

ALASTAIR NIVEN

D. H. Lawrence: The Novels

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978. Pp. 188. \$5.95; \$16.95.

Niven's study of Lawrence's novels provides an excellent introduction to Lawrence as an artist and as a thinker. Although the main focus is on the novels themselves, on an analysis of language, imagery, and themes, Niven also discusses Lawrence's letters since he believes that they are essential for throwing light on Lawrence's mood and on his purposes. Where appropriate, he considers the essays and short stories, showing cross-currents between the shorter fiction and the novels. The chronological format of the study gives valuable insights into Lawrence's development.

With the exception of the first two versions of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and of *The Boy in the Bush*, all the novels are represented at length here. The longest section deals with *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, the centerpieces of Lawrence's art. Particularly useful is the much needed reassessment of Lawrence's more neglected novels. Niven stresses their importance in Lawrence's overall development as well as their intrinsic value as novels, despite their shortcomings. In his chapter on *The White Peacock*, for example, Niven shows the important links between Lawrence's first novel and the mature novels yet argues convincingly that this novel has a sturdy independence of its own. In his essay on *The Trespasser*, Niven criticizes the lack of consistency in the novel but argues that it is a watershed in Lawrence's development since it shows him wrestling with the new discoveries of beginning maturity.

According to Niven, the "travel" novels show Lawrence struggling with new directions in his art. In *The Lost Girl*, Lawrence's scrutiny of provincial morality soon changes into a sexual and metaphysical psychology that goes far beyond his models of Bennett and Galsworthy. The sense of unrootedness in *Aaron's Rod* reflects Lawrence's own restlessness and despair and depicts the purposelessness of the world as Lawrence perceived it then. Above all, Niven urges a reassessment of *Kangaroo*, arguing that this novel has more unity than critics have generally recognized. He also discusses

Lawrence's view of politics, concluding that Lawrence flirted with authoritarianism only to abhor it later as he would have abhorred the fascist governments of Europe, had he lived to see them. Throughout these "travel" novels, Lawrence explores new values and searches for a vital mode of existence to replace the sterility of modern life. In the last chapter, Niven points to similarities in theme and setting between *The White Peacock* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, and this comparison with the first novel is a useful measure to assess Lawrence's artistic development.

This series on British authors, of which this study is a part, wishes to promote an increase "in the reading, with enjoyment and understanding, of the great works of English literature." This study definitely fulfills this goal in respect to Lawrence. Niven's style is refreshingly lively and the book spurs the reader on to become more familiar with Lawrence's works.

Jenny Michaels

BARD H. BAKKER, ED.

Emile Zola: Correspondance, I (1858-1867)

Montreal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal and Les Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1978.

Pp. 594. \$40.00

This is the first volume of a great edition which will reach ten volumes and which will require more than a decade to complete; it will contain a very high percentage of the letters Zola wrote between 1858 and the year of his death, 1902. It promises to be far more than the usual edition of a correspondence: like the epoch-making edition of Zola's *Oeuvres complètes* by Henri Mitterand for the Cercle du Livre Précieux, it will aim at being as complete as any such publication can ever be. Not only will it contain most of Zola's letters, but, in addition the editors aim to produce something very much like an encyclopedia of material surrounding