's manuscripts are there. I was working

simultaneously on my *Calendar* of Lawrence's works and on my biography of him. Acquiring so many excellent photographs from Peggy and Joan, many of them unpublished, had implanted in me the desire to produce an illustrated biography, and I had spent some fifteen years augmenting this nucleus with more photographs from all over the world, but especially from the H.R.C.

I could have gone at any time, but wanted to see Taos under snow. I had been at every other season, including the fall, for the aspens and the San Geronimo Indian festival. Taos, at seven thousand feet, is a ski valley in the foothills of the Rockies. So I went in January to be certain of snow. When I got to Albuquerque airport they told me there had been not a flake of snow all winter, and the ski resorts were desperate. As my Greyhound bus climbed out of Albuquerque into the Sandia Mountains huge flakes began to fall. The bus could get no further than Santa Fe. I had to stay the night in the de Vargas Hotel, where Lawrence had stayed. By morning the snow-ploughs had cleared the way to Taos. The valley came into view under eighteen inches of virgin snow. Three days later there was a fresh heavy fall. Up in Ski Valley they were searching for their cars with long poles. By now photography had become a major interest for me, and this was a photographer's paradise, especially the ranch and the pueblo.

It was the 3rd of December 1978 when I finished the first draft of my biography. I had decided that I did not want it to trail off into anticlimax with details of the survivors, the literary reputation, and so on. I wanted Lawrence's death to be the closing page. It was getting very late, but I was so close to the end that I did not want to leave it unfinished. Yet I dreaded the end. I had come to feel so close to Lawrence, and now I was about to kill him at the age of forty four. 'Why', I thought, 'I am almost that age myself, and my life has hardly begun. Perhaps I am already older than Lawrence was when he died'. I did the calculation. He was forty-four years, five months and nineteen days. Then I calculated my own age: forty-four years, five months and nineteen days.

The biography of Lawrence was published in February 1980. It was very well received, and I had every reason to expect it to have at least as long a life as its predecessor, Moore and Roberts' *D. H. Lawrence and his World*; but when the publisher, Methuen, was taken over a few months later by one of the faceless multinational publishing groups, the title was dropped.

From collecting my first copies from Methuen I went straight to the home of Christopher Miles, who was keen to use the photographs in my book for both locations and costumes in his film *The Priest of Love*. I spent the afternoon discussing these with his designers, then he took me out to dinner, and from there to Euston for the last train home. On the way to the station Christopher invited me to join the company on location in Oaxaca at his expense as an advisor. I had always wanted to go to Mexico, and had made two abortive attempts to get there (thwarted by the last minute unavailability of the American friend I had planned to go with). As we parted, Christopher thrust into my hand the first draft of the script by Alan Plater. I read it on the train. It appalled me. It created artificial situations nowhere near as dramatic as what had really happened. It bristled with unnecessary inaccuracies. Though it was three o'clock when I got home, I immediately typed a letter to Christopher saying that I could not possibly have anything to do with the film. He replied that shooting scripts never bore any resemblance to first drafts, and that if I came I would be able to influence its development. But I stayed on my high horse and

did not go. Christopher was right; there was little wrong with the final script. I have never made it to Mexico.

In July 1980 there was a huge festival in Santa Fe and Taos to mark the fiftieth anniversary of Lawrence's death. All I can remember of it is the surfeit of celebrities, literary and otherwise. I thought Trevor Howard was the worst reader I had heard of Lawrence's poetry until Elizabeth Taylor began to read 'Snake'. I found myself sitting next to Margaret Drabble one morning. She asked me what I had thought of Derek Walcott's talk on Lawrence's poetry the previous day. I said I thought that his comments on Lawrence's free verse were not very intelligent. 'Oh, but he's a wonderful poet', she replied in a huff (meaning Walcott, not Lawrence). In her subsequent report on the conference in *The Observer* she wrote that I had been a stand-in for Dr. Leavis, which surprised me.

That same year I directed a summer school on Lawrence and Italy at Nottingham University. When Michael Draper was forced to withdraw because of illness, we recruited a new tutor, Melissa Partridge, who was doing a Ph.D. on that very subject at Cambridge. I began to pursue her, in complete ignorance of the fact that one of the students in my group, who had deliberately registered in her maiden name, was in fact her mother.

On the final evening of that summer school we rashly decided to stage a reenactment of the Red Indian playlet performed by the Natcha-Kee-Tawara circus troupe in *The Lost Girl*. Peter Preston, who played the bear, barely survived my overenthusiastic assault.

