



MARK KINKEAD-WEEKES

Mark Kinkead-Weekes

1931–2011

THERE WAS VERY LITTLE in Mark Kinkead-Weekes's demeanour to make one suspect that he came from a military family; but when he was born in Pretoria, on 26 April 1931, his father was a lieutenant colonel in the South African army. His mother had two brothers, both of whom became pilots in what was, at the time, not the Royal Air Force but the Royal Flying Corps. The elder was killed at Shoreham-on-Sea in September 1917 in a flying accident, but the younger, Samuel Marcus Kinkead, survived the war. Much decorated, he had become well known as an 'ace' fighter pilot to whom were attributed thirty-six combat victories,¹ a fact of which Mark must have been reminded when he first became aware that a cousin of the woman D. H. Lawrence married was Manfred von Richthofen, the celebrated 'Red Baron'. After the war, 'Kink' (as he was known) became part of the team which went to Venice in 1927 and won for Great Britain the prestigious Schneider Trophy, awarded to the winner of an annual race between sea-planes. The following year he was the pilot chosen to make an attempt on the air-speed record (it was a question at that time of trying to break through the 300 mph barrier), but he was killed when his plane nose-dived into the Solent. This left Mark's mother with no surviving male relatives. One way in which she compensated was to christen her youngest son Marcus, after his uncle, the original form of his name which (to my knowledge) Mark almost never used once he was in England. But either she or the family as a whole was also prompted to change their

¹They are listed in J. Lewis, *Racing Ace: the Fights and Flights of Samuel 'Kink' Kinkead DSO, DSC*, DFC** (Barnsley, 2011), Appendix 1.

name from Weekes to the double-barrelled version by which Mark himself would always be known. This gave him some discomfort, and also some irritation when, on a surprising number of occasions, reviewers of his published works failed to spell Kinkead-Weekes correctly. But though he always had to be coaxed into talking about his uncle, he was justifiably proud of his achievements.

Like most military families, Mark's was often on the move, and at the age of nine he was sent to an expensive boarding school. When, however, his mother was diagnosed with breast cancer, his father spent all his money in a desperate and vain search for a cure. A minor consequence of this was Mark's move to Potchefstroom High School in the Transvaal. In some brief reminiscences of his time in South Africa, he describes this as a good school but notes that he was the only boy in his year to go on to university.² The problem of money, which by this stage had become acute, was largely solved by a bursary from the Johannesburg Public Library, granted on the condition that, during every vacation from Cape Town University, Mark should work in some department of the library and take a Certificate in Librarianship in addition to his BA. He was only sixteen when he went up to Cape Town and the transcript of the four years he spent there shows that he took sixteen units and achieved first-class marks in twelve of them. The exceptions, where he took instead a second, were 'Classification', 'Principles of Librarianship', 'Library Administration' and 'Bibliography Thesis'. In his first three years he was the university's top English student and in the fourth won the class medal for Ethics and Political Philosophy. A successful enough undergraduate to win a Rhodes Scholarship to study in England, Mark always declared himself grateful to the authorities of the Johannesburg Public Library for having waived the obligation he was under to go back and work for them after he had graduated.

His own memory of himself as a student is of someone who would have driven his later self 'up the wall'. Bright, fluent and with an almost photographic memory, he soon discovered he could pass exams easily on 'borrowed notes and received ideas'.³ He did, however, continue to read voraciously. His father had given him an enthusiasm for Kipling, which he was to repay later with an essay on 'Vision in Kipling's novels';⁴ and both

²See M. Kinkead-Weekes, 'South African reminiscences', in J. Phelps and N. Bell (eds.), *D. H. Lawrence around the World: South African Perspectives* (Empangeni, South Africa, 2007), p.49.

³*Ibid.*, p. 48.

⁴See A. Rutherford (ed.), *Kipling's Mind and Art* (Edinburgh, 1964). In 1977 this essay was largely reproduced as an introduction to the Pan Classics edition of *Kim*.

Dickens and Austen were early discoveries. It was relatively late before he came across D. H. Lawrence, but the encounter was important because he read *Sons and Lovers* and *The Rainbow* in conjunction with early essays on these novels by F. R. Leavis, and it was Leavis's criticism which first persuaded him that 'studying and teaching literature could be the serious pursuit of a lifetime'.⁵ At university (and probably before) he wrote his own poetry, which he describes as 'bad echoes of Wordsworth and early Yeats'.⁶ During the vacations, he fulfilled part of his obligation to his sponsor by helping to man a mobile library which visited the white suburbs. Its black driver was taking a correspondence course in literature and Mark would try to persuade him that there was after all some merit in Wordsworth's 'Daffodils', even though the landscape the poem describes was equally alien to them both. When, however, they came across in an anthology a poem by Lawrence called 'Mountain Lion', neither had any trouble in agreeing that this was how poetry should be written.

