In the past decade we have had many excellent specialized studies of Lawrence. But, in my judgment, Lawrence now needs a substantial synthesizing critical study that takes account of what we now know of his historical and personal background and of his relation to other writers and thinkers. Collectively, the books under review certainly contribute to our understanding of Lawrence. Yet what we need is a major study by a powerful critic, who would create a dialogue between texts and theory, between newer theory and traditional approaches, even while sifting through the vast research on Lawrence with intelligence and verve.

Among the questions that should be asked: How and why did Lawrence's form develop and evolve? How did his concept of character and characterization change? How does his "carbon" theory of the psyche as outlined in the famous letter to Garnett reflect developments in the English and European cultural and intellectual milieu? What are the appropriate theoretical questions to ask about Lawrence's language? Do we need an aesthetic and narratology for Lawrence that is different from the other writers of the modern British period? How does Lawrence's language signify in the intense and strained passages, such as the opening and closing chapters of The Rainbow and the famous "Ever and Again" passage of the chapter "Anna Victrix"? How can we discuss the symbolic speech acts of such works as The Man Who Died and St. Mawr? How does Lawrence's use of idiomatic and colloquial speech undermine such poststructuralist master terms as "writerly"? How does Lawrence use his letters as a threshing ground to test his ideas and fictional voices? (Of The Rainbow he wrote: "Now you will find [Freida] and me in the novel, I think, and the work is of both of us" [#718, Letters].) What are the reasons that his political fiction founders? Is Lawrence less a primitive and more of an intellectual—albeit a quirky one—than we thought?

Ross C. Murfin's study of Sons and Lovers is part of a new Twayne Series devoted to individual works. Apparently, each of these volumes will abide by a formula that stipulates chapters on "Historical Context," "The Importance of the Work," and "Critical Reception" before doing a critical analysis and concluding with an annotated bibliography. If, as I suspect, these books are intended for a student audience and for prospective teachers, it would be nice if they were available in inexpensive paperbacks.

Murfin is a sophisticated critic whose prior work on Lawrence's poetry deserves respect and makes him a good choice for such a volume. Murfin reads closely and is attentive to the novel's intricacy and evolving form; he discusses the Miriam-Paul relationship with insight and sees how Paul is the source of their problems: "Lawrence's achievement lies in suggesting that there is a tragic tension inside the self—between primordial instinct and modern Western reason, between sensuality and a counterforce called 'virginity,' even between 'male' and 'female' habits and yearnings—that produces tragic conflicts without." But if this is Lawrence's achievement, does it happen in part because of the breakdown in distance? One wonders if Murfin shouldn't be somewhat self-conscious about method and show an awareness of the current critical environment. I believe that the oscillating relationship between Lawrence and the narrator as well as between the narrator and Paul is crucial to the form of Sons and Lovers and to the interpretation of every scene. Although Murfin alludes to these relationships, he needs to be more aware of them, and the issue of how we discuss an author in a text needs to be addressed. While this is not Murfin's best work, it is attentive to the needs of his audience and is written in a lucid, readable style.

The prolific critic and editor Jeffrey Meyers has put together another collection of essays by a distinguished group of critics and scholars, and we should be grateful to have their work in one volume. Meyers presents the study under review as a sequel to another collection that he edited, D. H. Lawrence and Tradition (1985), a study of influences upon Lawrence. This new collection speaks...
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Ross C. Murfin's study of Sex and Leisure is part of a new Twayne Series devoted to individual works. Apparently, each of these volumes will abide by a formula that stipulates chapters on 'Historical Context,' 'The Importance of the Work,' and 'Critical Reception' before doing a critical analysis and concluding with an annotated bibliography. If, as I suspect, these books are intended for a student audience and for prospective teachers, it would be nice if they were available in inexpensive paperbacks.

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