

D. H. LAWRENCE

a short overview of DHL's life
prior to *The Rainbow*



EASTWOOD: LAWRENCE'S CHILDHOOD HOME

"In summer, when the foliage is thick enough to shut out the noise of traffic and machinery, and the natural scents hold their own against soot and sulphur, to walk from Eastwood to the Haggis is to step abruptly from one world into another, from the ugly urban industrial world to 'the old England of the forest and agricultural past'. A map of the Lawrence country is also a map of Lawrence's psyche, for that split went through the middle of him, and, in a sense, killed him. For half of him pulled simply to escape, back to Nature, to other countries not yet industrialized, to primitive cultures where a truly religious way of life seemed still attainable. The other half insisted that he acknowledge his Englishness, his class, his highly developed consciousness, his commitment to take up the fight where the problems were most acute, fighting not the machine, which is to be honoured insofar as it forces men from mechanical task to take up the challenge of being and creativity, but against all those forces which go to disabled men from taking up that challenge . . ." (Sagar 7).

FAMILY

- father: Arthur Lawrence
- mother: Lydia Beardsall
- 4 siblings: George (b. 1876), William Earnest (b. 1878), Emily (b. 1882), Lettice Ada (b. 1887)



EDUCATION

- c.1891-1897: Beauvale School
- 1898-1901: 3 yrs at Nottingham High School
- a voracious reader
- 1902-1906: pupil-teacher at school next to Congregational Chapel
- 1906: Nottingham Univ. College

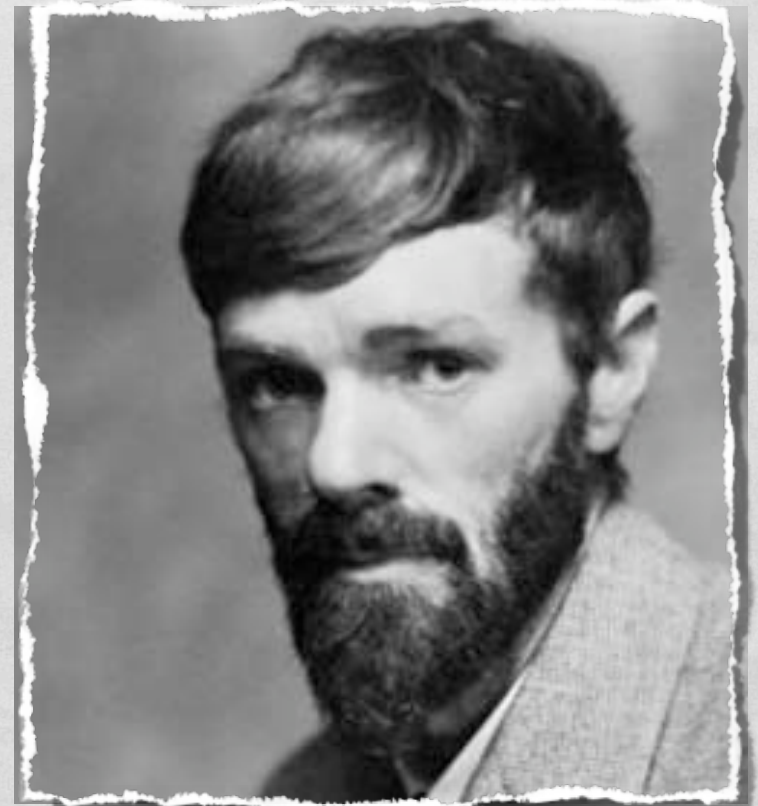


IN 1907, DHL FORMALIZES BELIEF THAT MEN ARE BORN TWICE, THE SECOND TIME UPON ENTERING MANHOOD:

"THEN THEY ARE BORN TO HUMANITY, TO A CONSCIOUSNESS OF ALL THE LAUGHING, AND THE NEVER CEASING MURMUR OF PAIN AND SORROW THAT COMES FROM THE TERRIBLE MULTITUDES OF BROTHERS. THEN, IT APPEARS TO ME, A MAN GRADUALLY FORMULATES HIS RELIGION, BE IT WHAT IT MAY. A MAN HAS NO RELIGION WHO HAS NOT SLOWLY AND PAINFULLY GATHERED ONE TOGETHER, ADDING TO IT, SHAPING IT; AND ONE'S RELIGION IS NEVER COMPLETE AND FINAL, IT SEEMS, BUT MUST ALWAYS BE UNDERGOING MODIFICATION. SO I CONTEND THAT TRUE SOCIALISM IS RELIGION; THAT HONEST, FERVENT POLITICS ARE RELIGION; THAT WHATEVER A MAN WILL LABOUR FOR EARNESTLY AND IN SOME MEASURE UNSELFISHLY IS RELIGION" (SAGAR 36, IL 40).

