The Making of the Modern Artist

The Making of the Modern Artist: Stephen Dedalus and Will Brangwen

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For Lydia and Ernestine,
in love and great expectations.

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PREFACE

THE POSITIONED MODERN ARTIST, POSTCOLONIALLY READ

A troubling aspect of the politics of modernism for a twenty-first century reader was its reliance on traditional attitudes which had previously been represented as primitive. With insights from Freudian psychology, the modernist artist began a painful but relieving process of walking back into and retrieving the dark recesses of his or her being. From this ambiguous position, it was tempting to conclude that "primitive" and "civilized" instincts were reconciled; but this was mostly an intellectual step that served only a symbolic convenience, and in which case the modernist artist remained a positioned phenomenon in the erstwhile embodying discourse of modernism. Examining this partiality from the works of James Joyce and D. H. Lawrence, one has to be reminded of the chasms of race, nation, and class that divided the two writers and were repeatedly exploited for various selfish, if at times illuminating, aims.

A casual question may be asked to know why we are still concerned with the canonical British writers when new realities in every sector make them almost a thing of the past. A simple answer to which I have already alluded will be that the dialogue between the traditional and the modern is an ongoing one that continues to address new shades of cultural meaning so that what is *almost a thing of the past* renews itself in overlapping cultural spheres. Part of our concern with canonical writers is proof of a reawakening in the way English modernism in particular is being revived in African scholarship today, a trend that is already an established tradition in other parts of the former colonised world. An interest in the imaging of the artist revives the debate about the identity of the artist in society and how ideological formations may or may not authenticate his or her position. Combining Joyce and Lawrence in this way may raise the eyebrows of the partisan critic. But I believe that a common denominator for the two is the varying ways in which they weave subaltern visions into the centre pillar of English modernism. Although critics like Michael Bell

have argued convincingly that Lawrence endorsed a "parallel modernism" to that of his sophisticated and more technically favoured peers, including Joyce, there is no denying the fact that the basic drive to question traditional values and representations underlies what is only apparently opposing.

One way of understanding this complexity is to envisage a workable relationship between Joyce and Lawrence with regard to basic subject matters beyond the often exaggerated consequences of the Oxbridge vs. Lawrence complexes. Inasmuch as the one camp exhibited a condescending comportment toward Lawrence and the class aesthetics that he represented, it is also true that the latter's reactionary conceit was equally positioned. Beyond the feuding sentiments, however, both Joyce and Lawrence may emerge from a "fraternal" study as sharing a common concern with the way art as both subject and object problematises – just as it could reconcile – the propaganda of the respective blocs. Joyce's rejection of an enabling Ireland coincides with Lawrence's eventual awareness that "Englishness" had been compromised by the very persons and authorities who pretended to affirm it. By comparing England in particular to a sinking ship from which he had to escape before the apocalyptic moment, Lawrence was drawing attention to the crucial need for artistic vision to stay unsullied. The struggle of the artist in both Lawrence and Joyce testifies to this affirmative need. Like Lawrence who claimed that he was not only English but that his vision was Englishness, Joyce confessed through his hero that "[t]his race and this country and this life produced me [...] I shall express myself as I am". That two writers who were technically opposed could reconcile at the basic level reveals the staged provenance of modernism.

The difficulty of pairing Joyce and Lawrence is thus resolved through a recognition that their art upholds a dialogue that is far more enabling than the politicised differences that are often used to polarise the writers. A common denominator that relates to their respective constituencies, it is easy to see how art is used by both of them as an anti-establishment proposition for change. For Joyce, art was functional at a personal and aesthetic level. His writing and the artist-figure who mediates this, is never unaware of his contested origins in what was supposed to be a *United* Kingdom. But Joyce's artist character offers a new, recalcitrant utterance, one that defines his colonised status within the setup. He is forever impatient with given definitions, the domestication of these, and how they are subsequently parodied into religious and nationalist clichés of irrelevance. As a consequence, he is always bolting both physically and imaginatively, and remains a troubling personality within the national

halo. Aesthetically, however, there seems to be a compromise that may easily lead to accusations of betrayal against Joyce. For, while he denounces a conservatism that is structured to stymie singular opinion and identity, he simultaneously embraces a modernism that experiments with new speech codes without translating these into the postcolonial text of his roots. The language of modernism instead appealed to a new conservative formation, new only because it relied on new cognitive perspectives, and in the case of Joyce in particular, this also meant being severed from the realities of contested Dublin to which he would return only through the mediation of letters.

