

THE LETTERS OF
D. H. LAWRENCE

VOLUME VI

March 1927 – November 1928

EDITED BY

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WITH

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INTRODUCTION

One obvious feature of the twenty-one months covered by this volume is the restricted range of Lawrence's movements when compared with earlier periods. More than half the time between March 1927 and mid-November 1928 he and Frieda lived at the Villa Mirinda in its isolation $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles beyond the south-western fringes of Florence, 'away from Tourists and hotels and touts'.¹ True they spent a few weeks in Austria, a couple of months (August–October 1927) in Frieda's sister's house at Irschenhausen, two weeks with her mother in Baden-Baden and six weeks (January–March 1928) with the Huxleys at Les Diablerets in Switzerland; but the Mirinda was the centre from which they moved and to which they returned. This continued so until, after a brief visit to south-western France, they were in Gsteig, Switzerland, and Lawrence decided that he could not face another winter in the Mirinda. That was in August 1928; by mid-October Frieda had been back to the 'big old heavy villa, square, perched on a hill',² removed or disposed of their belongings, and the Lawrences were on the tiny island of Port-Cros off the coast near Toulon. There had been no intercontinental travel, no visit to England: both these remained true for the rest of Lawrence's life.

Characteristically he was often restive. As so frequently in the past he would toy with ideas of travel over great distances: to Taos (but Frieda was adamant in her refusal to go near their old friend Dorothy Brett and was dubious about Mabel Luhan as a neighbour); to New York, San Francisco and then perhaps to China and India – 'anything to shake off this stupor'; or with Richard Aldington to Egypt where they would call on Bonamy and Valentine Dobrée and 'perhaps get shot in Khartoum like General Gordon'.³ In May 1927 Lawrence was sure his 'real inside doesn't turn towards America'; by November, sick of Europe, he must go to America which was 'somehow an antidote – so tonicky'.⁴ Or, less ambitiously, he might spend a year in Ireland; he might even 'try Devonshire or somewhere nearer home. Time to go home, I feel.' In February 1928 he mused on the possibility of 'drifting around for a time – Germany, England, perhaps Ireland, for the the summer: and for the winter, heaven knows'; but perhaps Taos, perhaps Capri and the 'etruscans'. A sea-voyage round the world was another dream.⁵ But, except in such moments of euphoria, honesty kept on breaking in. Travel had come to 'bore' him; the older he became the less he enjoyed 'the actual process of travelling'; and then the confession: 'I'm in despair, never able to

¹ Letter 3986.

² *Letters*, v. 448.

³ Letters 4198, 4603.

⁴ Letters 4021, 4208.

⁵ Letters 4183, 4192, 4313, 4390.

say *I will come* or *I will go*, because of my wretched chest.⁶ He preferred visiting small towns in the country – ‘big towns worry me’; country inns where ‘there is a natural life’ suited him better than boring hotels populated by ‘thousands of elderly English virgins’; but the inescapable fact recurs: ‘my broncs aren’t good enough for the long travel’. There is a poignancy about the Shakespearean echo in his remark to Aldous Huxley: ‘if you want to do a bit of a *giro*, so am I pining, pining to be amused, to forget and to escape the thousand natural snares’.⁷

Inevitably, then, Lawrence’s health was one of his main preoccupations. Much of what limited travel was undertaken in the period of these letters resulted from his worsening physical condition. For example, when he was once more in bed ‘with bronchials and haemorrhage’ in July 1927 – the month when Frieda expressed her own alarm in a private letter to Lawrence’s publisher Martin Secker⁸ – the physician, Dr Giglioli (whom he regarded as the best in Florence) recommended him to go somewhere about 2000 feet above sea-level. Therefore, for three weeks in August the Lawrences stayed in Villach. As soon as they arrived Lawrence delighted in the cool freshness he found there – ‘cool bed, . . . fresh mountain water, . . . fresh air, that isn’t baked. . .’; after a week he told his childhood friend, Gertrude Cooper, herself tubercular, that he was better ‘but the cough is a nuisance – I hope it will go away here in the mountains, in the cool’.⁹ But it did not. In late September at Irschenhausen he used the same biblical allusion that is found in a letter twelve years before, early in the war, when he felt beneath ‘a very black flood’; he told his old friend Koteliansky: ‘I feel a bit like Noah’s dove who has lost the ark and doesn’t see any signs of an olive bough – and is getting a bit weary on the wing’.¹⁰ In 1927, as in 1915, the despondency was profound. Though, a few days later, he declared himself ‘a lot better’, he admitted that he was not his ‘real self. I seem to have lost something out of my vitality – I hope it will come back.’¹¹ Once again at Villa Mirenda, he could ‘walk to the top of the hills, and feel like getting a grip on life again’; but one notices that his visit to Florence on 17 November was the first since the Lawrences returned from Baden on 19 October. Lawrence would not willingly have foregone the pleasure of meeting literary friends for so long; now, instead of encountering Reggie Turner, Giuseppe (‘Pino’) Orioli, Charles Scott-Moncrieff and Harold Acton on the Via Tornabuoni, they visited him at the Mirenda and he poured tea.¹² Then, early in 1928, ‘everybody says the mountains, the

⁶ Letters 3985, 4024, 4307.

