61. However, Lawrence was disillusioned with what he saw in Tahiti, because the place, with ‘natives in European clothes, and fat’, looked different from the ‘earthly paradise’ that Melville described. See *Letters IV*, p.289. Melville’s *Typee* also turned out later to be a hoax, the idealised native way of life since revealed as largely a product of the author’s own archetypal imagination. See David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire*, p.138.
76. Billy Tracey, *op.cit.*, 3.

**D.H. Lawrence and Nakedness**

Jonathan Long

‘Naked’ (or ‘nakedness’) was one of Lawrence’s favourite words and was frequently used by him. In the ‘blind tasting’ of a passage including other favourite words such as ‘blood’, ‘dark’, ‘sun’, ‘quiver’, ‘flame’ or ‘moon’ the additional word ‘naked’ will suggest the passage was almost certainly written by him. Even though particularly towards the end of his life nakedness was a preoccupation for Lawrence, as we shall see in his poetry, prose and painting, surprisingly little seems to have been written on the subject.

It is important first of all to establish what we mean by ‘naked’. It should be contrasted with the word ‘nude’, which generally speaking is not synonymous and has a more limited meaning, principally referring to a person without clothing. The distinction is important, as Lawrence uses ‘nude’ much less frequently, mainly as a noun with reference to his pictures. It is rarely used to describe inanimate objects or animals but mainly for humans, although in the poem ‘Bare Fig Trees’ Lawrence uses the words ‘bare’, ‘nude’ and ‘naked’ to emphasise the fact that the tree has no concealment.

The word ‘naked’ then is for Lawrence a more versatile term. It means unclothed, stripped to the skin and nude in the context of people but also, in the context of things it means exposed, without concealment, uncovered, devoid of something, open to attack or weak. One of the hallmarks of Lawrence’s writing is that the word is so frequently applied to inanimate objects. Both ‘naked’ and ‘nude’ can be used figuratively but Lawrence rarely if ever uses the word ‘naked’ in its pejorative sense, such as in the phrase ‘naked ambition’.
As we shall see, there was, as with other matters, a predictable inconsistency in Lawrence’s attitudes to and writings on nakedness. On the one hand there was the puritan and on the other the advocate of nakedness. This is intriguing, particularly as it is an oversimplification to say that his attitude mellowed as he got older. I will examine the contexts in which nakedness features in his work and then see what conclusions can be drawn. But first I will look at nakedness in Lawrence’s own life and the influences on his attitude towards it.

There is considerable evidence of Lawrence’s personal like of being naked. For example, in a letter to Douglas Golding dated 20 July 1920 he wrote from Fontana Vecchia in Taormina: ‘We do our own work – I prefer it, can’t stand people about: so when the floors must be washed (gently washed merely) or when I must put my suit of pyjamas in the tub, behold me in puris naturalibus, performing the menial labours of the day. It is very nice to shed so much.’

In a letter to Edward Garnett dated 4 July 1912 he wrote from Icking: ‘Now F. and I are going swimming in the Isar. She swims finely, and looks fearfully voluptuous, rolling in the pale green water. It’s all lonely and wild, so we can bathe naked, which one should. You really ought to try life down here.’

In a letter to Sallie Hopkin dated 19 August 1912 he wrote from Mayrhofer in the Tyrol of the beautiful mountain scenery and that ‘Sometimes F. undresses and lays in the sun – sometimes we bathe together – and we can be happy, nobody knows how happy.’ Lawrence was clearly proud of Frieda’s bohemianism.

When Murry and Katherine Mansfield went to visit Lawrence and Frieda at Broadstairs in July 1911 they all ‘bathed naked in the half-light, first happy then shivering.’

In a joint letter to Edward Garnett dated 7 September 1912 Frieda wrote: ‘My sister, who is elegant has just sent me 4 baldachino hats, – L is trying them on in an undesciplable get-up and the most beautiful Ashpodel pose! [Lawrence interjects: “by “get-up” she means sans anything.”]