It will be necessary to compare Joyce's approach with that of a compatriot like W. B. Yeats, whose modernist excursions were rooted to a local space and consciousness from which the universal was then determined. Whether it was the Innisfree or Byzantine landscape that he was prospecting, Yeats was never far away from indigenous values which could then be universalised contextually. It was his imagination that strayed after complementary concepts, not himself finally, reconciled to his turbulent locality. It may be argued that Stephen Dedalus attempts as much at the end of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in his hope "to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race". I find a conceptual flaw here in first imagining the revival in his soul, and then hoping to realise it in exile. Even if we understand the soul to be the seat of creative power, it is likely that his art in exile would have followed the same pattern as we see in Samuel Beckett's characters after *Murphy*, who increasingly addressed a European and not an Irish universality. This process of creative adaptation is one which Yeats was rejecting in his own revivalist approach to the problems of Ireland. Exile is a convenient space for an artist who believed at the point of leaving Dublin that only those without a conscience could live there; and in *A Portrait*, Stephen will lament the fact that "Ireland is the old sow that eats her farrow".

How then does the restive artist in Joyce envisage communal hope beyond this escapist valorisation of exile? One major way will be to draw on a symbolic aesthetic that was crucial to modernist experimentation. For instance, the debate over the functional relevance of Tennyson and Byron is vital to an understanding of what I see as a postcolonial reading of Joyce. The romantic fantasies of Tennyson appealed to the authoritative nuancing of national and artistic self-imaging. As Poet Laureate, it was clear that Tennyson had been recognised and compromised at the same time, institutionalised in a way that Joyce could never be, while his official status prevented him from straying into imaginative byways of ideological nationalism. Byron, on the other hand, was a poetic nuisance whose

physical disability was not only symptomatic of the rioting within, but was more than compensated for by his ego-bursting arrogance. This latter characteristic resulted in the nay-saying aesthetic that predictably led him across the conscripting borders of British conformism. Joyce was aware of how the parallel emotions represented by his forebears clashed dangerously in him. Refusing to endorse Tennyson, he does not, however, align with Byron in the end because it is one thing to abandon a reductionist system and another to adopt a militant posture against its nascent globalising ideologies such as Byron was to do during the Crimean war. Even if personal emotions of love were responsible for this attitude, we should also remember that one of Yeats' page-turners, 'Easter 1916', was in many ways a tribute to love's elastic frontiers.

The same escapism is evident in Stephen's critical orientation in the later part of *A Portrait*. He celebrates the classics but in doing this he is also adjusting rather comfortably into the authoritative critical voice which postmodernism was to react against. The intimidating modernist manhood, so to speak, was a variation of centrist attributes which the modernist writer and critic were supposed to be challenging. In the same voice, however, Joyce rejects Christian and nationalist decoys but also affirms Plato and Aquinas, and adjusts his own position to theirs only minimally. By defining art as "the human disposition of sensible or intelligible matter for an aesthetic end", Stephen drags us into the familiar modernist jargon that was reviving classical thought. The "new terminology and a new personal experience" which modernists like Stephen searched for, was only an anagrammatic ruse that led to a cul-de-sac where the postcolonial subject was dumped.

From my own postcolonial perspective, then, art and criticism which manifest and resolve themselves only in the senses becomes more of the problem than a solution. Stephen's ultimate but complicit vision of beauty – the image of the girl in midstream – shatters his bonds of adherence and transforms him into the rebel whose goal should be redemptive at a personal and communal level. Again, I suggest a comparison with the Maud Gonne symbol in Yeats' imagination, and how the lover-poet transformed that elusive symbol into a nationalist dirge which still echoes even today in "devolutionist" diplomacy from Number 10 Downing Street. But Joyce's vision negates the Ireland for which Stephen pledges his soul, and liberates him instead into a selfish "soul" whose aesthetic confluence will be in exile where he hopes "to live, to err, to fall, to triumph, to recreate life out of life".

At a modernist level, therefore, we understand and appreciate Joyce's artist as an excellent wordsmith for concepts that disavowed the traditional

sphere to which modernism itself clung. He is the antithesis of prude Victorianism, but only so because nineteenth century England was also reacting against its conscripting past and simultaneously devising global conquest on Christian oars. That Joyce understood this duplicity and tried to distance himself from its smear is clear enough from Stephen's alienation from the social codes of behaviour. But what is disturbing is the way he patterned artistic iconoclasm along the very conservative mentality that was championed in the creative and critical spheres by T. S. Eliot. The distance between Dublin and London – just as that for Eliot between Illinois and London – as opposing poles of attraction is nullified through an intellectual connivance and the bolting artist is finally seduced into a fraternity that celebrated the very fact of his "enslavement".

