

judgment can ever be a purely aesthetic matter. It leaves the reader skeptical about the fruitfulness of a dialogue between those who hold conflicting beliefs on aesthetic values and the definition of truth. Suchkov puts many a Western colleague to shame by referring to literature in English, Czech, French, and German. His essay shows, however, that familiarity with foreign ideas need not weaken prejudice.

But what can we learn about Kafka from this anthology? The non-expert can find more facts and more varied interpretations elsewhere. The expert will note that most of the pieces in this volume concentrate on statements of principle, general descriptions and blanket verdicts and offer little detailed textual analysis. Richter's commentary on two parts of *Description of a Struggle* is a notable exception. Here there is insight into Kafka's portrayal of an alienation which is so often mentioned in this volume as if it were the concern of sociologists rather than literary critics.

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## GRAHAM HOLDERNESS

*D.H. Lawrence: History, Ideology and Fiction.*

Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1982. Pp. 248.

Holderness approaches Lawrence's works from a materialist and historical perspective—literary works, he believes, can only be understood fully when they are related to their historical and ideological contexts. The study focuses only on works in which Lawrence addresses his native society, the small mining town in the English Midlands where he grew up.

First of all Holderness defines the terms he uses. His understanding of realism is closely linked to that of the Marxist critic Georg Lukács. He also draws on the theories of the French critic Louis Althusser and his followers Pierre Macherey and Terry Eagleton who argue that literature is closer to ideology than to scientific knowledge. A writer's description of history is not objective: instead his image of reality is shaped by ideologies which Holderness defines as "structures of social practice, thought, be-

lief, value and unconscious assumption" (p. 10). Another key term is aestheticism. Although Lawrence was often critical of this cultural movement, he was nevertheless influenced by it.

In the next chapter, Holderness points out what he sees as shortcomings in previous attempts to analyze Lawrence's realism. (He takes issue in particular with the criticism of T.S. Eliot and F.R. Leavis.) Such critics based their analysis only on the depiction of society they found in Lawrence's works—they did not use independent historical sources to measure Lawrence's accuracy. Lawrence's view of society is not, however, necessarily authoritative, as the different social models to be found in his works demonstrate.

Holderness surveys the development of the mining industry in the English Midlands and uses this as background to measure the accuracy of Lawrence's depiction of society. He then turns to Lawrence's cultural milieu in his formative years (family, church, Eastwood social life and friends). The political, economic and social conflicts evident in the mining industry, he argues, were reflected in Lawrence's cultural milieu; they were decisive in shaping Lawrence's character, ideology and works.

In the next two chapters, Holderness focuses on the struggle between aestheticism and realism in *The White Peacock* and *The Trespasser*. In both these works, he believes, aestheticism triumphs over realism. In both these works, the real world is portrayed as coarse, vulgar, ugly and animalistic. To escape from reality, the protagonists flee into an aesthetic world of culture and refinement.

In the next works, "The Odour of Crysanthemums" and *Sons and Lovers*, Lawrence directly addresses actual social reality. Throughout *Sons and Lovers* (Lawrence's only realistic novel, according to Holderness), Lawrence depicts the wounding and violent contradictions in the mining community. Paul's life is set within a wide social context, and the conflicts within the Morel family typify the clash of values in the mining community as a whole. Holderness believes that the relationship between the individual and society in Lawrence's works is always tragic: the individual is rooted in a society which cannot fulfil his needs.

After *Sons and Lovers*, Holderness notes a change from a realistic to more symbolic and mythological styles. The next chapter

focuses on *The Rainbow* which most critics, Holderness says, have viewed as a historical chronicle. Leavis, for example, sees the novel as a true account of society in transition from a rural, organic past to an urban, industrialized present. According to Holderness, however, Lawrence does not describe an actual but a mythical world, created in protest against the values of his own society. The three different settings, agricultural pastoral, rural village and industrialized city, are used only as backdrop for the drama of human relationships. The novel, Holderness concludes, amounts to a denial of history and an affirmation of ideology.

Holderness then describes the historical and ideological contexts of World War I, a period of crisis for Lawrence. Although *Women in Love* does not directly address the war, it contains, in fact, Lawrence's response to the war, in Holderness' estimation. He argues that it focuses on the social system which produced the war, that is, industrial capitalism, symbolized as always in Lawrence by the mining industry.

The last novel analyzed in the study is *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Holderness describes Lawrence's visit to England in 1926 which gave rise to the novel. He points out how bewildered Lawrence was by the labor unrest in the mining industry at the time. The first version of the novel is more realistic and makes the reader aware of the forces of social change while the final version retreats from history into a "mythological space liberated from the pressures and constrictions of industrial society" (p. 226). Holderness concludes his discussion of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (and the whole study) by noting that the conflict in this novel between 'life' and 'society,' between the dead collective form and the living, atomized individual is typical of all of Lawrence's works. He attributes this to the "social contradictions encountered and lived through all those years before by a child in a working-class family in a small industrial town of the English Midlands" (p. 227). Lawrence's writing, he believes, was decisively shaped by his early experiences of social conflicts.

If used along with other critical approaches, Holderness' historical, materialist approach can contribute valuably to understanding the complex world of Lawrence's fiction. When this approach is used alone, however, it sometimes tends to distort Lawrence's works, and this seems to me to be the major shortcoming of the study. This is particularly evident in the analysis of *Women in Love*, although other similar examples oc-

cur throughout the study. Since Holderness focuses chiefly on the Crich family, he gives this family a more important role than it actually plays in the novel; the carefully worked out contrast between the viewpoints of the two couples in the novel is lost in his discussion. Holderness summarizes the novel's purpose thus: "It attempts to offer a complete, comprehensive, final statement about the inevitable tragic destruction of industrial capitalism" (p. 215). Such an interpretation, while valid in part, ignores many other important aspects and distorts this rich and complex work. Yet in several respects this well-written book adds new dimensions to Lawrence criticism. It succeeds well in illuminating Lawrence's relationship to his times, showing how he reacts to historical and social change. It is particularly helpful in setting Lawrence's works into their historical and social background and in measuring the accuracy of Lawrence's depiction of his contemporary society. The study also gives insights into Lawrence's debt to aestheticism (an appendix contains Lawrence's most important comments about this movement).

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PATRICIA A. DEDUCK  
*Realism, Reality, and the Fictional  
Theory of Alain Robbe-Grillet and  
Anais Nin*

Washington, D.C.: University  
Press of America, 1982. Pp. 118.  
\$19.00.

Given the widely disparate controversies surrounding the works of Robbe-Grillet and Nin, one might well expect that a book comparing these radically different authors would discuss the one topic regularly included in critical studies of both writers: the degree to which stereotypical notions of masculinity and femininity have informed their respective ideas of fictional reality. But this is not the case at all. Deduck restricts herself to the purpose she outlines in her preface: "to acquaint the reader not only with the two writers' theoretical works and ideas, but also with the relation of their the-