THE CRITICS DEBATE

General Editor Michael Scott

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Published titles:

Sons and Lovers Geoffrey Harvey

Bleak House Jeremy Hawthorn

The Canterbury Tales Alcuin Blamires

Tess of the d'Urbervilles Terence Wright

Further titles are in preparation.

SONS AND LOVERS

Geoffrey Harvey

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For Nicholas and Michael

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General Editor's Preface

OVER THE last few years the practice of literary criticism has become hotly debated. Methods developed earlier in the century and before have been attacked and the word 'crisis' has been drawn upon to describe the present condition of English Studies. That such a debate is taking place is a sign of the subject discipline's health. Some would hold that the situation necessitates a radical alternative approach which naturally implies a 'crisis situation'. Others would respond that to employ such terms is to precipitate or construct a false position. The debate continues but it is not the first. 'New Criticism' acquired its title because it attempted something fresh calling into question certain practices of the past. Yet the practices it attacked were not entirely lost or negated by the new critics. One factor becomes clear: English Studies is a pluralistic discipline.

What are students coming to advanced work in English for the first time to make of all this debate and controversy? They are in danger of being overwhelmed by the cross currents of critical approaches as they take up their study of literature. The purpose of this series is to help delineate various critical approaches to specific literary texts. Its authors are from a variety of critical schools and have approached their task in a flexible manner. Their aim is to help the reader come to terms with the variety of criticism and to introduce him or her to further reading on the subject and to a fuller evaluation of a particular text by illustrating the way it has been approached in a number of contexts. In the first part of the book a critical survey is given of some of the major ways the text has been appraised. This is done sometimes in a thematic manner, sometimes according to various 'schools' or 'approaches'. In the second part the authors provide their own appraisals of the text from their stated critical standpoint, allowing the reader the knowledge of their own particular approaches from which their views may in turn be evaluated. The series therein hopes to introduce and to elucidate criticism of authors and texts being studied and to encourage participation as the critics debate.

Michael Scott

A Note on Text and References

QUOTATIONS from *Sons and Lovers* are taken from the Penguin English Library edition, edited with an introduction and notes by Keith Sagar (Harmondsworth, 1981), as being the text and most readily available to the reader.

Several of the critical essays referred to in this book are included in *D.H. Lawrence, 'Sons and Lovers': A Casebook*, edited by Gámini Salgado (London: 1969), from which quotations are taken for the convenience of the reader, who may wish to consult this volume. Other works cited are identified by author and year of publication; full details will be found in the Reference section.