⁷ Letters 4125, 4425, 4325, 4408.

⁸ Letters 4059, p. 105 n. 1.

⁹ Letters 4094, 4105.

¹⁰ Letters, ii. 9–10, Letter 4148.

¹¹ Letter 4157.

¹² Letters 4205, 4204. Cf. Harold Acton, *Memoirs of an Aesthete* (1948), p. 107, for a glimpse of the ‘plethora of writers’ and their life in Florence.

mountains. So we'll try'; hence the move to Les Diablerets. The second visit to Switzerland, four months later – this time 4000 feet up at Gsteig – was again on medical advice: 'let's hope I really can get better, I'm so sick of not being well.'¹³ At St Nizier in France, en route for Gsteig, an hotelier had actually turned Lawrence out because of the severity of his cough and though his health improved slightly in the Swiss air, he had to admit that his 'infernal cough' was 'for the time master of [his] movements'. Thus, however jocular his remark to the Huxleys that he had designed his tombstone with the inscription, 'Departed this life etc., etc. – *He was fed up!*', despair was not far from the surface.¹⁴

The true source of Lawrence's ill health was not acknowledged. He did not conceal from his correspondents the ill health itself (that would have been impossible in any case); rather he assured them that it could be attributed to external agencies; an organic cause was never admitted. His condition was associated with his increasing age (he was then forty-one), or explained by the malaria he contracted in Mexico in 1925, by his (like Lady Ottoline Morrell's) not being 'vulgarly *physically* selfish, self-keeping and self-preserving . . . [wasting] one's common flesh too much', or – when he was on Port-Cros – by Frieda's having brought an influenza germ from Florence.¹⁵ Outwardly Lawrence convinced himself that it was preferable to have diverse and liberating experiences, even at the cost of his own 'bad health', than to suffer the 'healthy and limited' life of a peasant. He could even suggest that, though 'these hemorrhages are rather shattering . . . perhaps they take some bad blood out of the system'. His sisters and Brett received assurances that his cough was simply a 'nuisance' and the cause of haemorrhages was bronchial and not pulmonary.¹⁶

That Lawrence's letters reveal frequent changes of mood is, in the light of this evidence, not surprising. He could vary between indifference to all creative activity, whether writing or painting: 'David sitting on his thumbs', as he put it on one occasion; or the feeling that he was undergoing a 'change of life, and a queer sort of recoil . . . drawing back from connection with everything'; to the conviction, at the end of 1927, that 'this is the low-water mark of existence. I never felt so near the brink of the abyss.'¹⁷ Lawrence had experienced such despair before; his sensing that people regarded him as an 'animal in a cage – or should be in a cage – sort of wart-hog', reminds one of his self-comparison to a hunted animal when he felt 'pushed to the brink of existence' in 1916.¹⁸ And yet, equally, his letters are also records of

¹³ Letters 4262, 4529. ¹⁴ Letters 4478, 4613, 4562. ¹⁵ Letters 4251, 4025, 4437, 4723.

¹⁶ Letters 4051, 4079, 4201, 4494, 4527. ¹⁷ Letters 4184, 3995, 4238.

¹⁸ Letter 4209; *Letters*, ii. 500.

astonishing resilience, of remarkable stores of mental and nervous energy. In August 1927, for example, though he was 'going round rather feebly' after serious haemorrhages and heat exhaustion, Lawrence read the distinguished psychoanalyst Trigant Burrow's *Social Basis of Consciousness* as soon as it arrived, wrote a long, fresh and searching response to it in a letter, and – within forty-eight hours, despite preparations to leave the Mirenda for Villach – wrote a review of the book running to nearly 3,000 words. After arriving in Villach and feeling invigorated by the mountain freshness, but weak nevertheless, he sent a translation of three stories from *Cavalleria Rusticana* to Nancy Pearn in his agent Curtis Brown's London office. There certainly were times, as in October–November 1927, when he was not inclined to work – 'I just don't really want to do anything'¹⁹ – yet preparation for the publication of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, the two-volume *Collected Poems*, the volume of stories entitled *The Woman Who Rode Away and Other Stories*, and what would (posthumously) be *Etruscan Places*, proceeded without serious interruption. He offered to write a prefatory essay for a volume of poems by the expatriate American Harry Crosby; he wrote a story for *Eve: The Lady's Pictorial*; he contributed a fine essay, 'Hymns in a Man's Life' to a volume in honour of the German novelist and physician, Hans Carossa; he translated Grazzini's *Story of Doctor Manente*, intended as Lawrence's contribution to a series of Italian Renaissance novelists to be published by Orioli. And there was much more.