Some of the above experiences are mirrored in Lawrence’s fiction, as I will later describe.

At the other end of the scale there are some examples of situations where Lawrence did not consider nakedness appropriate, and it is difficult to understand why in some cases.

Catherine Carswell described her visit to Lawrence and Frieda in Cornwall in September 1916 as follows: ‘Another strongly “working-class” trait in Lawrence was his extreme distaste of anything that could be regarded as indecent. It would indeed be easy to call him prudish. One night in Cornwall, after having just begun to undress for bed, I found I had left my book in the sitting room where Lawrence and Frieda still were, and I returned to fetch it. I had brought no dressing-gown with me, but there seemed to me no impropriety in my costume - an ankle-length petticoat topped by a long-sleeved woollen vest! Lawrence, however, rebuked me. He disapproved, he said, of people appearing in their underclothes. Lawrence analogously criticised Mabel Dodge Lathau taking ‘sun-baths’ on the roof of her house.

After the cosmetician Helena Rubinstein scolded Lawrence for his short story ‘Sun’, which she said was sending women off to sunbathe in the South of France in a new cult of ‘sun worship’, Lawrence apparently replied ‘In that case I should have scrapped the story.’

Another example of Lawrence’s ‘prudishness’ was occasioned by what he saw as the unwarranted invasion of his privacy in army or other forced medical inspections. He apparently wrote a letter of complaint to the American Vice Consul in Mexico City after the immigration officials at El Paso detained him in 1925. Nearly four years after the event he wrote: ‘I was called a liar to my face, when I was speaking the plain truth – and kept stripped, being examined by
a down-at-heel fellow who was supposed to be a doctor but was much more likely to be a liquor-runner — all of which I have not forgotten and shall never forget. Sheer degrading insult! Similar sentiments were expressed after the call-up medical examination during the First World War.

In a letter to Edward Garnett of 14 February 1912, Lawrence criticised Louie Burrows because when he took her to an art exhibition at Nottingham Castle, she ‘stared at the naked men until I had to go into another room’ — an allegation later denied by her. Lawrence worked at Haywood’s, the surgical garment manufacturers in Nottingham for a few months after leaving school in 1901. He did not want the humiliation of some of the factory girls trying to remove his trousers and resisted them like a ‘demon’ according to Neville.

Again, some of these experiences are mirrored in the fiction.

Almost certainly Frieda was the greatest influence on Lawrence in helping him shed his inhibitions and become more of a free spirit. There is ample evidence of her personal like of being naked — the swimming and sunbathing episodes referred to above are examples. In addition, she wrote to Otto Gross of how she ‘danced around in [her] room clothed only in a shawl, while the well-behaved Philistines were going to Church’. It was Otto Gross with whom Frieda had an affair. He lived for a while in Ascona in Switzerland, a place renowned for its settlement of liberals, including artists, anarchists, nudists, communists etc, some of whom would have been known to Frieda and whom she and Lawrence may have visited in 1913. We must remember that Frieda’s liberal friends almost certainly espoused the FKK or freikörperkultur philosophy, which is said to have led to there being literally millions of young German naturists by the early 1920s. As Lawrence wrote in ‘Pornography and Obscenity’ in 1929: ‘The intelligent young, thank heaven, seem determined to alter in these two respects. They are rescuing their young nudity from the stuffy, pornographical hole-and-corner underworld of their elders, and they refuse to sneek about the sexual relation. This is a change for the better and a real revolution.’

Again, Frieda’s influence found its way into Lawrence’s work. For example, in Mr Noon, Johanna describes how she took off all her clothes and ran through the forest, in a scene possibly based on Frieda’s experience with her lover Will Dowson in Nottingham. Also in Mr Noon Johanna and Gilbert swim in the Isar and dry off in the sun afterwards. The leaner male protagonist is not quite so keen as the better-padded female! In the poem ‘She Said As Well To Me’ the Frieda character tries to persuade the Lawrence character to be more proud of his body.