It was at university Mark felt that his eyes were opened to his own racism. In collaboration with the only black student on the Senior Common Room Committee (Cape Town was unusual in admitting any at all), Mark devised a strategy to indict the university in terms of its own Charter, which made no mention of race, and consequently force it to open to every student at least its social and sporting facilities. This proposition failed by only one vote in the SCR but attracted the attention of the government and led to Mark being censured by the Vice-Chancellor for bringing the university into disrepute. Yet when his black SCR colleague took Mark to a meeting of the Non-European movement, they were both bitterly denounced. Could they not see that the interference of white liberals would always blunt the cutting edge of the struggle? This was a position that Mark came to accept, especially after Sharpeville, and the sense that any talents he might have were of no real value in that struggle was one of the reasons that led him to renounce his South African citizenship.

Mark arrived in England in 1952, when he was twenty-one, and registered to read English at Brasenose in Oxford. He must have chosen to go to that particular college because he had a much older brother Noel (born in 1923) who, after periods as a RAF pilot during the Second World War and then in a POW camp, had also been awarded a Rhodes Scholarship. He had spent the two years between 1946 and 1948 reading law at

⁵Kinkead-Weekes, 'South African reminiscences', p. 48.

⁶Ibid.

Brasenose before teaching that subject at Cape Town University, practising as a barrister and eventually taking up an important position in big business. I have not been able to find out what kind of undergraduate Mark was but pictures of him in the college cricket team, and his name on the list of what Brasenose boasts is the oldest dining club in the university, suggest he took full advantage of its social facilities. Giving up the method that had proved so successful when he was a student in Cape Town, however, and beginning to think for himself, may be a more important reason why, after two years of study, he failed to emulate his brother and get a first. This must have been deeply disappointing when he had already decided that he would like to do research and become a don; but although the university may have shown some lack of confidence in his future, his college did not and awarded him an annual bursary of £300 so that he could register for the D.Phil. His subject was 'The novels of Samuel Richardson: a critical study'. This was not a particularly popular area in which to work in the 1950s but Mark may have been led into it because he got on well with the don in charge of English at Brasenose, Ian Jack, who was an eighteenth-century specialist (although his designated supervisor was in fact E. G. Midgley from St Edmund Hall). He himself later wondered whether he may have been drawn to Richardson by his experiences during the vacations at Johannesburg Public Library when, if he were not in the van which took books to the suburbs, he would invariably find himself working with exclusively female colleagues who, as they talked away, would very soon forget he was there.

He cannot have been a research student for much more than eighteen months since in January 1956 he was appointed to an assistant lectureship at Edinburgh University. Those were the days when applicants for their first jobs did not have to have a first book and a handful of articles to their credit but were hired primarily as teachers.⁷ Teaching meant largely lectures and the authoritarian professor of English at Edinburgh when Mark arrived immediately loaded him with lots of them. Given his conscientiousness and his habit, which I could observe when I got to know him, of preparing right up to the last minute, and during the previous night if need be, this must have taken a considerable physical and nervous toll. Early on in his appointment, he went to London to meet some friends

⁷Mark's first publication did not in fact come until 1959: see 'Clarissa restored' (*The Review of English Studies*, ns10, 156–171), a characteristically careful study of how the substantial additions Richardson made to *Clarissa* were a response to his discovery that his female readers were responding too enthusiastically to the charm of Lovelace and critical of the heroine's 'delicacy' in refusing to marry him.

and was involved in a serious car accident. He was unconscious for eighteen hours and came round to hear the doctors discussing how to wire up his jaw, a procedure he avoided by speaking coherently to them. With highly visible facial injuries, he was turned out of the London hospital because of a 'flu epidemic and made his shaky way back to Edinburgh, where his professor said how glad he was to see him because there was another course of lectures he wanted him to give. Yet lecturing was in many ways Mark's forte. With his dashing good looks, and the evident fervour of his commitment, he had an electrifying effect on students. One of his colleagues at that time, Stephen Fender, notes how if students were bored they would put their feet up on the bench in front and read *The Scotsman*; but if they felt entertained and enlightened they would applaud thunderously once the lecture was over. 'Mark was always applauded longer and louder than any of us,' he writes.⁸

Very soon after his arrival in Edinburgh, Mark met Margaret Joan Irvine, who was a qualified physiotherapist and possessed skills which became very useful after he had had his accident. The two of them waited until Mark had been promoted to a full lectureship in October 1958 before marrying in the following year. They took a house in Drummond Place and fitted up its lower garden basement as a flat which they could rent out to help pay the mortgage. Stephen Fender was one of their tenants there and reports that he cannot remember Mark 'speaking a single harsh word, or snide remark, to or about anyone':⁹ an observation which would be confirmed by everyone else who knew him both then and afterwards. This was not because he was constitutionally meek and mild. The truth was that his temperament was fiery ('that's the Kinkead in me', he used to say apologetically after one of his very occasional outbursts), but he had a remarkable amount of self-control.