The two major undertakings by Lawrence the professional writer, in the period of this volume – the publication of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and the burst of highly successful journalism – should to a considerable extent be viewed in association with his determination to achieve financial security. Poverty, or at least insecurity, had been a recurring feature of his professional life. It was still so in April 1927; in June he conceded that he managed 'to scramble through, but no more'; in October his 'earnings aren't much, nowadays'; but in the following September he insisted that he was not hard up, had 'plenty of money to go on with' and had no need or desire to sell any of his pictures.²⁰ The change requires comment; several of Lawrence's important characteristics are revealed in the process.

In August 1927, for instance, he refused to accept an advance from his publisher, Secker: 'I don't need it, thank heaven – and I hate things in advance.' Though he was determined to be paid for whatever he did produce, Lawrence showed neither greed nor willingness to accept what he had not yet earned. Understandably he felt that he 'damn well ought to have enough to live on' and resentful that only 'by living like a road-sweeper' had he

¹⁹ Letters 4083, 4086, 4118, 4198.

²⁰ Letters 3996, 4053, 4166, 4652.

sufficient.²¹ Yet, even though one suspects a growing awareness that he must accumulate funds to meet inevitable demands should his health deteriorate further, and, perhaps, to secure Frieda's well-being in the event of his own death, Lawrence was innocent of mere self-regard. He never sought to avoid paying dues and debts; his personal generosity was never in question.

On several occasions Lawrence is found telling Brett that, if she will send him 'the bill for taxes and the winter feed for the horses' on the Kiowa Ranch in New Mexico, he will pay it; she is instructed to apply to him for a loan if she is in need; or, as he puts it in March 1928, '*do tell me* if there is anything I ought to pay'. Similarly he assures his sister Ada that, if Gertrude Cooper is in difficulty, he will assist her to the tune of £50 p.a.; and 'don't tell anybody', he insists.²² He sends money to both his sisters and their children for holiday pocket-money; he arranges to buy German toys for Rachel Hawk's children in New Mexico, as well as for his nephew Bertram and niece Joan, at Christmas; and when he invites his sister Emily and niece Margaret to stay with him and Frieda in Switzerland, he offers money to cover their travelling expenses. When Montague Shearman reminds him about an outstanding 'loan', which Lawrence clearly believed was a gift, the £10 is paid immediately and without question. And his punctiliousness in paying his dues to Orioli for commission, and his debts to the Tipografia Giuntina for printing *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, is exemplary; nor does he forget a consideration for Carletto, Orioli's 'boy'.

As if to substantiate the claim just advanced, it is noticeable that in Lawrence's case generosity beget generosity. The letters frequently provide evidence of active concern on the part of his friends and acquaintances for his well-being. His neighbours at the Villa Mirinda, the Wilkinson family, were 'kindness itself'; when the Lawrences returned in March 1928 after a six-week absence in Les Diablerets, the Wilkinsons met them with a car at the railway station in Florence, drove them to the Mirinda where they found flowers and 'the peasants all there to greet and welcome us – very nice and friendly'. Other examples would include Orioli who was unfailingly kind; Frieda's family as a whole who showered affectionate regard on the man his 'Schwiegermutter' called 'my dear good Lorenzo',²³ and the Huxleys (including Juliette) who displayed particularly warm friendship towards him. Aldous and Maria Huxley invited the Lawrences to stay at Forte dei Marmi on the Ligurian coast, took them for Christmas to their friends Costanza Fasola and her husband 'Ekki' Peterich in Florence, and committed themselves to going *en quatre* to Taos in 1929. (That this last visit did not materialise cannot diminish the generosity of the offer.) It was also almost

²¹ Letters 4083, 4209. ²² Letters 4201, 4377, 4325, 4123.

²³ Letters 4085, 4326; letter from Baroness Richthofen to Emily King, 27 December 1927 (MS Needham).

certainly the Huxleys who ensured that the Lawrences met the celebrated society hostess Lady Colefax and thus brought about an exchange of visits between them.

