



“What do I care for first or last editions?” wrote DH Lawrence (1885-1930), “Books to me are incorporate things, voices in the air ... To me, no book has a date, no book has a binding.”

This declaration of indifference to editions appeared in his introduction to a 1925 bibliography of his writings edited by Edward D McDonald (1883-1977).

Yet despite Lawrence’s puzzlement toward bibliographers and collectors, and his impatience with the commercial aspects of publishing, as a hard-working and enterprising professional author he paid close attention to the publication of his works. His writing was regularly censored during his lifetime, so he was particularly attentive and shrewd in his dealings with literary mentors, agents, journal and magazine editors, and publishers. In the final years of his life he published privately to avoid what he called the “censor-moron”, which ensured his voice was heard, and his work seen and read. He was increasingly concerned with the design and production of his books, even creating a distinctive phoenix emblem which he put on the covers of his privately published editions.

Lawrence’s changing literary identity, and the shifts in his reputation, can be traced through his conflicted interactions with the literary marketplace, and through the various posthumous editions of his work. As one of the most iconic figures in English literature he has also been the subject of numerous TV and film biopics and adaptations, and authors have felt compelled to write about his life not only in biographies but in fiction. This re-packaging of the man and his works gives us a vivid insight into his continuing presence in popular culture and the public imagination.