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### Reviews

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## REVIEWS

**Ben Etherington, *Literary Primitivism*.**

**Stanford CA: Stanford UP, 2017.**

**Pp. xix+218. £52 (hardcover). ISBN 978 1 5036 0236 6**

**Rachel Crossland, *Modernist Physics: Waves, Particles, and Relativities in the Writings of Virginia Woolf and D. H. Lawrence*.**

**Oxford: Oxford UP, 2018.**

**Pp. xii+193. £60 (hardcover). ISBN 978 0 1988 1597 6**

**Stephen Kern, *Modernism after the Death of God: Christianity, Fragmentation, and Unification*.**

**New York and London: Routledge, 2017.**

**Pp. x+189. £105 (hardcover). ISBN 978 1 1380 9403 1**

*Reviewed by Michael Bell*

These three books deal extensively with D. H. Lawrence as part in each case of a larger argument about modernism. Ben Etherington has revisited the important and highly visible, yet curiously neglected, topic of literary primitivism. Etherington comments on this surprising absence of discussion noting that his one immediate predecessor is my own short volume of 1972 and I indeed have the sense of a conversation continuing after a long hiatus. No doubt, a principal reason for the neglect of this topic during the intervening period has been its apparent self-evidence. The orthodoxy of post-colonial critique made it, in the full sense of the word, blindingly obvious. Edward Said's deservedly influential *Orientalism* was a striking instance of the endemic principle of scholarly culture noted long ago by Nietzsche:

He who nowadays knows how to open up a new field within which even the weakest heads can labour with some degree of success becomes famous in a very short time: so great is the crowd that at once presses in. Every one of these loyal and grateful people is at the same time a misfortune for the master, to be sure, since they all imitate him and his defects then seem disproportionately great and exaggerated because they appear in such tiny individuals, while it is the opposite with his virtues, which are proportionately diminished when these same individuals display them.<sup>1</sup>

The impact of Said's volume was to convert orientalism from an academic specialism into an ideological sin. It became nigh impossible to believe that a "Western" individual of goodwill could exercise a sympathetic, informed appreciation of non-Western peoples and cultures, and improper even to consider degrees of success in doing so. The project is contaminated at its root by imperial projection and condescension; a cultural structure most notably revealed in the very notion of the "primitive". Etherington is properly respectful of the cultural turn represented by Said but resists the tendency to such sweeping judgements. Indeed, he makes the case for a serious use of primitivist motifs precisely by discriminating it from more naïve or defective instances. For this purpose, he gives close readings in turn of Aimé Césaire, D. H. Lawrence and Claude McKay.

By the twenty-first century, of course, the word "primitive" cannot be used without at least implicit quotation marks. Primitive is necessarily a judgement made from a given point of view. Nothing is primitive in and of itself. This recognition was developed over the, at least mentally, decolonising twentieth century which is why Etherington takes this period as the defining historical parameter of his theme delimited as "emphatic primitivism". Or that is perhaps my way of understanding it as an internal cultural development. Etherington's geo-political account, informed by Marxist analysis, defines his chosen period as the point where the globalisation of

capitalism has effectively destroyed the sense of foreign otherness, including the primitive other; a period, therefore, in which the experience of the primitive becomes at once more precious and more problematic. But whatever its aetiology, the new awareness of the “primitive” as a necessarily shifting, projective, hypothetical order of judgement aligns with Etherington’s further defining emphasis on *literary* primitivism. He is concerned with these motifs as deployed within consciously aesthetic and imaginative orders. This relates in turn to a third significant aspect: he includes as notably successful cases of literary primitivism writers from regions, primarily the Caribbean, which have historically been thought of as instances, rather than imaginative exploiters, of the “primitive”.

These considerations bear significantly on the generation now thought of as modernist, including Joseph Conrad and Lawrence. However critical in intent, both were creatures of their time, sharing many of its assumptions and thinking within its discourse. It is therefore easy, especially by means of decontextualised quotation, to present them as simply endorsing racist or imperial values. Yet Conrad and Lawrence radically questioned these values. In this respect, primitivism has two interrelated aspects: it may make an historical or ethnographical claim about a way of life identified as primitive or it may express dissatisfaction with the writer’s own culture by imagining an alternative form of life with an essentially utopian status within the work. The trouble is that both these dimensions, the ethnographic and the utopian, are likely to occur within the same work which is why Etherington insists on the literary, rather than the anthropological, dimension as governing the significance of the whole. Whatever their ethnographic limitations, and however literal their beliefs, Conrad and Lawrence used their best understanding, whether at first or second hand, of ancient or tribal peoples to identify the moral and spiritual deficit in their own European modernity. It is the latter critique which makes them significant writers and places them among the initiators of the post-colonial late twentieth century.