Nevertheless, however generous Lawrence may have been, he could never escape the realisation that he had to stand on his own financial feet; he did not earn his living, as he told Trigant Burrow, 'it has to earn itself'. Though he responded to an inner and inexhaustible compulsion to write, he was increasingly aware of the core of truth in the Johnsonian axiom, 'No man but a blockhead ever wrote, except for money.'²⁴ Thus he agreed that the text of *Rawdon's Roof* should be altered by a magazine editor who would provide an immediate financial return; he contemplated the private publication of a volume of his paintings in order to avoid sharing the proceeds with his normal publishers; and in the case of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* he circumvented both publishers and literary agent through private publication. He came to recognise the value of his manuscripts and sold one to Harry Crosby. Lawrence was distinctly irritated by the prospect of signing 500 copies of *Rawdon's Roof* for a mere £25; when Secker proposed a limited and signed edition of *Collected Poems*, Lawrence insisted on a 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ % royalty and instructed Laurence Pollinger (at Curtis Brown's) to arrange it: 'I'm tired of being always worsted.'²⁵ And there are several instances of his anger at what he considered publishers' indifference to their responsibility to promote the sale of his books.

One of the clearest proofs of his determination to exploit his earning capacity was his eager response to Nancy Pearn's challenge that he should write for the 'GBP' – the Great British Public – through the press. Arthur Olley, Literary Editor of the *Evening News*, invited Lawrence to write an article for the paper; Pearn (who transmitted the invitation) told him that if he could 'bear to tackle just those sorts of subjects which the Press adores', the resulting publicity might well be reflected in 'increasing book sales'.²⁶ He accepted her argument and acted on it at once. When he saw his first article in the paper on 8 May 1928, followed by a piece entitled 'I Could Not Have Married A Foreigner' by the novelist G. B. Stern, Lawrence 'had gooseflesh'; but it did not deter him from writing further articles. He published seven in the *Evening News* between 8 May and 13 October. (Noticeably he submitted without a single comment to editorial interference with the titles of his articles, and without annoyance when one piece was rejected. This is in sharp contrast to his anger when – out of deference to Compton Mackenzie's feelings – Secker refused to include 'The Man Who Loved Islands' in *The*

²⁴ Letter 4339; *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, ed. G. B. Hill and L. F. Powell (Oxford, 1934), iii. 19.

²⁵ Letters 4222, 4370, 4312, 4645, 4547. ²⁶ Pp. 403 n. 3, 401 n. 1.

Woman Who Rode Away volume. Though journalism paid better it did not warrant the same serious regard as imaginative literature.) 'I may as well earn this way', he remarked to Pearn; a week later he confessed to her, 'I find it really rather amusing to write these little articles.' Olley was delighted with his new journalist and proposed that Lawrence should write exclusively for his paper; Lawrence's response is instructive: he would agree on the presumption that 'we can make them go higher than their ten quid'.²⁷ Pearn duly extracted twelve guineas for each article thereafter. He wondered excitedly whether they could also be placed in USA; if they could 'That would be really hot dog!!' Lawrence subsequently wrote for the *Daily Chronicle*, the *Sunday Dispatch* and the *Daily Express*, but turned down an invitation from *Film Weekly* to contribute 'an article on the sort of film he would write or produce if there were no censor'. His journalism drew him to the attention of the BBC and he was invited to broadcast. However, despite Pearn's urging – 'We have found that broadcasting really is quite a useful and dignified bit of publicity' – Lawrence's blood ran cold at the thought and he refused.²⁸

It is appropriate here to acknowledge Nancy Pearn's importance to Lawrence's financial security. Admittedly circumstances had chanced to make her his chief point of contact with the Curtis Brown agency in London. It is also true that a personal friendship had developed between them: he invited her and a friend to use the *Mirenda* when they were on an Italian holiday and the Lawrences were away; she felt able to address him as 'Dear darling Mr Lawrence' when she once needed to deflect his wrath. Nevertheless, he depended a great deal on her wholehearted commitment to his interests and on her professional shrewdness. It is easy to understand her anxiety at the supposed threat to his security and continued success posed by the notoriety she feared would follow the launch of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in July 1928.²⁹

The publication of that novel – comparable in its long-term significance to the appearance of *Ulysses* six years earlier – is the focus of the greatest attention in this volume. The letters, many now published for the first time, allow a more detailed account to be given than hitherto of the publishing process and consequences. It is best organised into three periods: before and after two crucial dates, 3 March and 28 June 1928. On 3 March Lawrence wrote from Les Diablerets to his friend and publisher, Orioli: 'All is ready! We can begin.' And the master-printer, L. Franceschini, began the typesetting. On 28 June, with Lawrence on the same mountain as in March (though this time staying at Chexbres-sur-Vevey), he wrote once more to Orioli:

²⁷ Letters 4428 and p. 401 n. 2, 4431 and n. 2.