A second tenant, who shared the flat with Fender, was Ian Gregor with whom Mark developed an unusually strong and warm friendship which lasted until Ian's death in 1995. Strong friendships are based on complementarity as well as similarity. Five years older than Mark (he had been an assistant lecturer in London before coming to Edinburgh), Ian had a warm social manner and a gift for friendship. Although his first degree had been in Newcastle, he cultivated an Oxfordian, almost Wildean, manner but it was not hard to find the Geordie underneath (in the final years of the Second World War he had been working in a pit as a Bevin

⁸See *The Guardian*, 9 May 2011, Obituary section.

⁹*Ibid.*

boy). Mark certainly had a strong sense of humour and, in moments of joviality, could break into a soft-shoe shuffle and sing one of the music-hall songs he had learnt from his father. But he felt he could not himself tell jokes or be witty, and he admired the way Ian could make people laugh. He would often tell how, after giving a lecture, he came out to hear gales of laughter emanating from the adjoining lecture hall. As the students began to stream out with smiles on their faces, he asked one of them what they had been listening to. 'It was Dr Gregor on *Macbeth*,' the student replied, still smiling, and then added, with evident anticipation of more pleasure in store, 'And he's doing *King Lear* next week.' The success with which Mark told this story was heavily dependent on a convincingly imitated Scottish accent (he had a good ear), and suggested he was not so bad at telling jokes after all.

Mark and Ian got on so well that their names are invariably linked in the reminiscences of their contemporaries. A series of collaborations meant that they were linked in the public mind also. In 1962 Mark wrote an introduction to *Pamela* for Everyman, and in the same year made a selection of Pope's poetry for Chatto and Windus (with R. P. C. Mutter). But in the year following, he and Ian were responsible for an edition of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* for Faber; and in 1964 they edited *The Inheritors* for the same firm. Their professional interest in Golding had begun when they were both reading *Free Fall* and become outraged by the reviews it was receiving. They felt that the novel was being entirely misunderstood by its critics and made their views public in 'The Strange Case of Mr. Golding', published in *The Twentieth Century* (1960). The result was that Faber put them in touch with Golding himself who, after having gone to meet them at Salisbury station, recorded later his surprise at finding that they were not after all 'Scotch moralists' and claimed his first thought was 'By God, I'd better get some beer in.'¹⁰ It was because of this association that they had been invited to be responsible for the editions of *Lord of the Flies* and *The Inheritors*; and in 1967 they published the first book on Golding (*William Golding: a Critical Study*: London) which, apart from the novels I have already mentioned, dealt also with *Pincher Martin* and *The Spire*. In their introduction they say that because Golding's novels are difficult, their own approach 'takes primarily the form of elucidation', a procedure—seeing an intention behind a work—at which Mark especially excelled (his sympathetic nature made him unusually sensitive

¹⁰ See J. Carey, *William Golding: the Man Who Wrote Lord of the Flies* (London, 2009), p. 235.

to what a writer was trying to achieve, if sometimes less concerned with how far he or she had succeeded).

Saying anything useful about Mark's contribution to the Golding book is difficult because there is no indication in it of who wrote what. Often, when there are two authors, they indicate who is responsible for separate chapters. But *William Golding: a Critical Study* is a joint endeavour in the fullest sense, each chapter the result of intense debate between the two authors. Since, however, Golding's novels often engage with important and to some degree metaphysical or at least philosophical themes, it is perhaps relevant to Mark and Ian's collaboration that they were both Christians—an increasingly unusual fact in academic life, even in the 1960s. Ian was a Catholic born and bred; Mark had lost his Anglican faith during adolescence when his mother was dying of breast cancer; but his brush with death in the car accident in London had restored it. This must have made them comfortable with the larger issues Golding's novels sometimes throw up, since some of them were ones with which they were used to dealing in their own discussions.

