

entertainment to the entertainers and make education a task and not a game, but we must have no fears about what is 'over the public's head.'"

These animadversions are made more in regret than in anger. Essentially, what Adler has to say is worth listening to and reflecting on. He may at times seem like a humorless Puritan, but he is certainly preferable to the many clowns that have cluttered up the road to education in recent years.

Reviewed by MILTON BIRNBAUM

Casualties and a Survivor

D. H. Lawrence's Nightmare: The Writer and His Circle in the Years of the Great War, by Paul Delany, *New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1978. xviii + 420 pp. \$15.95.*

ON THE COVER of the dust jacket of Paul Delany's book, a portrait by Dorothy Brett depicts her master with Christlike beard and amusingly emphatic halo, in the guise of suffering servant. Better, alas, than the thousand (or so) words of this review, Brett's picture suggests the impact and the problems of Lawrence's personality and artistry. Both personality and what it wrought barely escaped disaster during the four years of the First World War, an adventure always involved and sometimes breathless that constitutes the subject of Delany's biographical study.

Well within the first four pages the author launches Lawrence into the maelstrom of the war. To continue the figure, the paramount interest, here, lies in one's learning and then in attempting to assess the terms on which Lawrence was allowed to emerge a survivor of the great deadly whirlpool. The penultimate paragraph concludes with a rapid summary of the artist's life after November 11, 1918: "He would be obliged to stay in England for another full year before he could get permission to leave . . . but once he was able to cross

the channel, on 14 November 1919, he never lived in England again."

Like Poe's survivor of the Maelstrom and against similarly formidable odds, Lawrence defeated a scenario of disaster. He did return briefly to England in the mid-1920's, but his homecoming was a reaction against the time spent in America and occasioned rejection and scandal. And, yes, the war he did survive, because he was a pacifist but more importantly because he was consumptive and was consequently rejected for service in the British armed forces. His effective weapon in the struggle to survive thus became his domitable wasting body; but, willing to forego health and reputation for more fiercely held essentials, he gained a decade or more of living.

His campaign for survival veered erratically, it appeared, yet stubbornly set back on course, ever opposed to the dominant concern of the British government and its subjects. In 1917 he devoted a book of poems, *Look! We Have Come Through!*, not to his pacifist fight but to the celebration of his bond with his German wife, Frieda. This celebration of their closeness may well have seemed to perpetrate a cruel joke on the vast majority of Britons suffering, hoping, dying in the Great War. But was his show an exhibition of Nietzschean pride strutting about to the injury of more ordinary aspiration?

Clearly sincere, Lawrence's exhibition was brask and inopportune, and either contempt or sympathy toward Frieda and himself would be to misjudge the situation. To be sure, as much today as in 1917 the moral and political dilemma abides with most of us in organized societies. For Lawrence, however, his personal decision sufficed for himself—therefore for Frieda to accept, or to leave him—truly solitary against the mob, as it were. His stand went beyond Christian morality, indeed beyond any ethical and social system transcending the shared vision of a tiny group (say, about four persons) who lived in daily, intimate contact in material self-sufficiency and intense exchange of conversation, images, and ideas—and who followed Lawrence as their master.

Professor Delany's study is an unusual work since it does not attempt to distribute blame or praise but rather tries to present a detailed factual analysis of the crucial period of Lawrence's life. Admittedly, those millions of Allied casualties allowed Lawrence's survival and eventual triumph. His would be posthumous, however—triumph as interloper and husband who defied accepted rules of marital legitimacy, triumph as pacifist who defied duty and patriotism, triumph as artist who, with unequalled skill, defied existing forms and reticences by building his new art upon candor and the profound appeal of all that is atavistic.