I have already signalled the conflict between Lawrence and Joyce, especially when partisan criticism led by F. R. Leavis and Eliot exploited it toward respective poles of rural and bourgeois tendencies. Both Lawrence and Joyce were in many ways roots writers, but while they also aspired beyond their roots, it was Lawrence, more than Joyce, who returned imaginatively, again and again, as John Worthen has remarked in many instances, to the pre-industrial setting of British society, at least from the memories of his childhood in Eastwood. Lawrence had also gone into a form of self-exile that took him literally across the world in search of lost values by which Anglo-European and even Western consciousness could be revived. In the works which he wrote in transit, Lawrence transforms art into bitter propaganda against Western ideological prefiguring, denouncing the complicity of Christianity (particularly its Roman Catholic variant), democracy, and capitalism on the neo-colonial world represented by Mexico. But this is not to say he favoured socialist or communist advocacy: rather, he was for a mutual respect for the Other's worldview, textualised in the controversial novel, *The Plumed Serpent*, and more significantly dramatised in the visual representations in the novel. These are denunciations of the prefigured ego, which Lawrence had actually celebrated in his earlier, pre-travel works, notably in *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*.

The image of Will Brangwen is an interesting point in Lawrence's experimentation with art as it looks back to the past and future representations in his work. Writing between 1915 and 1922 when *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* were published respectively, we have to wait until after Lawrence left England and Europe at the end of 1922, to have significant discursive insights from him on his stance regarding the problematic of art and the artist. In *Sons and Lovers*, already, it was clear that Paul Morel's art, which attempted to capture the protoplasm in a leaf,

was anticipatory of Lawrence's famous impatience with "the old stable ego of character" and preference for "allotropic states" of consciousness. This is the transitional moment which Will sketches, a struggle for utterance between the expression of traditional and modernist forms. He is almost helpless against time and age which have connived against his youthful exuberance and he finally withdraws into convenient Christian archetypes. Will's effort to envisage his domestic and matrimonial life in terms of a parallel with Adam's privileged creation in the book of Genesis makes Lawrence's art vulnerable to the same conservative pull as Joyce's. It is an orientation that reflected the contested patriarchalism, which Anna attacks in *The Rainbow*, and underscores a supremacist race attitude which Lawrence himself adopted toward the Irish, the Jews, and the Blacks. His visual representations speak to this pre-travel arrogance, which is ironically repeated in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* due more to the pressures of Lawrence's deteriorating health, his imminent death, and a kind of last gasp need to reaffirm identity.

Whatever arguments that have been advanced for and against Lawrence's obsession with art in his work, it is obvious that he saw its literary and visual representation as the ideal context to problematise the indeterminacy of life. Cézanne was a great inspiration in this direction and in appreciating his painted apples we see Lawrence struggling for his own unique form from Paul Morel's leaf, through Will's doomed Adam, to Gudrun's largely misunderstood and misrepresented work. Significantly, Gudrun's vision exposes textual and authorial interests which Lawrence's discursive writing on the subject highlighted. She can be viewed in this sense as already anticipating the relativised space of artistic representation and critical acknowledgement, which postmodernism was to introduce against a modernist immanence that had degenerated into a Vorticist conspiracy with industrialisation. The Lawrence who vehemently opposed the abusive mechanisation of industry together with the possessive instinct that was associated with it, was apparently unaware of the destabilising force of vision which Gudrun possessed, thus validating his famous caution for us to trust the tale more than the writer. Gudrun appeals to me as a sidelined character whose attempt to articulate what is intimate to her and her creator is compromised by consciously assertive positions of political correctness in art.

The contradictions that are identifiable in the concerns of both Joyce and Lawrence with art and the artist are still significant to postcolonial readings of these writers. They were questioning the empire's authority both at home and abroad, tracing internal colonial issues that defined the bigger picture of global dominance. The artists that Joyce and Lawrence

empowered in their works may be limited by the way they exhibit conceited opinions even when it is not necessary, but they also focus our attention on the way a postcolonial bias for and against them is inevitable.

—Mbuh Tennu Mbuh

INTRODUCTION

The English novel came up as a distinct genre in the eighteenth century and has since then imposed itself and won a place in the literary world. It pre-occupied itself with man as a social being, and so became oriented in the concern for the human society. William J. Long in his book English Literature tells us that the aim of the first novelists was to tell men, not about knights or kings or types of heroes, but about themselves in the guise of plain men and women (345). The novelists sought to present human life in fiction as closely as possible to the lived experience. The novel had to do with a fictional presentation of plain human life, with as much truth to nature as possible. Consequently, realism became fundamental to the novel form.[1]

John Parry in his *Guide Through English Literature* thinks that the beginnings of the English novel as we know it today, came from writers who sought a popular audience. The masses were the target of these novelists and their work was as consequential as it represented and affected the life of man in society. Thus, the novel was not only expected to be a near exact representation of man in society, but also had to be appealing to the largest audience possible.