²⁸ Letters 4492, 4725 and n. 4, 4644 and n. 1. ²⁹ Pp. 464 n. 2, 29 n. 5, Letter 4003.

Lady Chatterley came this morning, to our great excitement, and everybody thinks she looks most beautiful, outwardly. I do really think it is a handsome and dignified volume – a fine shape and proportion, and I like the terra cotta very much, and I think my phoenix is just the right bird for the cover.³⁰

For Lawrence's mood and concerns before 3 March 1928, the first letter in the volume provides a useful guide. Addressing Nancy Pearn, on 22 March 1927, he wrote:

Tell Secker not to do anything about *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. I must go over it again – and am really not sure if I shall publish it – at least this year. And I think it is *utterly* unfit for serialising – they would call it indecent – though really, it's most decent.

Themes which were to become more and more prominent – uncertainty about his English publisher, anxiety about publishing the novel at all and the expectation that it would be classed by many as pornographic, co-existing with pride in his imaginative creation: all are here in little. They recur in his next letter to Pearn, three weeks later, on 12 April; his affectionate regard for the work is almost painfully manifest:

I'm in a quandary about my novel, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. It's what the world would call very improper. But you know it's not really improper – I always labour at the same thing, to make the sex relation valid and precious, instead of shameful. And the novel is the furthest I've gone. To me it is beautiful and tender and frail as the naked self is – and I shrink very much even from having it typed. Probably the typist would want to interfere. – Anyhow Secker wants me to send it him at once . . . I am inclined to do just nothing.³¹

The same motifs are present; they were to appear and reappear on numerous occasions during the months which followed.

An epithet which is applied several times to the novel is 'tender': the book is 'tender and sensitive'; 'so tender and so daring'; 'very pure and tender'; indeed in January 1928 Lawrence decided that 'Tenderness' should be its title.³² The word conveyed the nature of the creator's regard for his creation as much as the quality of the relationship presented in the novel. But he became increasingly aware that it would be widely seen as "shocking" from the smut-hunting point of view', that possibly 'no publisher would even dare have the MS in his office' and that, even though it is 'an assertion of sound truth . . . pure . . . and warm-hearted', he could expect the book to face a largely hostile reception. The prospect was daunting. Gradually too he came to accept the inevitable: that, despite his offer to Secker and Alfred Knopf, his American publisher, to prepare an expurgated version for commercial publication – 'we can trim it up to pass' – neither of them would be ready to

³⁰ Letters 4321, 4495.

³¹ Letters 3981, 3990.

³² Letters 4210, 4211, 4229, 4263.

take the risk.³³ In any case he was 'tired of never getting anything from the publishers'; private publication became wellnigh irresistible. Particularly was this so after a fortuitous encounter in Florence with Michael Arlen in mid-November 1927. In letter after letter following this occasion Lawrence told his correspondents how Arlen had made nearly a million dollars from his novel *The Green Hat*, enough eventually to provide an income of 'perhaps £100,000 a year'. Lawrence was so impressed as to record at quite unusual length among his 'Memoranda' an account of Arlen's visit to the Mirenda two days later, on 19 November 1927. *The Green Hat* 'brought him 5,650 dollars one week', is part of the private record; another observation is – 'Definitely I hate the whole money-making world . . . But I won't be done by them either.' And the evidence to substantiate this determination is at hand: 'I'm thinking I shall publish my novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover* here in Florence, myself, privately – as [Norman] Douglas does – 700 copies at 2 guineas.' Two days after Arlen's visit he wrote to Orioli – who already acted as Douglas's publisher – alerting him to the probability that the novel would be privately published: 'you'd have to help me'.³⁴

From here to the moment in early March 1928 when the typescript was ready for press, a new sense of urgency entered Lawrence's correspondence; he became both decisive and defiant: 'unless I publish it in some way *as it stands*, I'll never publish it at all.' He chivvied his typists, was contemptuous of one, his old friend Nellie Morrison, who abandoned the work in disgust, and was somewhat exasperated by the 'simple chicken-pox of mistakes' made by Maria Huxley (who did 'the "worst" bits of the novel!'). He was prepared to flout prudish publishers and '*hyprocrites lecteurs*': 'I do want to publish 1000 copies of the unexpurgated edition, and fling it in the face of the world . . . it's got to be done.' And he derided Curtis Brown's warning that *Lady Chatterley's Lover* would damage his reputation: 'Let it.'³⁵

Between 3 March and 28 June 1928 Lawrence is known to have written over 200 letters. That is a measure of the sustained and energetic 'campaign' which he undertook once Orioli had received the complete typescript and presswork had begun. It was conducted simultaneously on several fronts. Lawrence continued to plead with Secker and Knopf to give patient consideration to the extent of expurgation required for public sale; the question of English and American copyright was also involved. But before the end of March he had concluded that Secker was 'himself an expurgated edition of a man' and was best ignored. For his part Knopf admired *Lady Chatterley's Lover*; he wanted to publish it and though he eventually decided

³³ Letters 4233, 4318.