The Golding book appeared after both its authors had already left Edinburgh and moved together to the new University of Kent in Canterbury in 1965. (One of the younger colleagues left behind in Edinburgh said that their departure was devastating for her group because Mark and Ian represented 'the highest standards and expectations in teaching'.¹¹) What seems to have attracted them to Kent was the opportunity to help in the fashioning of a different way of teaching English, with fewer *cours magistraux* and more seminars and tutorials; but also with a different degree structure. It had been observed for some time that the school 'A' level system in England, via which pupils qualified to enter university, was narrowing and gave them little opportunity to discover what they might really like to study. The first year in Humanities at Kent offered a series of courses, all of which were interdisciplinary, so that students who had come up to read English (for example) could experience what it was like to study subjects such as philosophy, comparative religion, art or foreign literature as well as what they had been thinking of as their own, and make a more informed choice in the second year as to what their main area of concern would be. All these courses were taught by teams of teachers from different disciplines who had to work closely together if what they offered was to be coherent. There was a degree of necessary collaboration here in which both Mark and Ian revelled, and

¹¹Helen Williams.

the process helped to make Kent a particularly sociable environment in which to work. As a bachelor, with many empty pages of a social diary he was determined to fill, Ian Gregor was often at the centre of social events, and his house opposite the Kent cricket ground became legendary as a venue for interesting talk and very large whiskies. Mark, with his wife and two small boys, was a devoted family man; but also sociable, open and friendly in all his contacts and very hard to dislike. Later, he would join with Ian a small group for the discussion of religious issues known as ‘theological wine’ (more wine than theology, its friendly critics claimed), which included Stephen Bann, at that time a teacher of history, and the then Dean of Canterbury Cathedral, Victor de Waal.

Mark had come to Kent as a lecturer but he was promoted to senior lecturer almost immediately (perhaps because of the imminent publication of the Golding book). Yet to go further he needed a monograph of his own. When he was first appointed at Edinburgh, he had maintained his D.Phil. registration but in 1961 he wrote to Oxford in order to abandon it and say he would be turning the work he had done into a book. That *Samuel Richardson: Dramatic Novelist* appeared in 1973 (London) illustrates the slow-burning nature of his literary interests, but was characteristic in that what he did finally produce was of the highest quality. ‘Although several of Kinkead-Weekes’s key terms have fallen out of fashion’, writes a contemporary eighteenth-century specialist, ‘the insights they allowed him to express have endured, and his Richardson book is still indispensable.’¹²

Mark’s premise in his book was that Richardson had always been more fortunate in his scholars than his critics, and that the latter had tended to patronise one of the eighteenth century’s truly great authors by paying far too little attention to texture and structure, showing too little awareness of form, method and technique, and failing to puzzle sufficiently over implications and difficulties. At its centre is a masterful reading of *Clarissa*, in which the ‘three worlds’ of the novel — those represented by the Harlowes, Lovelace and Clarissa herself — are skilfully contrasted. Analysis of the latter involved treating the religious concerns of Richardson’s age, and of Richardson himself, with the seriousness which Mark believed they deserved. Not that he felt the novelist should be seen as identifying with his heroine to the exclusion of other characters, or as not being able to establish from her any critical distance: she is no

¹² James Fowler, author of *The Libertine’s Nemesis: the Prude in Clarissa and le roman libertin* (London, 2011) and *Richardson and the Philosophes* (London, 2014). I am grateful to Dr Fowler for most of the judgements in the paragraph which follows this.

mouthpiece for the 'worthy Mr Richardson' but rather a character who allows him 'to see deep into the complexities of his own ideals and to challenge them at a depth and with a courage Defoe and Fielding never managed'. Already in *Pamela*, Richardson had been able, perhaps for the first time in the history of the English novel, to convey the inner life of a character in an intimate and complex way, and also convincingly develop her, through day to day fluctuations, during the whole course of a narrative. This was equally if not more true in *Clarissa* so that, with touches that now seem almost Jamesian, it would be hard to deny that its author was the founder in England of the psychological novel. How this happened was demonstrated by Mark in remarkable detail and yet with a seemingly effortless elegance and clarity.

Samuel Richardson: Dramatic Novelist was well received and a year after its publication Mark was made a professor. Almost immediately, he also became a Pro-Vice-Chancellor. When Kent was founded, it was on a would-be Oxbridge collegiate system. There were eventually four colleges, each of which had kitchens; and in the early days students were required to wear gowns at dinner and there was the phenomenon of 'high table'. When this system began to fall victim to rapidly changing social mores, the kitchens were no longer economically viable and it was one of Mark's more arduous tasks as Pro-Vice-Chancellor to try to do something about that. This meant a good deal of negotiation with all kinds of people, including union representatives, very difficult for a man who hated to be in bad terms with anyone and was unfailingly kind and conciliatory. He found his three-year stint as a Pro-Vice-Chancellor arduous and wearing, and would clearly have rather been doing something else; but he had a highly developed sense of responsibility which prevented him from giving any less than full attention to any task he undertook. In 1977 he was released back into the kind of academic life he preferred, and might well have gone on strengthening his position as a distinguished eighteenth-century specialist had his career not taken a quite different turn.

