

Poet David Herbert Lawrence : A Philosophical Appreciation of the Reality

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Abstract :

overall trajectory of Lawrence's experimentation with the initiatory pattern strangely mirrors the structure of The Rainbow: just as successive Brangwen generations progressively lose connection with their sources of vitality and integration, so too does Lawrence gradually lose contact with his own most creative—energetic, positive, and inventive—resources. It is as if in portraying the decline of the Brangwen generations, he prophesied his own physical, emotional, and artistic decline. The result is that The Rainbow is the most effective embodiment of the transformative pattern, and The Plumed Serpent the least effective. Lady Chatterley's Lover can be considered a final rallying of resources before the ultimate fall into death.

Keywords : Transformative Pattern Initiatory Pattern Fellow Countryman Destructive Phase Partial Rebound

David Herbert Lawrence was an English writer and [poet](#). His collected works represent, among other things, an extended reflection upon the dehumanising effects of modernity and industrialisation. Lawrence's writing explores issues such as sexuality, emotional health, vitality, spontaneity, and instinct. D.H. Lawrence is regarded as one of the most influential writers of the 20th century. He published many novels and poetry volumes during his lifetime, including *Sons and Lovers* and *Women in Love*, but is best known for his infamous *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. The graphic and highly sexual novel was published in Italy in 1928, but was banned in the United States until 1959, and in England until 1960. Garnering fame for his novels and short stories early on in his career, Lawrence later received acclaim for his personal letters, in which he detailed a range of emotions, from exhilaration to depression to prophetic brooding.

Lawrence's opinions earned him many enemies and he endured official persecution, censorship, and misrepresentation of his creative work throughout the second half of his life, much of which he spent in a voluntary exile he called his "savage pilgrimage"¹ At the time of his death, his public reputation was that of a pornographer who had wasted his considerable talents. [E. M. Forster](#), in an obituary notice, challenged this widely held view, describing him as "the greatest imaginative

novelist of our generation."² Later, the literary critic [F. R. Leavis](#) championed both his artistic integrity and his moral seriousness.

Lawrence wrote almost 800 poems, most of them relatively short. His first poems were written in 1904 and two of his poems, "Dreams Old" and "Dreams Nascent", were among his earliest published works in *The English Review*. It has been claimed that his early works clearly place him in the school of [Georgian poets](#), and indeed some of his poems appear in the *Georgian Poetry* anthologies. However, [James Reeves](#) in his book on Georgian Poetry,³ notes that Lawrence was never really a Georgian poet. Indeed, later critics⁴ contrast Lawrence's energy and dynamism with the complacency of Georgian poetry.

Just as the First World War dramatically changed the work of many of the poets who saw service in the trenches, Lawrence's own work dramatically changed, during his years in Cornwall. During this time, he wrote [free verse](#) influenced by [Walt Whitman](#).⁵ He set forth his manifesto for much of his later verse in the introduction to *New Poems*. "We can get rid of the stereotyped movements and the old hackneyed associations of sound or sense. We can break down those artificial conduits and canals through which we do so love to force our utterance. We can break the stiff neck of habit [...] But we cannot positively prescribe any motion, any rhythm."

Lawrence rewrote some of his early poems when they were collected in 1928. This was in part to fictionalise them, but also to remove some of the artifice of his first works. As he put it himself: "A young man is afraid of his demon and puts his hand over the demon's mouth sometimes and speaks for him."⁶ His best-known poems are probably those dealing with nature such as those in the collection *Birds, Beasts and Flowers*, including the Tortoise poems, and "Snake", one of his most frequently anthologised, displays some of his most frequent concerns: those of man's modern distance from nature and subtle hints at religious themes.

In the deep, strange-scented shade of the great dark carob tree
I came down the steps with my pitcher
And must wait, must stand and wait, for there he was at the trough before me.
(From "Snake")

Look! We have come through! is his other work from the period of the end of the war and it reveals another important element common to much of his writings; his inclination to lay himself bare in his writings. [Ezra Pound](#) in his *Literary Essays* complained of Lawrence's interest in his own "disagreeable sensations" but praised him for his "low-life narrative." This is a reference to Lawrence's dialect poems akin to the Scots poems of [Robert Burns](#), in which he reproduced the language and concerns of the people of [Nottinghamshire](#) from his youth.

Tha thought tha wanted ter be rid o' me.
'Appen tha did, an' a'.
Tha thought tha wanted ter marry an' se
If ter couldna be master an' th' woman's boss,
Tha'd need a woman different from me,
An' tha knowed it; ay, yet tha comes across
Ter say goodbye! an' a'.
(From "The Drained Cup")

Although Lawrence's works after his Georgian period are clearly in the modernist tradition, they were often very different from those of many other [modernist](#) writers, such as Pound. Pound's poems were often austere, with every word carefully worked on. Lawrence felt all poems had to be personal sentiments, and that a sense of spontaneity was vital. He called one collection of poems *Pansies*, partly for the simple ephemeral nature of the verse, but also as a pun on the French word *panser*, to dress or bandage a wound. "Pansies", as he made explicit in the introduction to *New Poems*, is also a pun on [Blaise Pascal](#)'s *Pensées*. "The Noble Englishman" and "Don't Look at Me" were removed from the official edition of *Pansies* on the grounds of obscenity, which wounded him. Even though he lived most of the last ten years of his life abroad, his thoughts were often still on England. Published in 1930, just eleven days after his death, his last work *Nettles* was a series of bitter, nettling but often wry attacks on the moral climate of England.

O the stale old dogs who pretend to guard
the morals of the masses,
how smelly they make the great back-yard
wetting after everyone that passes.
(From "The Young and Their Moral Guardians")

Two notebooks of Lawrence's unprinted verse were posthumously published as *Last Poems* and *More Pansies*. These contain two of Lawrence's most famous poems about death, "Bavarian Gentians" and "The Ship of Death".

Conclusion :

The poetry of D.H. Lawrence which has best stood the test of time is infused with a philosophical appreciation of the reality of changes in morals, mores and values than the philosophy of his own time. By the nearly all conventional notions of absolutism in such manners had evaporated along with the 20th century, the least appreciated of Lawrence's literary indulgences had finally met its time to shine. And shine it has as Lawrence is now finally receiving his late due as a poet of the same high quality with which he is regarded as a novelist and short story writer.

Refefences :

1. "It has been a savage enough pilgrimage these last four years" Letter to J. M. Murry, 2 February 1923.
2. Letter to *The Nation and Atheneum*, 29 March 1930.
3. *Georgian Poetry*, James Reeves, pub. Penguin Books (1962), ASIN: B0000CLAHA
4. *The New Poetry*, Michael Hulse, Kennedy & David Morley, pub. Bloodacre Books (1993), ISBN 978-1852242442
5. M. Gwyn Thomas, (1995)"Whitman in the British Isles", in *Walt Whitman and the World*, ed. Gay Wilson Allen and Ed Folsom. University of Iowa Press. p.16
6. *Collected Poems* (London: Martin Secker, 1928), pp.27–8