The novelist was expected to have a basic knowledge of society. Such was the advantage that Daniel Defoe had from having an intimate contact with society as a journalist. Diana Laurenson and Alan Swingewood say the novel for him was a "report on the state of society witnessed through the eyes of particular individuals" (176). Samuel Richardson (1689-1761) was concerned with an attempt to portray human society as much as he could. Henry Fielding (1707 – 1754), had a deep knowledge of life, gained from his varied experiences, which helped him to present genuine pictures of the men and women of his day.

The nineteenth century English novel, like that of the eighteenth century, remained concerned with man as a social being, and kept its moralising role. For example, Charles Dickens (1812-1870), of all English novelists in the era portrayed the English society in his novels the most and sought to reform it. Norman Page thinks that Dickens' job experiences

[1] This refers to the mimetic role of literature, where literature is seen as an imitation of real life.

as reporter helped to account for his acute powers of observation of speech habits and his capacity for reproducing them accurately (143).

For George Meredith (1843 - 1909), the novel is a more private thing, in which he concentrates on the psychological study of motives. Henry James (1843-1916), who is said to be more interested in ideas than in people, carries Meredith's concerns a step further. He is, along with H. G. Wells (1866 –1946), generally acknowledged as the father of the modern English novel.

Wells uses the novel as the instrument with which to announce that which is new. The quest for the new is in itself an element of the modernist period. Joseph Conrad (1857-1924) continues along the same pattern as Wells, but with a greater poetic touch to his fiction. Coming after Conrad is E. M. Forster, (1879-1970) who is most concerned with the individual and his responses to propriety and tradition.

We now come to Virginia Woolf (1882-1941), who is one of the most important modern English novelists. For her, says Boris Ford, the novel is essentially an art form; "a re-creation of the complexities of experience, not a criticism of life" (260). As far as she is concerned, life is a subtle and complicated succession of experiences, and fiction must be adapted to catch the "tones, the light and shade of experience" (260).

Irma Rantavaana opines that the reader of Virginia Woolf gets the impression that she creates in the same way as the painter, who proceeds with colours, adding touches here and there, and further says:

> Her work seems to rely largely on the subconscious, to be a series of 'little daily miracles, illuminations, matches struck in the dark…After a great deal of concentration and massing together of images, suddenly, in a moment of intensity, the right word, the right shape or colour, is hit upon, and in the act of creation a mystical awareness of the wholeness and unity that there is behind the phenomena, becomes all-absorbing (124.)

In the relationship of artistic novelty to social changes, Douglas Hewitt says Virginia Woolf's thinking proves important because of her emphasis on the need to move away from the public to the private, from the social to the introspective and from the political to the individual. This, Hewitt says, fits well with that rejection of the public sphere which characterises many of the artists who are central in all accounts of modernism (130).

Another novelist writing about the same time as Virginia Woolf is James Joyce (1881-1941). He writes almost only of Dublin. We read that he devises ways of expanding his accounts of Dublin, so that they become microcosms, small-scale models of human life, History and Geography. He writes about Dublin in such a way that it represents all of human

experience (Abrams 1961). James Joyce is not interested in a wide range of characters, and does not adhere to the novelistic tendency to tell a story such that the reader is eager to see what comes next. He is "anxious to share what his characters share in their environment as showing their individuality" (Hewitt 150).

We find about the same trend of thinking in D. H. Lawrence (1885-1930). John Worthen tells us that Lawrence decided to be a writer of the artistic kind, and that this choice imposed upon him a separation from his community, family and parents (*The Early Years* 132). As a growing artist, "Lawrence fought towards artistic identity by consciously overturning conventional forms in his work" (Mandell 9). In "Why the Novel Matters" Lawrence says the novel is the "bright book of life" (288). The novel for him is the vehicle for both emotional release and social change in its most ordinary but sensitive form (Mbuh 17).

David Lodge in *The Modes of Modern Writing* describes the works of Joyce, Woolf and Lawrence as experimental or innovatory in form, displaying marked deviations from pre-existing modes of discourse, literary and non-literary (45). Their fiction is concerned with consciousness and also with the subconscious working of the human mind.

Lawrence, Joyce and Woolf, prefer to paint pictures of other artists in their novels which, we earlier said, are now regarded as artistic products. Majumdar and McLaurin observe that "the modern novel is becoming a painter's literature" (82). Furthermore, the novelist, for the first time in history, decidedly makes company with painters, musicians, dancers, carvers and all the rest who express one form of talent or the other. A revolution has taken place in most of these arts, especially painting, and the novel follows suit. Essentially, the novelist is preferably called an artist, and the novels art deemed to be works of art. Remarkably, the novelists during this period preferably write about characters who are artists. The biographical nature of the novels emphasises the artistic concern, since their subjects are artists.