The catalyst was an essay by him entitled 'The Marble and the Statue' which had appeared in a collection called *Imagined Worlds*, edited by Ian Gregor and Maynard Mack and published in 1968 (London). By that date manuscripts and typescripts had become available which made it possible, for the kind of tenacious and eagle-eyed researcher Mark was, to unravel the very complicated circumstances that had led to the composition of both D. H. Lawrence's *The Rainbow* and his *Women in Love*. These two novels tell the story of the Brangwen family and particularly the Brangwen sisters, Ursula and Gudrun, and Mark was able to establish not only their

common origin in a text originally called *The Sisters*, but also that they had, as it were, been written backwards. That is to say that Lawrence had begun with Ursula and Gudrun in adulthood and then traced them back to their parents and grandparents so that *The Rainbow* came later than many of the episodes which were to figure in *Women in Love*, the novel which, at one moment, Lawrence considered its sequel. Doing all this required enormous patience and brought into play many of those skills Mark had acquired when he was studying librarianship in South Africa. But there was a further way in which he was especially qualified for the task. *The Rainbow* went through almost too many revisions to count but the final, major one before publication (and almost immediate banning) in 1915 was preceded by a work called *The Study of Thomas Hardy*, which is in fact less about Hardy than many other matters that were preying on Lawrence's mind in those dark days. Critics in the past had picked out memorable passages from this text but shied away from treating its 'philosophy' seriously. Mark showed that it represented a determined effort by Lawrence, who had abandoned Christianity in his early manhood but remained firmly anti-materialist (as a famous episode in *The Rainbow* shows), to work out for himself a position which could satisfy an essentially religious nature. This meant that, rather like the early Wordsworth, he regarded the natural forces which govern our lives as not so much from God, as God him- or herself, and the essence of morality was therefore to learn to be at one, not only with what is outside but also with the primal impulses that rise inside us. It was in this context that, as Mark puts it, 'sex was essentially a religious mystery to Lawrence, the one way he knows and believes in, by which human beings can contact "the beyond": "the sexual act is for leaping off into the unknown, as from a cliff's edge"'. He argued that Lawrence brought this vision to his final rewriting of *The Rainbow* so that, with numerous echoes in its prose of the Authorised Version, the novel is a great religious as well as literary classic.

'The Marble and the Statue' made a powerful impression on Lawrentians. This was at a time when Cambridge University Press were inaugurating their major new edition of all Lawrence's work and it may therefore have been influential in persuading them that Mark should edit *The Rainbow*. But they also thought that, with all the new material which had become available, it would be right to commission a new biography. When they approached Mark, he was concerned by just how much work this would involve and suggested that he should have two collaborators, John Worthen for the early years up to *Sons and Lovers* and myself for the final ones, from Lawrence's departure from Europe in 1922 until his death in

1930. The Press accepted this arrangement, so that Mark now had two major contracts which would transform him from an eighteenth-century specialist into an expert on the modern period. He had always been interested in Lawrence but was now firmly in the Lawrence camp.

The amount of research the two contracts represented must have worried him (busy as he was at the university), and may have been partly responsible for a life-changing decision he made in the early 1980s. This was a time of a major crisis in university funding and a desperate search at Kent for early retirements (which the government had set aside quite a large sum of money to facilitate). The carrot of fully paid-up pension contributions was dangled in front of people who were regarded as less useful to the university than others, by no means all of whom accepted the way they had been classified or were inclined to go quietly. The result was the departure instead of several figures with international reputations, scholars whom, at a later period, the university would be doing all it could to keep. R. A. Foakes, for example, a very well-known Shakespearean and the founding professor of English at Kent, took the early retirement on offer and then immediately went to work at the University of California at Los Angeles. When these offers were being made, Mark was only fifty-three but his involvement in teaching and administration had been whole-hearted and he must have seen early retirement as the only way to complete the work he had now been contracted to do. A powerful additional motive, however, was a threat always hanging in the air that if enough people did not leave then there would have to be compulsory redundancies. The idea that he could keep his own job only at the expense of someone else losing theirs was very painful to him. After a spell in Canterbury itself, Mark had moved with his family to the wing of a very large house in the Kent countryside, positively grand in the summer but too expensive to heat adequately in the winter so that he had to sit at his desk with a blanket wrapped round his legs. Shortly before his retirement in 1984, he left this property for a house in a Regency terrace in Ramsgate which overlooked the sea. That removed him still further from his friends in Canterbury, a fact he would often regret, yet, although he enjoyed being with people, he also relished being alone with his family, and was not the first person to have found it difficult to balance conviviality with the need for solitude.