By the same token, of course, such primitivist projects are intrinsically fraught with ambivalence and subject to damaging naivety both in the writing and in the reception. No doubt for this reason Etherington presents his most positive case first. After an extended analytic and historical introduction, he reads the poetry of Césaire as a sophisticated use of primitivist motifs to affirm a cultural identity in apposition, if not opposition, to the white European norm. It is also relevant here that Césaire is a poet in a highly accomplished idiom of the Francophone avant-garde. An idiom that might otherwise be a too rarefied verbal symbolism is given urgency by its resonances for a specific historical experience and identity. And by the same token, the poetic transmutation reflects how that history now persists as psychological forms and traces.

Lawrence provides a sharply contrasting case in his Mexico-based novel *The Plumed Serpent* which Etherington offers as the primary instance of Lawrence's primitivism. Setting its action almost contemporaneously in the early 1920s when the bloodshed of the Mexican Revolution was finally coming to an end, Lawrence imagined the possibility of a new state based on the pre-Columbian religious sensibility of Mexico which, in many peoples' view, has left psychological as well as archaeological traces in modernity. The religious revival is led by the patrician anthropologist Don Ramón Carrasco along with the army under General Cipriano Viedma. Few people see this novel as a success, and Lawrence himself soon rejected the element of political leadership. Yet Etherington is surely right to see it as a complex and illuminating instance of modern primitivism. It is best read as a utopian thought experiment although this constantly conflicts with the mode of historical realism in which it is conceived. Or to express the same point more positively, it is the work in which Lawrence pushed his primitivist speculation to its limits and tested it within, or against, the realism of the novel form. It is telling in this regard that a rejected earlier draft, now published as *Quetzalcoatl*, offers a more moderate version of the theme.

Lawrence's primitivism finds other expressions such as his sympathetic recreation of ancient Etruscan life from the evidence of

its funerary decorations. Likewise, in his essays on the Pueblo Indians he tried to enter imaginatively into the cosmic beliefs underlying their way of life while always conscious of the danger of white liberal sentimentalising of Native American culture. Lawrence was at once the greatest exemplar and the most penetrating critic of modern primitivism, which is why *The Plumed Serpent* hovers constantly between affirmation, self-critique and unwitting self-parody. Readers of Lawrence may think of more successful and varied instances of the primitivist impulse throughout his oeuvre, but in so far as Etherington's purpose is not to explore the full range of Lawrence's art but to exemplify a spectrum of possibilities in modern primitivism, his choice of this novel is apt and effective.

For his third case study, Etherington focuses on the fiction of another Caribbean writer, Claude McKay. A positive value in the primitive may be appropriated for the self as well as projected on to the cultural or ethnic "other". But reversing the formula of "Narrative Primitivism" that he sees in Lawrence, Etherington sees in McKay a "Primitivist Narration" which is to say the very premises of the narrative are unquestioningly primitivist. In this respect, the sequence of writers makes for an anti-climactic structure, but this in itself helps to emphasise reflection on the critical and analytic paradoxes of a modern primitivism.

Early-twentieth-century culture is not short of paradoxes, whether real or imagined, some of which emerge from the ongoing revolutions in scientific thought. Rachel Crossland's *Modernist Physics* is a contribution to a burgeoning field of study devoted to the interrelations between scientific and artistic modes of understanding in the period. Her principal authors are Virginia Woolf and Lawrence read closely in the light of their knowledge of contemporary physics as represented in turn through three focal themes: waves and particles, relativity, and Brownian motion. She offers some close textual analysis, making plausible claims for scientific awareness in these authors' tropes and metaphors. This includes useful documentation of Lawrence's scientific knowledge acquired in the course of his training as a school-teacher. At the same

time, readers seeking literary critical insight may feel that the motive of contributing to a “field” dominates over an intrinsic interest in the author.

Crossland devotes considerable space to general methodological concerns: is the interrelation of scientific and literary discourse best understood, for example, as influence or as old-fashioned *Zeitgeist* or as a common pool of discursive metaphors? The possibilities are carefully examined and critiqued but there lurks a prior question as to whether such a general model is not a distracting chimera. The relationship is likely to be different in all its varied instances and, while it is true that to conduct such a study one must have thought about these questions, it is not perhaps necessary to rehearse all the theoretical possibilities to make specific claims. During the theory wars of the previous academic generation it was common to point out that those hostile to “theory” were not without it but just unconscious of it. No doubt there were plenty of such cases but the problem for sophisticated critics was a more subtle one about the mode of self-consciousness and the assumed priority of a theory.