As with Poe's survivor, so with Delany's, the cost of survival was grievous. The experience of coming through the Maelstrom turned Poe's young Norwegian overnight into a white-haired old man; Lawrence too would come through a different man. In September 1914 he had been acclaimed "as a genius." Alfred Sutro, Maurice Hewlett, Harold Munro, Gilbert Cannan, and Edward Marsh willingly supported Lawrence's application for aid from the Royal Literary Fund. Cannan also asserted that James Barrie "certainly would have supported the application, as he told me that he thought *Sons and Lovers* the best novel that he had read by any of the younger men." In mid-October Lawrence was granted fifty pounds from the Fund. Such encouragement did not last as his position gained increasing notoriety in the contexts of Gallipoli and of trench warfare in northern France. By the end of the war even such an old friend as Katherine Mansfield wrote of Lawrence, to Lady Ottoline Morrell, as taking "himself dreadfully seriously nowadays: 'I mean he sees himself as a symbolic figure—a prophet—the voice in the wilderness crying 'woe.'" In sum, concludes Delany, Lawrence was dismissed "as a gull and a crank."

Why then this book, indeed why the hundreds and hundreds of studies both sober and woolly minded, the scholarly essays, the films and plays about Lawrence or, adapted from his writings, the paperback editions selling by the millions of copies in a variety of tongues throughout the globe? One answer to

the query—too general to satisfy, of course—is that D. H. Lawrence speaks to our condition as his contemporaries, among whom such committed souls as H. G. Wells and John Galsworthy come to mind, do not speak to us. Two passages from *D. H. Lawrence's Nightmare* strike this reader as paradigmatic, whether one is searching for an answer in Lawrence's art or is searching for a model (or its opposite) in the life and personality themselves.

The first occurs fairly early in Delany's account of Lawrence's war years. Toward the end of 1915 he busied himself collecting a few disciples who would emigrate with their master to, of all places, "a cottage on the west coast of Florida . . . where the Lawrences might live rent-free." Bertrand Russell, Dorothy Warren, Aldous Huxley declined their invitations; another trio, equally remarkable, persisted in fantasizing about "the delights of life among the palm trees" in intense fraternity—Philip Heseltine, Dikran Kouyoumdjian, and Lawrence himself. The venture foundered in the swirling Maelstrom. In the 1920's, Philip Heseltine became, as Peter Warlock, a well-known composer, while Dikran Kouyoumdjian became, as Michael Arlen, the author of "wildly successful novels of high society." Back in 1916 what would Clearwater or Tarpon Springs, say, have made of these unlikely pilgrims, and Frieda?

Faced with heavier restrictions and pressures occasioned by Britain's constant need for conscripts, Lawrence abjured his utopian plans, in a letter to Lady Ottoline Morrell: "I shall not go to America until a stronger force from there pulls me across the sea. It is not a case of my will."

By November 11, 1918, forsaken by the disciples, from whom one carefully distinguishes his steadfast friends, Lawrence continued unrepentantly to take himself—in Katherine Mansfield's naughty words—"dreadfully seriously," as "the voice in the wilderness crying 'woe.'" He refused to celebrate the Armistice, even in the midst of convivial Bloomsbury with its inner circle gathered—Clive Bell, Roger Fry, Lytton Strachey and Carrington, Duncan Grant,

Maynard Keynes—and their distinguished friends and guests coming and going—Osbert and Sacheverell Sitwell, Leonid Massine, Sergei Diaghilev, Mark Gertler, Lady Ottoline. Frieda and Lawrence were there, too, in Monty Shearman's flat, but Lawrence was in a dour mood. Confronting the group, he declared somberly, as David Garnett has recorded: "The hate and evil is greater now than ever. Very soon war will break out again and overwhelm you. It makes me sick to see you rejoicing like a butterfly in the last rays of the sun before the winter . . . Even if the fighting should stop, the evil will be worse because the hate will be dammed up in men's hearts and will show itself in all sorts of ways which will be worse than war. Whatever happens there can be no Peace on Earth."

More than ten million had died to make the world safe for Democracy; "but who," asks Paul Delany, "except Lawrence could foresee, or accept, that the Nightmare was not over?"*

Reviewed by NICHOLAS JOOST

*All quoted matter is by Paul Delany except as specified in my text.