One of the leaving presents which his colleagues bought Mark when he retired was a telescope, which he set up in the living room of his Ramsgate home so that he could look out to sea. But there wasn't much time for that as he laboured away at his edition of *The Rainbow*. When this

was finally published in 1989 it was one of the great achievements of his academic career. He was the first person to have teased out the underlying chronology of the action of the novel and his explanatory notes have stood the test of time for their clarity and comprehensiveness. He was aware that in the summer of 1915, between the manuscript and typescript (which Lawrence corrected), and the printed text, there were numerous changes. Some of these could be ascribed to Lawrence but others looked very like changes made by the publishers in their efforts to censor a book about which they were increasingly concerned, and which they had urged Lawrence to censor himself. But how to distinguish one from the other? Mark chose an unorthodox eclectic approach, teasing out the logic of each change (or addition) as far as he could, and arguing convincingly that, in many cases, Lawrence must have taken the responsibility for them himself and they should therefore be accepted. It was an editorial method which could only have been employed by someone who was an acute literary critic, as well as a careful and responsible thinker about texts. In all this labour, his wife Joan was his constant companion and assistant so that he could write in his acknowledgements how finally she 'gives thanks, that we have got somewhere (somehow) over *The Rainbow* — and I give mine to her, for bearing with me, and it, throughout'.¹³

With *The Rainbow* completed, Mark could turn his attention to the Lawrence biography. Mainly thanks to John Worthen's energy and enterprise, this was already in full flow. He had produced a series of drafts on which Mark and I were able to comment, there were frequent meetings and the gradual establishment of an annual biographers' dinner, for the three of us and our wives. After having been an external examiner for the University of Singapore, Mark was for five months a visiting professor there in 1987–8, and on the way home seized the opportunity to visit various places in Australia, Mexico and America where Lawrence had once lived. Most of the more relevant European sites he had already seen, usually in the company of John Worthen whose volume of the biography (*The Early Years*) appeared in 1990. The Press was naturally anxious to profit from the very favourable reception this had received and would have liked to have published Mark's volume not more than two years later. But then he was the victim of two disasters.

In January 1990, not too long after his return from Singapore, he had a bad attack of 'flu. This left him with severe muscle pains, scarcely able to move and having to spend a good deal of his time in bed. His condition

¹³D. H. Lawrence, *The Rainbow*, ed. M. Kinkead-Weekes (Cambridge, 1996), p. ix.

was eventually diagnosed as ME (myalgic encephalomyelitis), or what is known in America as chronic fatigue syndrome. This was a particularly distressing condition to suffer from at that time since there were still disputes in medical circles about whether it should be called a physical illness at all, and some suggestion that its origins were entirely psychological. It cannot have felt psychological to Mark as he struggled to get up every morning and began to set himself the target of walking the few hundred yards from one bench to the next on the seafront before retreating to his bed again. He was just beginning to feel much better when in January 1993 (January seems to have been his unlucky month) his house caught fire. In the basement flat which he rented out, the tenant had left a chip pan on the stove and then, just back from work and tired out, fallen asleep. She had to be extricated from the smoke-filled rooms by Mark while his wife was similarly occupied with her own, not very mobile mother, who had been living with them for a while. After the fire, the whole house was in such a state that it needed to be boarded up (during which time it was burgled twice). Repairing the rooms and above all removing the pervasive smell of smoke took a long time and meant that meanwhile the Kinkead-Weekes had to live elsewhere. They were fortunate that not long afterwards Mark was invited to spend a year at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington; yet neither his illness nor the fire were conducive to steady work on the biography. With his extraordinary thoroughness and his inability to cut corners, it is likely that he would have always been late with his volume; but, without these two external factors, not quite so late.

D. H. Lawrence: Triumph to Exile 1912–1922 was published in 1996 (Cambridge) and proved very well worth waiting for. Referring to the memoir which Lawrence wrote about his former friend Maurice Magnus, who had committed suicide, Mark noted that its author cared little ‘for the inclusiveness, the painstaking enquiry, the effort to imagine from the subject’s point of view (and that of the other actors in the story), the attempt to blend objectivity with sympathetic understanding, which seekers after such biographic truth as is obtainable might demand of themselves’. What he was there defining were his own qualities as a biographer. At no point in his volume can the ice ever be described as thin: every moment in it is contextualised in a thorough if not always evident way, and the voluminous notes are in themselves a literary education and a fine introduction to the period when Lawrence was writing. As for sympathetic understanding, that is present in abundance when Mark is faced with describing some of his subject’s more discreditable actions or

remarks. Notorious among the latter is the letter Lawrence almost certainly wrote to Katherine Mansfield (it has not survived but Mansfield quotes phrases from it in one of her own letters to Middleton Murry) in which he says she revolts him 'stewing in [her] consumption', and that the Italians were right to have nothing to do with her (she had had difficulty in finding accommodation in Italy because of her condition). Although Mark in no way condones what Lawrence had written, he gives a rich context involving rejected articles, the misunderstanding postmarks can cause and the unfortunate effects of a postal strike, which at least makes it understandable.