There were undoubtedly other influences on Lawrence amongst his circle of friends and acquaintances. Rupert Brooke and the Neo-Pagans, including the Olivier sisters (cousins of Rosalind Thorneycroft Baynes), whom Lawrence met in 1914, were characterised by their love of the countryside and outdoor life, camping, boating, nude bathing and informal relations between the sexes.

Members of the Bloomsbury group provide further examples, while Richard Aldington is pictured ‘skinny-dipping’ with Brigit Patmore in the Brenda Maddox biography of Lawrence.

I will now examine some of the surprisingly large number of contexts in which nakedness is used in Lawrence’s fiction. I will concentrate on examples involving people — men and women — and not things or concepts. I am only looking at one of often several layers of meaning in the extracts I quote and different interpretations are possible. In some cases a passage could come into more than one category.

The power of nakedness is revealed, for example in The Rainbow when the pregnant Anna Brangwen ‘In the pride
of her bigness' dances naked in front of Will and 'The strangeness, the power of her in her dancing consumed him, he was: burned, he could not grasp, he could not understand.' Similarly Connie experiences 'shock' and 'visionary experience' in Lady Chatterley's Lover when she sees Mellors' semi-naked figure for the first time, as he washes. This epiphany of a 'warm white flame' shocks her own fading life-flow back into circulation.

Vulnerability is shown, for example, in The Rainbow when Will Brangwen looks at the infant Ursula and 'saw the tiny living thing rolling naked in the mother's lap, and he was sick, it was so utterly helpless and vulnerable and extraneous; in a world of hard surfaces and varying altitudes, it lay vulnerable and naked at every point. Equally vulnerable was Mrs Lederman who was stripped by the Chichui priests prior to her inevitable sacrifice at the hands of these men in 'The Woman Who Rode Away.'

Lust is reflected in the description by Lydia Brangwen in The Rainbow of her father and other men being in a 'cattle-truck full of naked girls riding from nowhere to nowhere' or in the 'Class-room' chapter of Women in Love when Birkin and Hermione visit Ursula at the end of a school day and he attacks Hermione, saying 'As it is, what you want is pornography - looking at yourself in mirrors, watching your naked animal actions in mirrors, so that you can have it all in your consciousness, make it all mental.'

Innocence is represented in the scene in The Rainbow when Will swims in the canal with Ursula on his back and 'the dark-dilated eyes of the child looked at him wonderingly, darkly, wondering from the shock, yet reserved and unfathomable, so he laughed almost with a sob'. Or the idyllic scene in the 'Water-Party' chapter of Women in Love where Ursula and Gudrun row away from the others for a swim.

Vanity mixed with the very opposite sentiment is provoked by nakedness when Connie looks at her body in the mirror before she has been uplifted by her relationship with Mellors in Lady Chatterley's Lover.

The beauty of the naked human form is frequently described. For example, in the poem 'Gloire de Dijon', Lawrence uses similes and metaphors comparing the body of the woman who is washing to a Gloire de Dijon rose, its natural beauty being like the beauty of other things in nature, too beautiful to cover up. Then there is the discussion about the human form between Clifford and Constance in The First Lady Chatterley. The reference to Renoir here is interesting for my later comments about Lawrence's paintings, as he wrote in 'Introduction To Those Paintings' that 'If a woman didn't have buttocks and breasts, she wouldn't be paintable, he [Renoir] said, and he was right.' The scenes in The Rainbow which I will come back to later, where Ursula and Anton run to the dewpond and where the naked beauty of the rainbow is described, are also relevant here.

Nakedness is represented as an attractive state. Even in the 'Shame' chapter of The Rainbow where Ursula makes what could be described as the adolescent mistake of having a relationship with her teacher Winifred Inger (referred to by Lawrence as 'the perverted life of the older woman'), their naked swim is described in more than favourable terms.