The British Lawrence Society had been founded in 1974, based on Eastwood. I was closely involved from the start, and have probably given more talks to the society than anyone else. One of the society's activities is to provide guided walks in the Lawrence country. I later heard that a certain tree above Felley Mill had acquired mythic status as 'the very tree under which Keith Sagar proposed to Melissa Partridge'. We had, indeed, sat under that tree during the summer school, but the proposal came some months later.

During my long stay in Austin in 1977 I had met Harriet Gay, who was also working on Lawrence in the H.R.C. We subsequently kept in touch, and when I told her that I was soon to be married, and that we were planning a honeymoon in the States, she and her husband Larry invited us to spend a week (by ourselves) at their second home in Hawaii, with the use of their car — amazing hospitality to near-strangers. It was the highlight of the honeymoon, which we remember as dominated by the almost overpowering scent of flowers. I was able to snorkel with some of the same species of coral reef fish I had been keeping and photographing for many years.

In 1982 the British Council invited me to give a lecture tour on Lawrence in what was then Yugoslavia. Melissa accompanied me. I lectured in Ljubljana, Zagreb, Split, Belgrade and Novi Sad. The beauty of Split was balanced by the ugliness of Novi Sad. Our Yugoslav hosts were extremely hospitable. I lunched with the great Yugoslav poet Vasco Popa in Belgrade. Tito had died in 1980. Everything seemed perfectly normal.

There was no sign (or nothing evident to visitors) of the horrors into which Yugoslavia was to descend within ten years.

Our first child was born in Lawrence's centenary year, 1985. We called her Ursula partly after the main character in *The Rainbow*. Ursula, though an avid reader, does not, I regret to say, read Lawrence. She began *The Rainbow*, but did not persist, even though I told her that without Lawrence she would not exist.

In 1980 I had staged a Ted Hughes exhibition in Manchester, and had borrowed some items from Colin Franklin. When I went to collect them we were having afternoon tea in his garden. He said: 'You're also a Lawrence man, aren't you? I've got something which might interest you'. He went into the house, and came back with a small watercolour. 'Good heavens', I gasped, 'it's *Dandelions*'. Lawrence's painting of one of the peasants on the Villa Mirinda estate pissing into a clump of dandelions had never been heard of since he sold it to Orioli for £20 in 1929. Colin offered me a sizeable commission if I could find a buyer for him. I told him I was about to go to a huge Lawrence festival in Santa Fe, where there were bound to be many potential buyers. I let it be known at the reception meeting that I had a major Lawrence painting for sale. Several men jostled round me, reaching for their chequebooks, but when I produced a colour photograph of the painting, they mysteriously melted back into the crowd. Apparently sex would have been o.k. for these Texas millionaires, but pissing was beyond the pale. Five years later Carl Baron and I were working on a proposal for a volume on the paintings in the Cambridge edition. It occurred to me that I must keep tabs on *Dandelions*, so that it did not disappear for another fifty years. Colin Franklin confirmed that he still had the painting, and it was still for sale at the same price. 1985, Lawrence's centenary year, seemed a likely time to find a buyer. It suddenly occurred to me that I could just about afford to buy the painting myself. When Melissa returned home from hospital with the new baby it was to find *Dandelions* on the wall, her 'birthday' gift, the only mature Lawrence painting in England.

Carl and I lost interest in the book when the C.U.P. told us a few months later that the illustrations in it would all have to be in black and white. I had to wait another eighteen years to do the book as I had always wanted to do it. *D. H. Lawrence's Paintings* was published by the Chaucer Press in 2003.

1985 saw the publication by Penguin/Viking of my most ambitious book on Lawrence — *D. H. Lawrence: Life into Art*, which attempted to show how Lawrence transformed the raw material of experience into novels, stories, plays and poems. It was also the year of my British Council lecture tour in India. The tour began with a Lawrence conference in Hyderabad. I did not realize until I got there that the name Sagar (meaning, apparently, any large body of water) was very common in India. It was almost certainly in the belief that I was Indian that I had been invited. In fact my name is Scandinavian, meaning sawyer. I was the only non-Indian at the conference. No timetable was available until after the conference had begun. I was taken to the first meeting by the conference director. On the way he said that they had hoped to have an inaugural address by the Vice-Chancellor, but that he had cried off at the last minute. When I asked who was now giving the inaugural address he said 'You are'. That gave me some five minutes to think of a theme. What I rashly said was that I felt it would be more useful and more 'Lawrencean' if Indian scholars were to approach him from the perspective of their own

culture and religion rather than aping Western academics. I don't think that cut much ice. I subsequently lectured on both Lawrence and Hughes at Madras and Trivandrum.