For such a decent man, who always had difficulty in thinking ill of others, and who was in addition a warm admirer of Lawrence, the danger was always special pleading. On the whole this is triumphantly avoided, the only possible exception being his dealings with Lawrence's sexuality. Several contemporaries, and one or two modern critics, have felt the clue to Lawrence lies in repressed homosexuality. Mark had no difficulty in disposing of this view while clearly demonstrating that Lawrence was strongly attracted to the bodies of men as well as women. He argued that, after an initial period of innocence or naivety, Lawrence courageously faced up to his own bisexuality and learned to accept it; and implied that his doing so was a manifestation of acute self-knowledge and strong character. A young scholar who had been a research student at Kent, and known Mark well, took issue with this idea and in an article entitled 'D. H. Lawrence and Male Homosexual Desire' claimed that there was far less composure and freedom from anxiety in Lawrence than Mark had suggested.¹⁴ He sent a copy of this piece to Mark before trying to have it published. Whatever the rights and wrongs of the case, the interesting point here is the characteristic way in which Mark responded. In the first place, he responded very late, so that the article had already been sent off and accepted by the time the young scholar received the reply. But in the second, when he did respond, his answer was remarkably full and detailed, carefully reviewing his own and his correspondent's positions, insisting firmly on his point of view but fully recognising the areas where there could be legitimate grounds for disagreement. The tone was never that of an emeritus professor to a young academic just about to start his first job, and included the insistence that he regarded the sending of the article as a compliment and a mark of friendship. Apologising for the length of his reply (when it needed none), he said that he used to have to explain to his

¹⁴Howard Booth. The article appeared in *The Review of English Studies*, 53 (2002), 86–107.

students that frequency of comment was, in his case, a mark of interest and not condemnation.¹⁵

Not everything in Mark's retirement involved Lawrence. In 1992 he had been elected a Fellow of the British Academy and that meant occasional trips to London, as well as much energy expended at home over grant applications. He maintained his interest in Golding. In 1984 he and Ian Gregor had brought their 1967 edition up to date with essays on the fiction which had appeared in the interim; but in 2002 it was left to Mark to produce a third augmented and revised edition, which he did partly as a tribute to his deceased collaborator. Well before he retired, and certainly afterwards, there was at the University of Kent a strong development of what become known as post-colonial studies, and one of the last courses Mark himself had taught had in fact been on South African literature. Reluctant to return to his home country while apartheid persisted, he helped set up an exchange between Kent and the University of Ibadan and wrote an essay on Soyinka.¹⁶ In 1993 he published an article on the shorter fiction of Nadine Gordimer and Doris Lessing, and in the same year one in which he compared Lawrence with Bessie Head, the Botswana writer who had been born in South Africa of a white father and black mother.¹⁷ He developed a strong interest in Caribbean writers and from time to time, after an occasional return to the eighteenth century, published work on Americans (Hawthorne, Poe and Whitman), perhaps partly as a consequence of all the time he had spent on Lawrence's *Studies in Classic American Literature*.¹⁸

Yet as the twentieth century reached its close, he became increasingly preoccupied with his church. When he was living in the country near Canterbury, he had taken an active role in the affairs of the local parish; but in Ramsgate he joined the congregation of St George the Martyr, the

¹⁵I am grateful to Dr Booth for allowing me to see the letter Mark sent him.

¹⁶M. Kinkead-Weekes, 'The Interpreters: the form of criticism' in J. Gibbs (ed.), *Critical Perspectives on Wole Soyinka* (London 1980), 219–38.

¹⁷M. Kinkead-Weekes, 'Sharp knowing in apartheid: the shorter fiction of Nadine Gordimer and Doris Lessing', in A. Gurnah (ed.), *Essays on African Writing* (London, 1993), pp. 88–110; M. Kinkead-Weekes, 'Re-placing the imagination: D. H. Lawrence and Bessie Head', in Phelps and Bell, *D. H. Lawrence around the World*, pp. 130–46.