Lawrence can use nakedness in a scene where someone is being ridiculed, as he clearly saw the possibility of the naked human form looking absurd to someone, at least in an inappropriate setting. For example, on 3 September 1917 he wrote to Lady Cynthia Asquith from Zennor in Cornwall that 'We have been very quiet. There are nearby some herb- eating occultists, a Meredith Starr and a Lady Mary ditto: she a half caste, daughter of Earl of Stamford. They fast, or eat nettles: they descend naked into old mine-shafts, and
there meditate for hours and hours, upon their own transcendent infinitude: they descend on us like a swarm of locusts, and devour all the food on shelf or board: they even gave a concert, and made most dreadful fools of themselves, in St. Ives. Unsurprisingly Philip Heseltine introduced the Starrs to Lawrence. Then, returning to the scene in Lady Chatterley’s Lover where Connie wonders at Mellors washing himself, the narrative continues with her mocking him: ‘But with her mind, she was inclined to ridicule. A man washing himself in a back yard! No doubt with evil-smelling yellow soap! – She was rather annoyed. ‘Why should she be made to stumble on these vulgar privacies!’ This is a complete contrast to the ‘visionary experience’ just described.

Lawrence had personal experience of how being naked could, under the wrong circumstances, be harmful, and that is strongly reflected in his writing. In ‘Tickets Please!’ John Thomas Raynor, a tram inspector and notorious womaniser, has his comeuppance when the tram girls gang up against him and try to tear his clothes off. He has flirted with them once too often. This is reminiscent of Lawrence’s own experience in Haywood’s factory: ‘Strange wild creatures, they hung on him and rushed at him to bear him down.’ Similarly the intimate medical inspection by army medical officers in the ‘Nightmare’ chapter of Kangaroo is reminiscent of Lawrence’s own experience of such inspections.

It would appear that nakedness might have been a feature of the Utopian community which Lawrence planned and called Rannanin but which was never realised. In the ‘Excursé’ chapter of Women in Love Birkin, who voices a number of Lawrence’s opinions, tells Ursula that ‘There’s somewhere where we can be free – somewhere where one needn’t wear much clothes – none even – where one meets a few people who have gone through enough, and can take things for granted – where you can be yourself, without bothering. There is somewhere – there are one or two people –’ Birkin, earlier on in the chapter called ‘Fetish’, seems quite at home in the bohemian flat where Halliday lives with Pussum and all the characters are naked – even the doubting Gerald eventually participating – ‘after all, it was rather nice. there was a real simplicity’. This novel is remarkably open-ended and there is a danger of reading too much into themes that are not fully developed. But the reviewer in The Saturday Westminster Gazette in 1921 clearly thought these passages were intended to be taken literally and mocked them, making much of the number of characters who take their clothes off and saying: ‘D.H. Lawrence’s new and very long novel Women in Love is not unlike a serious elaboration of the well-known advertisement, “Mr and Mrs Smith, having cast off clothing of all descriptions, invite inspection. Distance no object.”’

Lawrence’s creation of imagined past or future civilisations could involve nakedness as part of a preferred way of life. When describing the Painted Tombs of Tarquinia in Sketches of Etruscan Places he wrote: ‘From the sea rises a tall rock, off which a naked man, shadowy but still distinct, is beautifully and cleanly diving into the sea...and on the water a boat waits with rested oars, in it three men watching the diver, the middle man standing up naked holding out his arms...Men are nearly always painted a darkish red, which is the colour of many Italians when they go naked in the sun, as the Etruscans went. Lawrence clearly liked what he saw and wrote equally favourably about the lost ‘delicate magic of life’ in his poem ‘Cypresses’. Similar poetic recreations of a lost past are to be found in ‘Middle of the World’ and ‘The Man of Tyre’. In 1921 he started but did not complete ‘A Dream of Life’, a sort of autobiographical sketch set in Eastwood, but which is transformed into a dream sequence. It is set one thousand years in the future where people are routinely and unselfconsciously naked and live in a calm and happy community with singing and dancing. Lawrence
wrote: ‘But among the rest, here and there were men like my guide, quite naked, and some young women laughing together as they went, had their blue smocks folded to a pad on their heads, as they carried their bundles, and their slender rosy-tanned bodies were quite naked, save for a little girdle of white and green and purple cord fringe that hung round their hips and swung as they walked.’