A propos an episode in the relationship between Miriam Leivers and Paul Morel, Crossland observes: “As in *The Trespasser*, the moment cannot be sustained for long, but in this novel there does at least seem to be some hope of achieving a successful and practical theory of relationships...” (94). Why does this factually unexceptionable sentence seem to misrepresent Lawrence’s novel? It gives assumed priority to a self-conscious theoretical quest and makes this the criterion by which to judge the central relationship. But for Lawrence all human relationships, including the most “successful”, are arenas of strife and a successful theory of relationships would not entail a successful relationship; nor vice versa. Indeed, one of the novel’s remarkable moments of intuitive insight into relationship is the episode with Paul and Clara in the field with the “pee-wits” calling. Here there is a sense of cosmic connection that Lawrence was able to develop in his next novel *The Rainbow*. Not only does that add a new dimension to the nature of human relationship, it is also an instance of Lawrence’s dramatic

imagination moving ahead of conceptual understanding. This is the underlying significance of his claim that his theoretical writings, his “pollyanalytics”, grew from, rather than being the creative starting point for, his fiction. Precisely because he had a formidable intellect Lawrence worked hard, if not always successfully, to prevent it distorting his intuitions.

All this has a bearing on the question of literary quality which has an ambiguous place in a cultural analysis of this kind. On the one hand it is implicitly bracketed since writers great and small may equally respond to the discourse and world view of science. Yet on the other hand the generally acknowledged status of the writer implicitly underwrites the significance of these connections. The chosen writers are among the canonical “major” figures and it is not clear that the critical question can really be bracketed since aesthetic quality is intrinsic to the imaginative mode of literature as such. In that respect the question is not whether a writer has responded to scientific thought but what place this has in the imaginative achievement. I should confess at this point to having recently reread Woolf’s *The Waves* with a view to finding it more impressive than previously but found it even more archly willed and self-conscious in the wrong kind of way. For me, Crossland’s account does not help to alleviate this impression so much as help to explain it. But Woolf has many admiring readers who are likely to respond differently, and this reading certainly affirms her alertness to intellectual currents of her time.

For readers of Lawrence the central chapter on “human relativity” is likely to be the most significant, but also the most anti-climactic. Lawrence had an intense sense of the unique being of all creatures, human and non-human. The appreciation of difference underlies his perception of nature and his understanding of human relationships. It was when seeking to articulate this discursively that he drew explicitly on the notion of relativity as put into the public arena by Einstein. It is generally understood by readers of Lawrence that, however well he may have understood the scientific theory in its own terms, he was using the stir created by Einstein to introduce his own

notion of human relativity. Or rather he saw in this stir an indication of possible readiness for the seismic cultural transformation he envisaged. Hence, when he says in *Fantasia of the Unconscious* that Einstein had pulled out the “pin” that secured the old absolutes, it is not clear to what extent he means this to be a graphic account of Einstein’s theory as such or of the subsequent cultural commotion around the term relativity, but in any case he shifted the topic to his own concern with human relativity.

Crossland claims a closer link to Einsteinian theory but the argument effectively switches at this point to an extended exposition of Lawrence’s sense of difference in his fiction and essays including the classic instances of *Women in Love* and *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine*. Given the abundant commentary on this central aspect of Lawrence, veteran readers will not find anything new in itself nor significantly transformed by the suggestion that his invocation of Einstein may be more informed and literal than previously supposed. Indeed, the approach through Einstein’s relativity rather than Lawrence’s own *oeuvre* means that the proper force of difference in Lawrence is actually missed as if the writer’s attention is somewhere else. Crossland remarks that “although he does not always express the problems of apparently unbridgeable differences between lovers in scientific or mathematical terms, [Lawrence] does refer to such difficulties frequently within his writings...” (90). There follow instances of such “difficulties” in relationships but in all cases, although the characters do indeed feel unnerved by their mutual strangeness, the narrative makes clear that this is a vital dynamic of the relationship as such. The instances include Lydia and Tom Brangwen for whom a literal foreignness is extensively thematised in the novel to focus the positive significance of their difference. The misappreciation of difference vitiates much of the discussion of Lawrence and it is precisely in so far as Lawrence does have a theory of relationship that Crossland misses the point.