It may be necessary to point out a number of characteristic features of the modern English novel which make it dissimilar to the traditional novel of the 18th and 19th century.

To begin with, the traditional novel, as already pointed out, is pre-occupied with the presentation of the lives of ordinary men in society. But when we come to the modern novel, especially as far as Joyce, Woolf and Lawrence are concerned, the focus moves to a greater concern with the individual. Furthermore, the traditional novel is concerned with society at large and how to reform it. The modern novel on the other hand is concerned with the individual and how the personality functions. We also

find that whereas the traditional novel seeks a popular audience, the modern novel is actually written for a select intellectual few.

The traditional novelist intends the novel to serve a moralising role in the society. But with the shift in values in the modern society, there are hardly any set moral values to uphold. In this light, the modern novel is never meant to serve any moralising role. Its role is to create a consciousness in the readers about what life is, rather than what it ought to be. Furthermore, the shift in societal values means, as D. H. Lawrence rightly said, that modern life no longer needed any absolutes. If then there are no absolutes, there is equally hardly a reference point.

This lack of a reference point implies the loss of a sense of direction, so that even the artist, in the modern novel is seeking for new values. He consequently becomes very experimental, in search for new and suitable methods of presentation which suit the new situation. The traditional novel on the other hand is less experimenting, since it belongs to a more stable social context.

Another trait characteristic of the modern novel is that its language tends more towards poetry. The traditional novelist's labour for simplicity and clarity are absent in the modern novel. In fact, one would think that modern writers like Woolf and Joyce intentionally make their works difficult to the untrained mind.

Typical to the novel form is the novelist's desire to probe into the mind of the characters. But the psychological penetration observed in the lives of the characters of the modern novel far exceeds what happens in the traditional novel. This is perhaps because unlike the traditional novel where action is given a lot of importance, the modern novel is not very much concerned with it. The modern novelist is more interested in the individual's state of mind. Following from the modern novelist's concern with the mind, comes the great use of the stream of consciousness technique in the modern novel. This is also possible with the modern novel because it is being written at a time when a lot of discovery has taken place in psychology, especially around the work of Sigmund Freud.

After reading the novels of say Daniel Defoe, Henry Fielding, Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, Thomas Hardy, and a host of other 18th and 19th Century English novelists, one gets used to a certain pattern in the presentation of their material. There is what may be called a tradition of the novel that these hold to, in almost all of their works.

But when for the first time one lays hands on a work of James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence or Virginia Woolf, one comes face to face with a marked departure from that tradition. There is a difference evident in their handling of subject matter, narrative techniques and in the manner of presentation.

The causes of these changes have been found in the rise of social philosophies such as Darwinism, Marxism and Psychoanalysis. Developments in science and technology have also contributed a great deal.

Evidently, James Joyce and D.H. Lawrence are modernist in lots of ways. One modernist characteristic of their work, say A. Nicholas Fargnoli and Michael Patrick Gillespie, is that it offers a thorough critique of the key social institutions that seek to shape the life of its central character[s] (143). However, within that common denominator Joyce and Lawrence are remarkably distinct, and sometimes opposed to one another. True to this, critical opinion has by and large found more differences in their approaches to modernism than similarities. This tendency to find more discrepancies than points of convergence in the two acclaimed modernists is rendered more so by marked differences in their upbringing, education, social status, associations, personality, temperamental differences and artistic styles.

In Paul Delaney's article, "A Would-Be-Dirty Mind": D.H. Lawrence as an Enemy of Joyce" he tries to explain why "Lawrence and Joyce must be counted among the great pairs of literary enemies." In his brief essay, he identifies two major points of contention: realism as a method and sexuality as a subject, to illustrate the antipathy between the two artists. He explains that:

> "Real life," for Lawrence, means striking through the mask of culture to get as close as possible to "the thing itself." Joyce, on the other hand, accepts that reality is inescapably textual. Stephen's maxim that absence is the highest form of presence argues that representations are more potent than whatever they are taken to represent. In sexual relations, Joyce dwells obsessively on indirect or incomplete modes of consummation; he is fascinated by everything that may intervene between desire and performance.

It strikes us, however, that irrespective of the differences, and quarrels with one another, they seem to come to an implicit consensus about the writer as an artist and the artist as character in their novels. For different reasons, very likely, they seem to go for the artist and his/her life-style as the option par excellence for the twentieth century. This common interest on the artist for Joyce and Lawrence became an investigative interest to us, and we set out to find out the artist portraits they showcase in their works, especially in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and *The Rainbow* respectively.