³⁴ Letters 4233, 4213 and n. 2; MS NWU; Letters 4213, 4212.

³⁵ Letters 4248, 4255, 4303, 4277.

against doing so, at least he had not ‘lifted shocked hands of virtuous indignation, like that London lot’. The Florentine printer was another source of stress – and amusement. There was comedy in the fact that in the printing shop ‘nobody understands a word of English’; irritation was caused by the printer’s slow progress, frustration when it emerged that he had sufficient type for only half the text at a time. But Lawrence’s greatest challenge was to obtain subscribers, secure orders and payment (no copy was to be sent ‘until it’s paid for’) and arrange for distribution in England and USA.³⁶

For some time Lawrence’s correspondents (except his sisters who were kept in total ignorance of the novel) had been informed about the possibility of private publication, but a letter to Mabel Luhan on 13 March 1928 can be regarded as the opening shot in his campaign to attract subscribers. She was the first to be given a general description of the novel which was, in effect, also a justification of it (‘frankly and faithfully a phallic novel, but tender and delicate’), as well as order-forms (fifty in her case) for distribution among likely customers. About fifty (and perhaps more) people are known to have received a similar approach; the composition of the list repays study.³⁷ It includes old friends such as Lady Cynthia Asquith, Gordon Campbell, Earl Brewster and Catherine Carswell (who had arranged a considerable portion of the typing, in London); more recent friends and acquaintances like Bonamy Dobrée, Rolf Gardiner and Max Mohr; Lawrence’s publishers Secker and Knopf, and members of Curtis Brown’s offices in London and New York, not omitting the timorous Brown himself; editors of journals in which he had previously published – George Bond (*Southwest Review*), Edith Isaacs (*Theatre Arts Monthly*), Coburn Gilman (*Travel*), Harriet Monroe (*Poetry*); a man, J. Elder Walker, whom Lawrence encountered on shipboard while travelling from Ceylon to Australia in 1922; people whom he had met in Mexico like Idella Purnell, George Conway, Donald Miller and Genaro Estrada; and others whose relationship with Lawrence was fairly tenuous. One such was Elizabeth Hare of Long Island, known to be a wealthy patroness of writers and artists, and probably a friend of Brett’s, who later showed herself keen to arrange an exhibition of Lawrence’s paintings in New York. Another was Mary van Kleeck, a radical social reformer and, in 1928, Director of Industrial Studies for the Russell Sage Foundation in New York; she had chanced to meet the Lawrences, probably in Autumn 1924, when on holiday in Taos and, most likely, had no further contact with him.³⁸ That the net was spread wide is evident.

³⁶ Letters 4360, 4398, 4337, 4387, 4333.

³⁷ See Letter 4333 and p. 335 n. 2.

³⁸ See Mary Anderson and Mary N. Winslow, *Woman at Work* (Minneapolis, 1951), pp. 227–8; in the Sophia Smith Collection at Smith College, Massachusetts, is a letter to Van Kleeck, 18 July 1924, which refers to her proposed visit to New Mexico post 14 August 1924.

Lawrence had assigned 500 copies for sale in England (at £2), the same number in USA (at \$10). Arrangements for distributing the novel in both countries caused him great anxiety; this was particularly true of America. He naturally turned for advice to people he knew in USA and whose judgement about books he trusted: to his bibliographer, Edward D. McDonald, and to Harold Mason who had published *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine and Other Essays*. He asked McDonald whether there was 'much risk in the mail . . . the book *isn't* improper: but it *is* phallic'; Mason did not hesitate to advise how to circumvent interference by the Post Office and Customs, telling Lawrence to address copies of the book to individuals – to send them in bulk to Mason's Centaur Press might make them more vulnerable. American booksellers were soon alarmed by the possibility of censorship at the point of entry to the country. When Lawrence became aware of this he arranged to consult an Italian export agency about the feasibility of sending one or two hundred copies via Galveston or New Orleans, thus avoiding the notoriously severe Customs authorities in New York.³⁹