There are a number of scenes that I could have chosen where nakedness is used when Lawrence can understandably be described as a Romantic Utopian. The one I have selected is chapter XV of *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*. Connie is about to go to Venice and there is rainfall of almost Biblical proportion, the writing accompanied by Ark symbolism. Mellors is despairing about the attitudes of the English and believes that England is the wrong place to bring up a child. He wants to escape the money-based and industry-overrun life. He says ‘Take yer clothes off an’ look at yourselves. Yer ought to be alive an’ beautiful, an’ yer ugly an’ half dead.’

There follows one of the most dramatic passages in the book, which breaks the tension that has built up. The beauty of this writing is contrasted strongly with the shock Clifford expresses when Connie tells him about her ‘shower-bath’.

This is from one of the erotic sections in the book, but the part I have just quoted is about the use of nakedness as an escape. It is very much in a nature setting with flowers used in this chapter to decorate Connie and Mellors’ bodies. There is almost a pagan rain dance feel to Connie’s dancing. Pagan – but in a passage littered with Old Testament references: the wood is Eden recreated with Mellors and Connie as Adam and Eve trying to save themselves from the modern world and reverse the Fall, harking back to the first couple of paragraphs of the novel. The scene was clearly important to Lawrence. It is pre-empted in *The First Lady Chatterley* where Constance walks naked in the moonlight before the lovers adorn each other with flowers. The relevant passage in

*John Thomas and Lady Jane* is surprisingly similar to the final version. Other types of escape are envisaged when Ursula wants to get away from everyone including Skrebensky in the ‘First Love’ chapter of *The Rainbow* and when Gudrun wants the freedom to join Gerald swimming in the ‘Diver’ chapter of *Women in Love*.

There is more comedy in Lawrence’s work than it might first appear and this is another context in which nakedness features. For example, in *Mr Noon* Gilbert and Johanna are caught by the landlady, while a similar experience later in the novel involves Johanna’s mother. Analogously, in the short story ‘Once!’ Anita takes a series of lovers, including the narrator, and they are described wearing hats and little else. When the narrator is wearing just a silk hat and a pair of gloves Anita ‘looked at me and went off into a fit of laughter. She dropped her hat onto a chair, and sank onto the bed, shaking with laughter. Every now and then she lifted her head, gave one look from her dark eyes, then buried her face in the pillows. I stood before her clad in my hat, feeling a good bit of a fool.’

Dancing was important to Lawrence and it is another context where nakedness features. For example, we have already looked at Anna’s naked dance in front of the mirror in *The Rainbow*, and Connie’s dance in the rain in *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*. In both of these, reference is made to eurythmics, as also in the scene in the ‘Water Party’ chapter of *Women in Love* where Gudrun dances in front of the cattle. A scene of great gaiety is described in *Mr. Noon* in a passage that interestingly demonstrates both the joy of the freedom that nakedness gives them but also Gilbert’s (and presumably Lawrence’s) slight reservations about this activity. If Lawrence is being represented it is a rather more honest description of his body than appears in some of the paintings I shall refer to later.
In many scenes in which Lawrence’s characters are naked they are happy at least partly because they are naked. Some of these scenes I have referred to already, such as the dance scenes. I would also refer to Johanna’s joy in swimming in the river Isar in Mr Noon. Here again Gilbert is not yet convinced and the reason would appear to be what he perceived to be the inadequacy of his body. In the ‘Water-Party’ chapter of Women in Love quoted above, Gudrun and Ursula slip away from the other guests and thoroughly enjoy their swim in the lake. Similarly Richard Lovatt Somers in Kangaroo strips off to escape the ‘emotional heat of the town’ and runs in the rain across the sand to the Pacific where he relishes the ‘fresh cold wetness’.