A laid-back reading of the novels points to a pattern in the life and work of the Joycean and Lawrencian fictive artist. Generally:

- He or she is initially immersed in the life of their community; family, church, other social institutions and the nation as a whole.
- Questions, rebels and casts away his/her former adherence to establishment, its values and demands.
- Sets out on a self-discovery pursuit, which ends in the establishment of an artistic vision, and
- Produces works of art that are a reflection of the above, and which often turn out to be ideologically and experientially autobiographical.

The outline above becomes the informing pattern by which we shall be examining the artist figure in the chosen works of Joyce and Lawrence. However, we shall begin by looking at critical opinion on the subject of the artist in relation to the chosen authors and texts.

CHAPTER ONE

CRITICS ON THE ARTIST IN JOYCE AND LAWRENCE

James Joyce and D. H. Lawrence, alongside Virginia Woolf are presumably the pillars of the modern English novel. They have, in varying degrees constituted a centre of attraction for a large number of critics who have approached their works from different perspectives, sometimes with contradictory opinions. The works of Joyce and Lawrence are perhaps the most controversial in terms of style, subject matter, notion of reality and the role of the novel ever since the advent of the novel as a distinct literary genre. They could be taken for harbingers of the new kind of the novel, or simply as those in whose hands the traditional English novel died. Some critics think that these writers best represent the truth of modern reality, but others think they are not genuine artists and that their works fall short of art in one aspect or other.

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and *The Rainbow* written by Joyce and Lawrence respectively, have received considerable critical attention. There are those who think these novels are not worth the name and those who think they are the epitome of the art of the novel. The opinions differ but the books are important enough to draw massive attention. A lot of the critical literature on the artist focuses mostly on the artist as living and practising in real society. Not much has been written on the artist as characters depicted in the novels. We shall begin by looking at critical material on Lawrence as an artist, and the artists he creates in his fiction, particularly in *The Rainbow*.

We realise that for most of the available critical considerations on D. H. Lawrence and *The Rainbow*, the major concerns have been on whether Lawrence is an artist or not and whether *The Rainbow* is a work of art or not. In this argument F. R. Leavis, Richard Aldington, Aldous Huxley and David Cecil have gone a long way to prove Lawrence's standing as a modern artist, as against Edwin Muir and T. S. Eliot who at first hand dismiss Lawrence as an artist mainly because of the lack of discipline in his work.

The other aspect of critical concern is on Lawrence and sexuality. Singrid Undset, Dedria Bryfonski, Sharon K. and Edward Garnet have addressed this aspect in which they evaluate Lawrence's obsession with sex in his novels as well as the relationship between sex and art. Edward Garnet even thinks that Lawrence's pre-occupation with sex is a more constructive concern than industrialisation. F. R. Leavis and John Middleton Murray have also done a good deal on Lawrence and his attitude towards the Industrial Revolution.

As concerns Lawrence's art in *The Rainbow*, Emile Delavenay and Robert Kiely have undertaken to evaluate his success in this novel. Hesitant though, they call it a work of art, as against F. R. Leavis who praises it and says it only falls short of perfection. Richard Aldington on his part looks at Lawrence as heretic and rebel. In about the same concern, Mbuh Mathias Mbuh looks at Lawrence's rebellion as the outcome of conflicting identities.

Aspects of Lawrence's relationship with his society have received elaborate attention from Leonard S. Klein, Herzinger, Raymond William and Carol Ferrara Treacy. Treacy in particular goes ahead to look at the Lawrencian artist in his novels as different shades of Lawrence and tries to fit them within the culture of the artist in English literature.

Apart from character sketches here and there as in Leavis' *Thoughts, Words and Creativity: Art and Thought in Lawrence*, and Treacy's *Art and the Artist in D. H. Lawrence*, not much has been done on Lawrence's artists as portrayed in *The Rainbow* in particular. Aldous Huxley considers Lawrence as an artist by all standards. He says it is impossible to write about Lawrence except as an artist. Secondly, "the fact of his being an artist explains a life which seems, if you forget it, inexplicably strange" (Qtd. in Andrews 41). In his opinion, an artist is characteristically strange in relation to expected social conduct in a particular society. But strangeness is only an aspect of the varied characteristics that go to make the artist.

From reading the letters of Lawrence, Lord David Cecil says they possess the special merits of good letters; directness, intimacy, unself-consciousness, vitality, and could be a startling evidence of Lawrence's artistry. He remarks that in the letters, Lawrence is always talking of himself, which explains why his novels are most often a projection of himself (40). Here again is a feature characteristic of the modern artist. His art is often his experiences reproduced in diverse ways, as it is always the case with modern artists. Diana Trilling finds that Lawrence's male characters are reduced to vehicles for his doctrine. They are similar to Lawrence in terms of his life experiences. His leading male characters are

regularly slight, wiry, fierce, home-centred men of the working class. Like Lawrence, they think of life as a test, a challenge to be faced up and overcome (1).