¹⁸See (among several others) M. Kinkead-Weekes, 'Bone-flute? Or house of fiction?: the contrary imaginations of Harris and Naipaul', in G. Martin (ed.), *The Uses of Fiction: Essays on the Modern Novel in Honour of Arnold Kettle* (Milton Keynes, 1983), pp. 139–58; M. Kinkead-Weekes, 'Johnson on the rise of the novel', in I. Grundy (ed.), *Samuel Johnson: New Critical Essays* (London, 1984), pp. 70–85; and M. Kinkead-Weekes, 'Reflections on, and in, *The Fall of the House of Usher*', in A. R. Lee (ed.), *Edgar Allan Poe: the Design of Order* (London, 1987), pp. 17–34.

nearest church to him, and found himself even more heavily involved in church affairs. St George's is an unprepossessing nineteenth-century edifice but it is built on high ground and has a tower which has for decades served as a navigational aid for those at sea. This proved to be in bad need of repair and the estimate for restoring it to anything like its former condition was staggeringly high. In 1998 a committee of church members was formed to raise what money it could and, by no particularly keen desire of his own, Mark became its chairman. This meant organising monthly events at church, writing innumerable letters to charities and local businesses, and cultivating Ramsgate's few celebrities. One of these was Edward Heath, who was born there, and Mark would give a vivid account of a heavy lunch at a local restaurant when, after proffering some useful if unrealistically expensive advice, the former prime minister had then slowly slid into somnolence. He had more success with the London and then Hollywood actress Brenda Blethyn, who for Mark's sake came back to her home town quite often in order to help host a premiere of her latest film at the local Ramsgate cinema. He enjoyed these occasions but put just as much energy into the sparsely attended 'wit and wisdom' evenings at the church. The whole process of fund-raising exhausted him so that it was a great relief, and something of a miracle, when in 2006, with restoration work already in train, the appeal reached the improbably high target of £1.2 million.

Mark was in no way just a church Christian. In his last years he wrote an essay, not for publication, which he called 'This Little Light of Mine'. 'To almost all my friends and family', it began, 'my religion probably seems an aberration, by an otherwise moderately reasonable man.' He went on to explain why he was a believer, describing the feelings he had had of being in the very presence of God during prayer, and pointing out that the militant atheism which was at that period receiving a lot of publicity, chiefly because of Richard Dawkins, did not have a more rational account of how and why life began than the Bible did. From there he used the statements in the creed he recited every Sunday as section headings for an acute scrutiny of each aspect of his belief: of the question of the after-life, for example, or the final judgement. Under 'He was incarnate of the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary', he admitted how much he had struggled with the insistence on Mary's virginity in the doctrine of the immaculate conception, and confessed that he had never been able to accept that celibacy was a higher state than marriage, or that Mary's purity had to be associated with an unbroken hymen. Though he regarded Saint Paul as a 'great saint', he felt that what was implied in his suggestion that it is better

to marry than to burn represented a crass mistake. More generally, he wrote that he found it impossible to believe in a world that came about through a series of fortunate accidents and thought it must have had a creator to which all its aspects could be referred. Given that creativity is a precious gift from God so that the truly creative artist could be said to imitate Him, he said he believed that the defining characteristic of the major work of art is ‘that behind all its multiplicity and complexity is an imaginative coherence, an organic unity, in which multiple details come together and reinforce one another’ so that ‘to try to reveal this coherence, getting everything in, as far as possible to one’s limited ability, is the true work of criticism’. His keenest interest and pleasure, he said, had been to try to ‘uncover unifying patterns, underlying wavelengths, in enduring works of literature’, and he had therefore stubbornly resisted what he called ‘the sceptical relativism of post-modern critical theory’. ‘It all hangs together in the deepest sense,’ claims Birkin in *Women in Love*, and Mark would have agreed that this was true of both that particular novel and the world.

In the autumn of 2006 Mark was diagnosed with lung cancer: he had been a smoker in his youth, but then so had most of his contemporaries. After an operation later that year he was told that his maximum life expectancy was five years, and he survived almost all of those, as welcoming to visitors as ever and keeping up his interest in modern fiction by regularly ordering, and actually reading, the six leading Booker prize nominees. His family had been augmented by two grand-daughters from whose company he derived great pleasure and, as the cancer returned, he was expertly as well as lovingly looked after at home by his wife. After his death on 7 March 2011, his funeral was held in the cavernous St George’s but because he had insisted on being cremated, there was a long drive afterwards to the crematorium near Margate. At both services, the music had been religious and classical but as the coffin finally disappeared it somehow seemed appropriate that the mourners should hear, at what had been Mark’s own special request, an old Fats Waller number of which he had been very fond, ‘Ain’t Misbehaving’.

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