Shame is a sentiment felt on the part of Gilbert in two of the passages in Mr Noon I have referred to above. First in the dance sequence he is ‘ashamed to be ashamed’ of being naked himself and clearly has reservations about Johanna’s free-spirited attitude. Secondly, just before that when they swim in the Isar he does not share the enthusiasm of Johanna and of the narrator, but instead when they get out of the water he ‘brooded’ and is preoccupied with desire for her instead of enjoying the moment for what it is.

Clearly many scenes involving nakedness are erotic ones, such as the lovemaking passages in Lady Chatterley’s Lover. Those are covered elsewhere, so I will not dwell on them but it is important to remember that for Lawrence lovemaking does not have to involve nakedness, nor nakedness lovemaking. Erotically charged passages also appear in poems, such as ‘New Year’s Eve’, ‘New Year’s Night’, ‘After many Days’ and ‘Excursion Train’.

A key context in which nakedness is used again and again is where the character is searching for the truth and needs an aid to perception. From early days Lawrence took the view that naked people could see and understand nature better. In the poem ‘Wild Common’.

Over my skin in the sunshine, the warm, clinging air
Flushed with the songs of seven larks singing at once,
goes kissing me glad
You are here! You are here! We have found you!
Everywhere
We sought you substantial, you touchstone of carresses, you naked lad!

For centuries truth has been represented by a naked figure, the implication being that nakedness helps you find the truth. Thus in The Rainbow Ursula is naked when she has a visionary experience of how beautiful nature is and the mess humans have made of the world with industrialisation.

This theme is continued in the last paragraph of the book.

In Lawrence’s writing nakedness can be a barrier as well as bonding people together. For example, in The Rainbow when the young Tom is courting a ‘nice girl’ he ‘could not think of her like that, he could not think of her actual nakedness. She was a girl and he liked her, and dreaded violently even the thought of uncovering her.’ Similarly in Lady Chatterley’s Lover there is Clifford’s shock at the thought of Connie’s naked dancing in the rain. Yet, by contrast, it can be used to break the ice, to break a barrier. Therefore in the short story ‘Daughters of the Vicar’, Louisa helps Alfred strip wash. She had previously felt isolated in his house but as he starts to wash the coal dust off him, Lawrence writes: ‘Gradually Louisa saw it. This also was what he was. It fascinated her. Her feeling of separateness passed away: she ceased to draw back from contact with him and his mother. There was this living centre. Her heart ran hot. She had reached some goal in this beautiful, clear, male body.’

Nakedness was an important part of blutbruderschaft, or blood brotherhood, the male bonding seen in The White Peacock and most notoriously in Women in Love, in the ‘Gladiatorial’ chapter. This is where Gerald and Birkin have
their naked wrestling scene, and Lawrence clearly saw this as an important part of their relationship. He wrote: ‘One ought to wrestle and strive and be physically close. It makes one sane.’68 Also: ‘At any rate, one feels freer and more open now and that is what we want.’69

Finally I will examine what Lawrence perceived to be the therapeutic benefits of nakedness, the healing and relaxing qualities. These are best demonstrated in the short story ‘Sun’. Nakedness in the tangible sense is generally missing from Lawrence’s short stories to any great extent, with the notable exception of ‘Sun’, where it is a major theme. This is the story that was written in its first version in 1925 and published in 1926. However, when Harry Crosby wanted the manuscript and it could not be found he wrote a second, expanded and stronger version. As he wrote to Harry Crosby on 29 May 1928: ‘When the public is more educated, I shall have the story printed whole, as it is in this MS’. He referred to this second version as ‘unexpurgated’ and it was printed by Harry Crosby’s appropriately named Black Sun Press in 1928. This is an example of nakedness in the sun-worshipping context – there are various references to intercourse with the sun. In the same way that Lawrence writes penetratingly about his characters elsewhere, here Juliet is physically penetrated by the sun: ‘She could feel the sun penetrating into her bones: near, further, even into her emotions and thoughts.’70