There are however controversial critical positions as to the standing of Lawrence as an artist. Edwin Muir is one of such critics. In his understanding, an artist must be very disciplined in the handling of his material. Consequently, in his denial of Lawrence as an artist he says, artistic discipline does not in any way preoccupy Lawrence. To Lawrence, what mattered was what he saw or felt. Muir, however, acknowledges that what Lawrence saw and felt was of extraordinary interest (40). Muir's acknowledgement that what Lawrence felt and saw were of extraordinary interest suggests that there was something distinct and different in him, which could be seen in his novels, poems and short stories. We want to think that the presence of discipline is one of many distinctive marks of the artist, and that one need not exhibit all that generally characterises an artist to merit the appellation. Yet we must acknowledge that there is no air-tight definition of what characterises the modern artist. Critics have hardly come to a consensus about it all.

T. S. Eliot's opinion is that Lawrence is not a pure artist because he never succeeded in making a work of art (Qtd. in Draper 359). In *After Strange Gods: A Primer of Modern Heresy*, Eliot takes a more critical look at Lawrence, calling him a heretical demoniac, who by class, education, and religious upbringing combined with his penchant for false prophecy, made himself to something of an anti-Christ (58-61). However true this maybe, we do not think that talent and genius, which are at the very base of the artist's personality are class-bound. Background, of course, is important to the moulding of the artist, but it does not make the artist. We may dare to say that T. S. Eliot, who in many circumstances thinks more clearly and liberally, is being class-conscious in this critical position against Lawrence as artist. This is most likely the case because his later reception of Lawrence as artist is more on the positive end. Eliot later acknowledges that his former opinion about Lawrence was not balanced and in 1960, stood in defence of Lawrence as artist against the charges of obscenity in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. He also wrote the preface to Father William Tiverton's[1] book on Lawrence. In this preface T. S. Eliot calls the book "a serious piece of criticism of Lawrence of a kind for which the time is now due" (Leavis 317). It took Eliot a good deal of time to accept Lawrence's other-worldliness, characteristic of the modern artist.

[1] Tiverton is an Anglican priest who recommended Lawrence as a good Christian and a positively improving author for Christians.

Lawrence was certainly too much unlike what society was used to at the time, and produced art that was strange for the time being, to be accepted there and then.

In 1950 Richard Aldington published *Portrait of a Genius But…* calling Lawrence the world's rejected guest. In trying to explain the artistic genius of Lawrence, he argues that Lawrence indisputably has genius because in the mere twenty years of his manhood, his experiences and his creative output were intense and continuous. He further insists that Lawrence has unique perceptions and an unmistakable aptitude both in living and in writing (x). In a very pro-Lawrence manner, F. R. Leavis in *D. H. Lawrence: Novelis*t wages war against Lawrence's detractors indiscriminately. He dwells on the novels and tales of D. H. Lawrence with the aim of proving Lawrence's genius as an artist. He holds adoringly that Lawrence is the great creative genius of our age, and one of the greatest figures in English literature (17). Leavis brings out an important dual feature of the artist. He rightly holds that an artist must have genius, but that genius alone is not enough; he must be creative. This is perhaps why he goes a long way to examine lots of passages from Lawrence's work to prove their artistic quality. In his retort to those critics who argue that Lawrence is not an artist, he practically exaggerates Lawrence's genius and creativity.

Eliseo Vivas on his part believes that Lawrence is something beyond merely being an artist. In his "The Two Lawrences", he says on the one hand, Lawrence is an artist and on the other a prophet. He thinks that the problem with Lawrence is that in the artist's role as the antennae of the race, he "thrust his long, tremulous filaments into the future and brought back to us a report of what we were gradually to find as the years went by" (113-114). To him, the artist both x-rays the present and foretells or foresees the future. His only problem with Lawrence is that he over-did the forth-seeing aspect of his genius as artist, thereby overlapping into prophecy.

Another publication which helps to establish the artistic worth of Lawrence is R. P. Draper's *D. H. Lawrence: The Critical Heritage,* which provides a number of important critical reviews on Lawrence as an artist. Kingsley Widmer on his part in "Lawrence as Abnormal Novelist" thinks that since Lawrence is not consistent as a thinker, artist or man; discrimination is very essential, without which studies in Lawrence are nonsense, if not something worse (220). He further holds that no simple affirmation or negation as to whether Lawrence is an artist or not will do. When Virginia Woolf reviewed *The Lost Girl* by D. H. Lawrence, she called Lawrence an original *(*Qtd in Draper 141), adding that his work was

disquieting, as the original work of a writer often is. She had not been drawn to read Lawrence early enough because of the derogative comments made of him at the time (Qtd in Draper 93-96).