RELIGION

- the “Congo” (Congregational Chapel)
- 1898: the Haggis
- 1904: the “Pagans”
- 1907: crisis of faith



DHL WRITING OF GIRLFRIEND AGNES HOLT IN 1909:

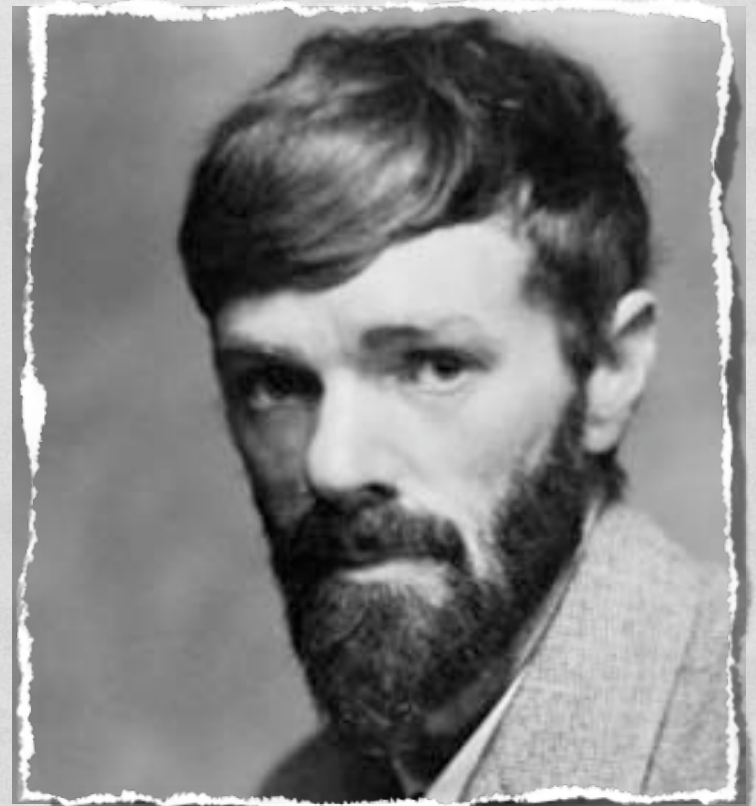
"I HAVE ENLIGHTENED HER, AND NOW SHE HAS NO COURAGE. SHE STILL JUDGES BY MIDVICTORIAN STANDARDS, AND COVERS HERSELF WITH A WOOLY FLUFF OF ROMANCE THAT THE YEARS WILL WEAR SICKLY. SHE REFUSES TO SEE THAT A MAN IS A MALE, THAT KISSES ARE THE MEREST PRELUDES AND ANTICIPATIONS, THAT LOVE IS LARGELY A PHYSICAL SYMPATHY THAT IS SOON SATISFIED AND SATIATED. SHE BELIEVES MEN WORSHIP THEIR MISTRESSES; SHE IS ALL SHAM AND SUPERFICIAL IN HER OUTLOOK, AND I CAN'T CHANGE HER. SHE'S FRIGHTENED. NOW I'M SICK OF HER" (SAGAR 46, 11153).

DHL WRITING TO FRIEDA IN 1912:

"CAN'T YOU FEEL HOW CERTAINLY I LOVE YOU AND HOW CERTAINLY WE SHALL BE MARRIED. ONLY LET US WAIT JUST A SHORT TIME, TO GET STRONG AGAIN. TWO SHAKE, RATHER SICK PEOPLE TOGETHER WOULD BE A BAD START. A LITTLE WAITING, LET US HAVE, BECAUSE I LOVE YOU. . . . IT'S A FAR GREATER THING THAN EVER I KNEW. . . . IT'S A FUNNY THING, TO FEEL ONE'S PASSION -- SEX DESIRE -- NO LONGER A SORT OF WANDERING THING, BUT STEADY, AND CALM. I THINK, WHEN ONE LOVES, ONE'S VERY SEX PASSION BECOMES CALM, A STEADY SORT OF FORCE, INSTEAD OF A STORM. PASSION, THAT NEARLY DRIVES ONE MAD, IS FAR AWAY FROM REAL LOVE" (SAGAR 63, 11403).

LOVE & SEX

- c. 1891: Mabel Thurbly
- 1898: Jessie Chambers
- 1908: self-conscious
- 1909: loses virginity
- 1910: affair w/ Alice Dax
- 1910: falls for widow Helen Corke; mother dies
- 1912: Frieda Weekley



DHL'S "BLOOD PHILOSOPHY," ARTICULATED IN LETTER TO ERNEST COLLINGS 17 JANUARY 1913:

"MY GREAT RELIGION IS A BELIEF IN THE BLOOD, THE FLESH, AS BEING WISER THAN THE INTELLECT. WE CAN GO WRONG IN OUR MINDS. BUT WHAT OUR BLOOD FEELS AND BELIEVES AND SAYS, IS ALWAYS TRUE. THE INTELLECT IS ONLY A BIT AND A BRIDLE. WHAT DO I CARE ABOUT KNOWLEDGE. ALL I WANT IS TO ANSWER TO MY BLOOD, DIRECT, WITHOUT FRIBBLING INTERVENTION OF MIND, OR MORAL, OR WHAT NOT. . . . [IN ITALY] THE PEOPLE ARE SO UNCONSCIOUS. THEY ONLY FEEL AND WANT: THEY DON'T KNOW. WE KNOW TOO MUCH. NO, WE ONLY THINK WE KNOW SUCH A LOT THE REAL WAY OF LIVING IS TO ANSWER TO ONE'S WANTS" (SAGAR 71, 1L 503-4).

THE ARTS

- first poems at 19 yrs old
- 1906: begins *Laetitia*
- 1907: wins award w/ short story
- 1909: meets Hueffer, Yeats, Pound
- 1911: sends stories to Garnett
- 1912: *White Peacock* published
- 1913: *Sons and Lovers*
- 1915: *The Rainbow*