Subscriptions for the novel began to arrive steadily (including one for four copies of 'Mrs Clutterley's Lover'). In mid-April Lawrence informed Kot that 150 copies had been ordered from England, two from USA; a week later Secker, who (unlike Brett) was not given a complimentary copy, was told rather optimistically that the 500 allocated to England would soon have been applied for; however on 22 June Laurence Pollinger, a great enthusiast for the book, was assured that 'England has subscribed over six hundred'.⁴⁰ Lawrence would be gratified by the number of old friends and acquaintances who were among the first subscribers:⁴¹ Catherine Carswell, Somerset Maugham, Kot (who ordered two copies which he asked should be numbers 1 and 17), Barbara Low, Lady Ottoline Morrell, Millicent Beveridge, Gertler, Compton Mackenzie, Desmond MacCarthy, H. G. Wells, Leonard Woolf, Harold Acton, and many others, ordered by early April. (On 25 April Lawrence noted that E. M. Forster and Clive Bell had not ordered, though Keynes had.) Subscriptions were received from individuals not personally known to Lawrence: a William Dibdin, of Bristol, who wanted to maintain his almost complete collection of Lawrence's publications; the economist Edward Beddington-Behrens (subsequently knighted for his services to the League of Nations); and, later, Lord Beaverbrook was added to this category when he ordered three copies, at the same time asking if Lawrence could help him find a first edition of *The Rainbow* to replace one which had disappeared from his library. American subscribers responded more slowly, but early ones

³⁹ Letter 4329; p. 363 n. 1; Letter 4436. ⁴⁰ Letters 4441, 4400, 4402, 4485.

⁴¹ Subscribers' names are taken from DHL's 'Memoranda' (MS NWU).

included many well known to Lawrence. There was Ruth Wheelock whom he had known in Sicily and who had typed *Sea and Sardinia* and *Mr Noon*; Alfred Stieglitz; Mitchell Kennerley, the publisher responsible for American editions of *The Trespasser*, *Sons and Lovers*, etc. and whom Lawrence did not hold in high regard; his agent from whom he parted company five years before, Robert Mountsier; Mabel Luhan's psychiatrist, Dr Abraham A. Brill; Alfred Knopf; old friends such as Ted Gillete, Witter Bynner, Elizabeth Humes – and so on. There can be no doubt, then, that the 'campaign' to attract subscribers by enlisting the support of specific individuals who were virtually conscripted as agents, met with considerable success.

Some booksellers showed a keen interest in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* before it was released. On 24 April William Jackson, export booksellers in London, increased an initial order for 10 copies by a further 35; on 29 May the number was again increased, now to 70; but in this last letter an ominous note appeared: 'We want [an advance] copy badly, for we wish to see whether the book is of a questionable nature. Do you anticipate that there will be any difficulty concerning its entry into this country. . .?' Lawrence had heard that 'book-sellers are afraid of the mail'; his 'anxiety till *Lady C.* is safely delivered' is understandable.⁴² However, on 28 June he was elated at the sight of the 'handsome and dignified volume'.

After that date schemes for distribution had to be implemented. 'Let's get started', he told Orioli on 5 July. Orioli was instructed in the same letter to send 'three or four copies every day to America, especially to the Philadelphia people [i.e. McDonald, Mason and their friends] – copies that are paid for, of course'. To England they were to be sent to 'people we know, who are not likely to talk – and to people like Dulau' (the distinguished London bookseller). By 12 July Orioli was despatching 20 copies a day.⁴³ Key recipients in USA, like Mason, McDonald and Stieglitz were asked to cable Orioli to confirm the arrival of their own copies; McDonald and Mabel Luhan in America, Kot, Barbara Low and, later, Enid Hilton (daughter of William and Sallie Hopkin whom Lawrence had known from his Eastwood days) and Richard Aldington in England, were to monitor the arrival of copies generally. Lawrence was apprehensive about possible repressive action not only in the USA but also by the English police. At the end of July he reported 'rumours that the police are going to raid the shops'; by the same date booksellers (William Jackson, Stevens & Brown, and Foyles) had returned 114 copies; and Lawrence's London group found themselves acting like secret agents to collect, store and distribute them. Aldington was asked 'to keep these copies

⁴² Pp. 390 n. 2, 417–18 n. 4; Letters 4436, 4491.