Three years later there came another British Council tour, this time to China. It was a time of apparent liberalization. The Shanghai conference was memorable for the number of bright young Chinese academics greedy for Lawrence. A few months later came Tiananmen Square, and all that enthusiasm was nipped in the bud.

After that, apart from editing the volume of his letters, I rather drifted away from Lawrence to work on Ted Hughes, and on my magnum opus *Literature and the Crime Against Nature* (which has a large chapter on 'Lawrence and the Resurrection of Pan'). I gave an early version of this chapter as my contribution to the inaugural day of the D. H. Lawrence Research Centre at Nottingham University in 1991. Being all too aware of the fact that, despite the widespread celebration of the centenary of his birth in 1985, Lawrence's stock among both academics and the reading public had dwindled sadly in the eighties, what I wanted to do was to draw attention to a neglected aspect of his contemporary relevance, his contribution to deep ecology.

I have spoken at the Centre several times. Perhaps the most important occasion was a day-school in 1994 to mark the completion of the great Cambridge Letters project with the publication of the seventh volume. But equally important was the unveiling of the delightful statue of Lawrence holding a gentian by Diana Thomson, which now stands outside the library.

Only once has my decision to specialize on Lawrence worked against me. There was a financial crisis at Manchester University in the early nineties. By that time I had the status of Reader. One of the measures the university adopted was to close down its Extra-Mural Department in 1995. This meant relocating over forty academic staff, most of them in the appropriate internal departments. I assumed that I, along with the other Literature tutor, would go into the English Department. When the rest received notification of their new positions, I did not. When I approached the chairman of the Arrangements Committee, he said that a decision had not yet been reached in my case. Months passed, with frequent assurances that I would have a decision not today but surely tomorrow. In June I did not know what my job would be in September, so I wrote to the Vice-Chancellor. He asked me to be in his office at eight on Monday morning. To my amazement with no preamble he outlined terms for Enhanced Early Retirement (I was sixty-one). When he asked if they were acceptable, I replied 'I can't answer that until we have discussed the alternative'. 'What alternative?' he said. 'Going into the English Department', I replied. V.C.: 'I wouldn't regard that as an alternative'. Me: 'Why not?' V.C.: 'The English Department does not regard your work as fitting what it sees as its changing profile'. Lawrence, in other words, was not flavour of the month. Neither was Ted Hughes, nor, for that matter, the whole of the Western Canon. The 'changing profile' referred to the desperate attempt of the department to climb belatedly onto the Post-Modern Critical Theory bandwagon. Shortly afterwards I was introduced in the refectory to a new member of the English Department. I asked him what his specialism was, and he replied 'soap opera'.

I lost any desire I had had to enter that department, and accepted the retirement terms. Since that decision probably saved me from several years of misery, I can hardly say, in retrospect, that my allegiance to Lawrence had worked against me.

In retirement my first intention was to wean myself from academic work altogether. When I had finished the Ted Hughes bibliography I was working on, I intended to cultivate our garden, and breed endangered Australian finches in the large octagonal aviary I had designed as a retirement present to myself. (Ted Hughes called it my 'stately pleasure dome'.) I had given up hope of ever doing a book on Lawrence's paintings, of ever getting my short-lived Lawrence biography back into print, of ever finding a publisher for my magnum opus *Literature and the Crime Against Nature*, of ever getting the Harry T. Moore award for services to Lawrence studies, and, of course, of ever getting a Professorship. I do not believe that all things come to him who waits. But I do believe that all things sometimes come to him who has abandoned hope altogether. In 2002, without my stir, out of the blue, came an invitation from Chaucer Books (prompted by John Worthen) to edit and introduce a volume on Lawrence's paintings. It was published in 2003. In 2004 Chaucer published a new edition of my Lawrence biography, and in 2005 *Literature and the Crime Against Nature*. In that same year I got the Harry T. Moore award (appropriately in Santa Fe), and in the following year a Special Professorship in the School of English at Nottingham.

When I chose Lawrence as the topic of my thesis in 1957 because I felt I could maintain my interest in him for five years, I little thought I should still be working as keenly on him in fifty.