Aristotle remarked on the importance of recognising the degree of precision appropriate to a given subject matter. The effect of this study is, partly by argument and partly by inadvertence, to show the

elusiveness of its topic. In the last section, on Brownian motion and the psychology of the crowd, Crossland comments on how the individual ego is caught up in an impersonal process. But in the age of Nietzsche, Freud and Marx it is problematic to itemise any particular source for the period's conceptual dissolution of the ego. In a way this precisely demonstrates the book's principal thesis: that there is between distinct disciplines a shared, mutually interacting set of terms and concepts. By the same token, however, it shows the difficulty of isolating individual echoes and causalities.

Stephen Kern sets out to define an "ideal type" of the modernist writer or thinker (based on the analytic model of Max Weber). Looking in turn at Nietzsche, Joyce, Freud, Lawrence, Gide, Heidegger and Woolf, he traces a similar pattern: a strong religious upbringing (apart from Woolf); a developed hostility to Christianity; an ambivalent respect or co-option of it into a personal spiritual understanding; and, finally, an attempt to overcome the perceived fragmentation of modernity by means of a philosophical or aesthetic synthesis. Few readers are likely to dissent from the general proposition and the question is rather how much fresh insight it yields into these writers or into the period at large. In that respect it is hard to say what the intended readership may be. To make the case for the importance of religion in all cases, Kern gives an extensive biographical account which makes no strong claim to originality and, for readers of Lawrence in particular, covers familiar ground: his pious upbringing, his sexual inhibitions, his ambivalent appropriation of Christianity and his exploration of ancient religious traditions. As a series of introductory essays these chapters work well enough but otherwise the analytic implement of the "ideal type" developed for sociological thinking is highly ambivalent when applied to literary texts. In bringing out a common pattern it rather blunts the individual element that constitutes the primary interest of these writers.

Of these three thematic studies, Etherington's is the most nuanced and probing while the two others create something of a straitjacket.

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<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997), 171–2.

**Helen Smith, *The Uncommon Reader: A Life of Edward Garnett*. London: Jonathan Cape, 2017. Pp. 440. £30 (hardcover). ISBN 978 0 2240 8181 8**

*Reviewed by Annalise Grice*

Above all, Edward Garnett was a man of letters. He was also a proud freethinker, whose anti-institutional principles led him to refuse official recognition for his services to literature in a career spanning some fifty years. When offered an Honorary Doctorate in 1936, Garnett declined, describing himself as “an outsider, a solitary person, unacademic in essence and unfitted to be Dr Garnett” (350). Emerging from an intellectual – rather than wealthy – middle-class background, Garnett had close family links to the world of literature. Lacking a university education, in 1889 he married the Cambridge-educated Constance Black, who became the celebrated translator of over seventy volumes of Russian literature including the complete works of Turgenev, whose writing Garnett held in the highest regard. Alongside Constance, Garnett became known as a promoter of Russian literature, writing volumes on *Tolstoy* (1914) and *Turgenev* (1917) and contributing literary journalism and reviews to the *Speaker*, the *Academy* and the *Nation*.

Helen Smith’s highly anticipated biography *The Uncommon Reader* provides valuable and extensive details about Garnett’s career as a publisher’s reader for T. Fisher Unwin, Heinemann, John Lane, Duckworth and Jonathan Cape, and as English representative for the American *Century* magazine and the Viking Press. The biography is designed to appeal to a broad readership, but scholars reading the book for research purposes may be frustrated by the lack of a chronology, and an appendix of first meetings or first

correspondence with future mentees would also have been useful. An absence of dates within chapter titles and page headings makes the book hard to navigate. Nevertheless, the biography proceeds chronologically, and Smith reveals how Garnett intervened in the professional (and often also in the personal) lives of an array of significant writers including Joseph Conrad, John Galsworthy, W. B. Yeats and – of course – D. H. Lawrence. There have been a number of other substantial biographies on the Garnetts and Smith is most indebted to George Jefferson's *Edward Garnett: A Life in Literature* (1982) and Richard Garnett's *Constance Garnett: A Heroic Life* (1991), but she has also carried out expansive archival research and examines a cache of Garnett's reader's reports to discern his literary values, concluding that Garnett prized "veracity", originality and "an unflinching readiness to show people what they are" (273).