⁴³ Letters 4511, 4529.

quite quietly, and tell nobody, and just let them lie till I have a use for them'; Enid Hilton was advised, when collecting returned copies from a bookseller, to give a 'fake' address and that she was 'under *no* obligation to give Jackson's [her] name'.⁴⁴ If any official action were taken against the book, members of the London 'cell' were expected to warn one another. But despite the rumours and fears, the police did nothing. In mid-August Lawrence could tell Stieglitz that *Lady Chatterley's Lover* had 'exploded like a bomb among most of my English friends, and they're still suffering from shell-shock. But they're coming round already'. Aldington thought the novel 'a feather in the cap of the 20th Century'; David Garnett wrote to congratulate Lawrence; but many people were 'beastly' about it. (Edward Garnett who had told Lawrence years before that he would 'welcome a description of the whole act', was sent a copy from Gsteig.)⁴⁵

Early reactions in the English press were not unfavourable. Perhaps the first appeared in the *Star* on 1 August. Readers learned that 'there is a brisk inquiry . . . for the latest D. H. Lawrence, which has just been printed privately in Italy'; the writer of 'The "Star" Man's Diary' found 'the treatment . . . frank in some ways and . . . obscure in others'; and though he did not expect the work to 'enhance the reputation of this distinguished writer . . . its literary quality is – need it be said? – of the highest.' At the end of September John Rayner in *T. P.'s Weekly* told his readers that 'Mr Lawrence has carried realism to a pitch seldom aspired to in the whole history of literature. And the result is a fine novel, bold and stark.' Thus, though Lawrence believed it cost him many friendships; though the *Sunday Chronicle* attacked the book viciously on 14 October as 'one of the most filthy and abominable ever written . . . an outrage on decency' and *John Bull* a week later delivered its notorious attack on 'the most evil outpouring that has ever besmirched the literature of our country': the reception accorded *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in England was by no means unrelievedly hostile.

Lawrence received a clear warning of official reaction in USA when Mason wrote on 31 July to say that his copy had been 'arrested'. He went on: 'You have been too courageous for our timid and dove-like postal inspectors who have been scared stiff by the naughty words you employed.' He suggested that copies be passed from an English exporter to a friend on 'the American Merchant' who would take them through Customs and subsequently mail them from New York. However, the proposed exporter, William Jackson, refused to handle a book of such a 'thoroughly obscene and disgusting nature'. Many American subscribers, besides Mason, failed to receive their

⁴⁴ Letters 4562, 4556, 4572, 4573.

⁴⁵ Letters 4595, 4556, 4611, 4676.

copies; on 27 August Lawrence estimated that only 14 out of about 140 had been fortunate. He urged Maria Chambers, one of the unfortunates, not to 'go round talking to booksellers: they even may be police agents . . . the quieter one keeps, the better'.⁴⁶ Meanwhile his hopes were stirred by the prospect of an American edition of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* from the Vanguard Press; to enable Vanguard to assess the book, he suggested that Orioli should send three copies with a specially printed jacket and title-page to read: '*Joy Go With You – by Norman Kranzler (The Ponte Press)*'. (About a fortnight later he proposed for the false jacket the title of Butler's novel, *The Way of All Flesh*.) But the US mail and Customs authorities were too vigilant. An obscure Californian newspaper, the *Fresno Morning Republican*, may have been the first to announce, on 11 August: 'Postal Officers Confiscate Books . . . as unfit for the United States mails.' 'Damn the Americans – damn and damn them', was Lawrence's first reaction when the news reached him in late August; a week later America was described as suffering from a 'tyranny of imbeciles and canaille'; and soon afterwards he was 'tired of America and the knock-kneed fright in face of bullying hypocrisy'.⁴⁷ But this proved simplistic. The case of Herbert Seligmann (author, in 1924, of the first American book on Lawrence) establishes the point. He wrote a favourable review of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and it was published in the *New York Sun* on 1 September, but the editors were so outraged by his 'pollution of their pages that they took the unprecedented step of remaking the literary supplement to remove it in later editions'. Seligmann was never again invited to review for the *Sun*. So there were bullies but brave men were not in short supply. Indeed some of the most appreciative and laudatory comments on the novel came from American readers. Mason, for example, told Lawrence that it was 'really a magnificent book . . . I have yet to hear a dissenting voice . . . a work of great beauty and strength and there are pages of it that have never been excelled, in my opinion'; Stieglitz and Georgia O'Keefe wrote 'long effusions'; and Pascal Covici, a friend of Aldington's and New York publisher, considered it 'the most vital piece of fiction . . . in the last ten years'. Thus for Lawrence to be pleased with the 'intelligent appreciation . . . even enthusiastic' in England was appropriate; but to assert that 'all the Americans either squirm and look sickly, or become sordidly indignant', was wide of the mark.⁴⁸

If evidence were required of Lawrence's skill as an entrepreneur, his letters of this period provide it. It is clear that he knew at any time where every unsold copy of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was in London, no matter how confusing the situation created by booksellers returning their purchases and

⁴⁶ Pp. 449–50 n. 3, 518 n. 3; Letters 4623, 4613.

⁴⁷ Letters 4617, 4655, 4625, 4642, 4666.

⁴⁸ Pp. 607 n. 1, 548 n. 1; Letter 4643; p. 560 n. 1; Letter 4679.