There are various descriptions of how much good the advice that Juliet’s doctor gave her to ‘lie in the sun without [her] clothes’ did her.

What Juliet is doing is consistently portrayed in a favourable light. We have a sort of Eden rediscovered, and there are references to fruit to emphasise that. The free spirit of Juliet is clearly attractive, in stark contrast to Maurice, who perhaps Lawrence thought of as like the readers he was trying to attract. He is described as wearing a ‘grey felt hat and dark-grey city suit and ‘looking pathetically out of place’.71 There is a similarity with Lady Chatterley’s Lover in that both deal with the reawakening of a woman’s vital self, but here Juliet is left with her unsatisfactory relationship with Maurice, compared with Connie’s new one with Mellors. Such a favourable view of sunbaths is to be found in ‘The Lovely Lady’ where Pauline and her niece Giss take them (perhaps reminiscent of Mabel Dodge Luhan). The same fondness for sunbathing is found in a poem called ‘Sun- Women’ in the collection Pansies where Lawrence wrote: ‘And how delicious it is to feel sunshine upon one! /And how delicious to open like a marigold’. He was capable of being rather more negative, as in the ‘pansies’ ‘Forte dei Marmi’ and ‘Sea-Bathers’, but the general feeling seems to have been positive. Such positive thoughts are also to be found in the unfinished short story ‘The Man Who Was Through With The World’. Henry, the man of the title, goes naked in the sun to get closer to nature and to cleanse himself from what he describes as the ‘pollution of people’. Sadly these ideas were not fully developed.

I will now move on to look briefly at Lawrence’s paintings, showing how those fit in with his writing, so far as the contexts I have looked at are concerned. We should remember that Lawrence started painting before he took up writing and it was clearly very important to him. His early work consisted mainly of copies taken from books and magazines. The nudes that he painted later on are not highly accomplished and reveal little detailed knowledge of human anatomy. He found the photographs which Brewster sent him to be ‘posed’ but seems to have been unwilling to have someone sit for him so that he could achieve the natural effect he was looking for. Neville72 tells the story of Lawrence in 1907 drawing a nude figure of Louie Burrows but going into a rage when being told that it should have pubic hair added to it, not to be found on the classical nude figures. Yet he was later to be a pioneer in this field.
Some of the subjects in Lawrence’s pictures are reminiscent of people he knew. For example, the naked couple in *Under the Haystack* is possibly Lawrence and Jessie, and the naked woman in *North Sea* is possibly Lady Cynthia Asquith. There would appear to be little doubt that it is Frieda who puts in an appearance in *Fight with an Amazon*.

Lawrence’s nudes were mainly painted between 1926-28. There is little doubt that if Lawrence (renowned in other spheres) had not painted the pictures they probably would not survive today. They are not of a high quality and are weak in construction. However, many have an innocent eroticism, are not unpleasant to the eye and complement some of his writing of the time.