Mbuh Mathias Mbuh in his study of Lawrence holds that the domestic and social conflicts akin to Lawrence's childhood and adulthood are the main concern in his art. He says that Lawrence seeks to infuse a new self-awareness into social consciousness. Beyond biographical evidence, he undertakes a study of Lawrence's works to highlight the complex phenomenon of conflicting identities (1). In this study, he brings out an aspect of the artist's working material; his own experience, from birth to the time of his artwork. What also stands out in Mbuh's work is that in the artist's development, he is constantly in a battle with himself as an individual, distinct and different from those around him, in a society where he is hardly an integral part.

Lawrence's novels are characteristically sexually explicit. To some critics, Lawrence is obsessed with sex, and to some others, his works are obscene. Sigrid Undset holds that Lawrence is the prophet of an altogether sexual religion, which makes his art to give offence and alarm to a public accustomed to seeing something literary (Qtd. in Mbuh 47). Dedria Bryfonski and K. Sharon justify Lawrence's frank sexuality and his unconventional life on the grounds of freedom of expression. They argue that Lawrence is highly moral in his writing. Lawrence's sexuality, they point out, is a constructive force as opposed to industrialisation, which is the other of his major concerns (342).

The characters of Lawrence always live and function within a sphere of sexual passion. These characters suffer because they have to pass through much and endure much in attaining or missing their passionate sexual desires (Garnet 145-146). With Lawrence as artist, as well as the fictive artists in his works, sex and art are intimately related. In this relationship, sex is believed to enhance art. In this book we think that what is essential to the artist is passion. By passion here we mean a strong emotional drive. In Lawrence's case, as with many other artists, preoccupation with sex is the easiest emotional excitement they find. Others revert to alcohol and to other drugs as a means of sharpening their perceptions.

One of the things that was important to Lawrence and which time and again appears in his writings is industrialisation. He was bitterly opposed to industrialisation. It is for this reason that John Middleton Murry calls him enemy of civilisation. Murry equates the progress in industry to a step ahead in civilisation and considers Lawrence as an enemy of civilisation since he hated the growth in industry. To Murry, Lawrence is "the

conscious and deliberate, yet passionate and potent, enemy of modern civilisation" (235).

Leavis takes up the discussion, and is particularly pro-Lawrence when he looks at the ill-effects of the machine. He holds that the machine has more disadvantages than advantages to man. He refers to the case in *The Rainbow*, where the emergence of the Brangwens from their memorial rustic traditionalism towards the possibility of the intelligentsia means progress in civilisation, producing industrialised Eastwood, thereby breaking the blood intimacy that existed before, and installing a greater sense of emptiness in the Brangwens (11). We do not think that progress in civilisation in itself is an evil. But in as much as the artist is concerned, we know that he loves nature and that an urban setting with its peculiar problems is not conducive enough for art. As we shall see later, the artists under study characteristically withdraw from urban settings preferring to work in rural areas.

In his assessment of Lawrence's *The Rainbow,* F. R. Leavis says *The Rainbow* is not a perfect work of art (101). He adds that although it falls short of complete success, it is certainly a major work of a great writer (101). Emile Delavenay considers *The Rainbow* as Lawrence's first attempt at total artistic creation (344). By way of the achievement of Lawrence in *The Rainbow*, Delavenay continues to say, "Lawrence has attempted two things: to break away from the old conception of character and to find a new form for the novel, different from the old linear narrative development of most of his predecessors" (381). This highlights one of the tendencies of the artist in the modern English novel, in which the artist is characteristically experimental, as with Lawrence in the handling of Character in *The Rainbow*. Even in the form of *The Rainbow*, Lawrence is not conventional. Allan Friedman looks at newness in *The Rainbow* in relation to its recurrent exploration to the reductive process in relation to time (Qtd. in Whelan 221-222).

Robert Kiely goes on to say that in company with the other writers of the modern period, Lawrence is not less concerned with art in his creative work. But unlike Henry James, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, T. S. Eliot, and Ezra Pound, he is rarely at his best when preoccupied with art. Often, his emotions intrude and destroy the balance (94).

The modern artist is also something of a heretic in the sense of dissent from a dominant theory, opinion or generally accepted beliefs. Aldington fits Lawrence within this tradition of the artist as heretic when he writes that:

> D. H. Lawrence was a good example of the English Heretic. In England, contumely, persecution, fierce solitariness show the man of genius…Think