In his expressionist and increasingly naturalistic style Lawrence looked for a direct correspondence between feeling and representation at the expense of the more sophisticated values of proportion and harmony, as is represented in his studies of the nude. There is wish-fulfilment evident not just in presenting himself in the pictures as a muscular, fit and healthy man, but in using them to encourage others to cast off their inhibitions in the way represented in some pictures. We must not take the pictures too seriously – he clearly had a ‘curious delight in image making’ and in a letter to his sister Emily King dated 18 January 1927 he described it as ‘fun to paint the picture called Red Willow Trees’. In keeping with his mood at the time the pictures were not only fun to paint but were also intended to shock: ‘I paint no picture that won’t shock people’s castrated social and spiritual perversity’, as he wrote to Brewster on 27 February 1927. He wrote to Lady Glenavy on 3 February 1928 that he ‘painted pictures last year – seven or eight big ones – nudes – some people very shocked – worse than my writing. But I think they’re rather lovely and almost holy’. In pursuit of this naturalness Lawrence included pubic hair and/or a phallus in many of his pictures and in that respect he was a pioneer. It was this that led to so many pictures being confiscated by the police in the Warren Gallery exhibition of 1929.

The later pictures mainly come in a small number of categories, including scenes from myth, classical poses, scenes of natural relaxation, Bible-parody, scenes showing the body in different poses, pagan scenes and humour. To relate that to the contexts I looked at earlier I will concentrate on a few examples. *Family on a Verandah* shows a family relaxing together. Although Lawrence had no analogous family the picture clearly represents a situation he wished to portray positively, possibly thinking of Ramanuj and Birkin’s ideas on nakedness in *Women in Love*. *Dance Sketch* could almost be an illustration of the eurhythmic dancing in *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* but instead of the dog dancing with Connie and Mellors we have a goat. In *Fire Dance* we have another picture with a dance theme and in *Men Bathing* we are shown the happiness of lone communal activity, mirrored in Gudrun and Ursula’s swim in *Women in Love*. In *Boccaccio Story* as well as the comedy element of being caught (mirrored in *Mr Noon*), there is the theme of relaxation as the nuns come across the semi-naked man. This reminds us of Juliet being discovered by the peasant in ‘Sun’. Not all of the paintings come into the same categories as they have been produced for different reasons.

To conclude, we should remember that Lawrence was often shy about his own nakedness except eventually in front of Frieda. In an ideal world he saw it as socially acceptable and he was able to reflect that in his written work and in his paintings. There, the Lawrence character appears as handsome and muscular and does not have the more feeble frame of the real Lawrence. But here as elsewhere he was capable of naked inconsistency!

Lawrence was probably the only great writer to produce not only novels, short stories and poems but also es-
says, plays, travel writing, philosophical works and paintings. Most of these, in one context or another, portray nakedness in a positive way, the great exception being the plays. Even the writer of _Lady Chatterley's Lover_ could not imagine the sort of scenes in this novel being enacted on the stage!

Lawrence has an excellent reputation for his description of locations he visited and the spirit of place, his portrayal of human relationships, especially between men and women, and his description of nature. That deservedly extends to his description of the beauty of the state of human nakedness. It is not just the number of passages, some of which I have quoted, but also the beauty of his description of nakedness that reveals how important it was to him.

Endnotes

25. Mark Kinkead-Weekes, ed., _The Rainbow_, _op.cit._, p.50.27 34.
29. Michael Squires, _op.cit._, pp.70.1-71.27.
34. _Ibid._, pp.315.8-316.9.
35. _Ibid._, p.319.10.
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74. Ibid., p.103.
75. Ibid., p.115.
76. Ibid., p.64.
77. Ibid., plate X.
78. Ibid., plate XII.
80. Ibid., p.111.
81. Ibid., p.13.
83. Ibid., p.14.

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37. Michael Squires, ed., op.cit., p.66.34.
41. David Farmer, Lindeth Vasey and John Worthen, eds., ibid., pp.77-81.
44. Vivian de Sola Pinto and Warren Roberts, eds., op.cit., p.298.
45. Ibid., p.688.
46. Ibid., p.692.
51. Dieter Mehl and Christa Jansohn, eds., The First and Second Lady Chatterley Novels, op.cit., pp.147.28-149.32.
55. Lindeth Vasey, op.cit., pp.152.36-153.22.
64. Ibid., pp.458.39-459.8.
65. Ibid., p.213.33-35.