It is little wonder, then, that he was so drawn to Lawrence's writing. Smith detects Garnett's influence in the rewriting of scenes in *Sons and Lovers* in which, in the final manuscript, Lawrence replaces several instances of protracted authorial exposition with dramatic exchanges and symbolism (228–9) and writes to Garnett that he has rewritten the novel, "pruning it and shaping it and filling it in" (IL 476), pre-emptively defending himself against any charges of formlessness. Responding to the manuscript of 'The Wedding Ring', Garnett advised Lawrence to express the novel's emotional and psychological elements through vivid episodes rather than abstract theorising, and to work on the character of Ella (241). By this date, Lawrence had gained a degree of self-confidence from the largely positive reception of *Sons and Lovers* and he defended his work against Garnett's criticism, telling him that he no longer cared for "accumulating objects in the powerful light of emotion, and making a scene of them. I have to write differently" (2L 142). The intimate friendship and productive literary engagements between Lawrence and Garnett, which ended with a period of mutual frustration and disagreement about literary matters in 1914, fit the pattern of Garnett's role as a self-appointed mentor throughout his career. Garnett would scout out promising young writers, school

them in literary style, offer them guidance about publishing practice, instil them with the confidence to stand alone, undergo a period of disagreement, and then leave them to choose their own path with his cautionary tales ringing in their ears.

Much of the detail in Smith's biography about Garnett's engagements with Lawrence is well-known to Lawrence scholars. However, an excerpt from a letter held at the Bodleian Library from Garnett to Heinemann's reader Walter de la Mare fills in some further detail about Heinemann's rejection of *Sons and Lovers* (then entitled 'Paul Morel') and Garnett's hand in taking the novel over to Duckworth. This letter reveals the communication and collegiality between publishing houses at this time and suggests that Duckworth eagerly supported Garnett's move to take on 'Paul Morel' in 1912. Garnett then commented on and returned the manuscript to Lawrence together with a "list of notes from Duckworth" (IL 427), further indications of Duckworth's close involvement and interest in Lawrence's work.

Readers of the *JDHLS* will be interested in how *The Uncommon Reader* shows Lawrence not simply as a sole recipient of Garnett's sharp but well-informed criticism and editorial intervention, but as one of Garnett's many acutely-criticised protégés. A better understanding of Garnett allows us to reassess his contribution to Lawrence's career and comprehend why he and Lawrence got on so well. Throughout his life Garnett attempted to become a fiction writer, but Smith observes that Garnett's "critical faculty overwhelmed his creative aspirations" (80), and he appears as a melancholy, embattled figure, who was prone (in Constance's words) to "nervous irritability". Garnett suffered a form of nervous breakdown at the age of 26 (49–51) and he turned to bromide in order to sleep at night (174). Smith reveals that his marriage was companionate rather than passionate and, from 1896, Garnett's feelings for the artist Nellie Heath grew, apparently with Constance's blessing, and Nellie became Garnett's long-term partner. By the age of 43 Garnett had become "tired of books and MSS", feeling the work of a publisher's reader was "a second-hand sort of existence"

(198), but despite long-term illness he continued working for Jonathan Cape until his death of a cerebral haemorrhage at the age of 69.

This is an enjoyable, deeply informative and wide-ranging biography for any reader interested in early-twentieth-century publishing culture and literary networks. It ends rather abruptly, leaving one wishing that Smith had rounded off her extensive research and evident admiration for her biographical subject by giving a final brief evaluation of the shape of Garnett's life, career and his remarkable legacy.

**Anthony Pacitto. *A Sense of Ancient Gods*.**

**[www.winejarpress.com](http://www.winejarpress.com)**

**Pp. 328. £11.95 (paperback). ISBN 978 1 9998 8380 5**

*Reviewed by Neil Roberts*

In December 1919 Lawrence and Frieda spent nine days in an uncomfortable and poorly furnished villa near the mountain village of Picinisco on the western edge of the Abruzzi. They were the guests of Orazio Cervi, a "returned native" who had spent years in London working as a model for artists including Lord Leighton and Sir Hamo Thorneycroft. The latter was the father of Lawrence's friend Rosalind Baynes, and the sojourn was partly to see if the villa was a suitable bolt-hole for Rosalind and her children, in flight from her marriage.

The cold and discomfort, and the lure of a much warmer climate in Capri, proved too much for Lawrence, but he was profoundly impressed by the remoteness (perhaps the most remote place he experienced before his New Mexico ranch) and, in his own word, "primitiveness" of the Abruzzi. It became the setting for the closing chapters of *The Lost Girl*, which he wrote in March–May 1920, after retrieving the manuscript of 'The Insurrection of Miss Houghton' which he had abandoned in 1913.

Now Lawrence's stay in Picinisco has inspired another novel by Anthony Pacitto, an Englishman with family roots in and intimate knowledge of the region. *A Sense of Ancient Gods* is set almost entirely in the period of the Lawrences' visit and, though fiction, confines itself to events that either did take place or might plausibly have taken place during that period. Unlike Huxley's *Point Counter Point* (1928) and Helen Dunmore's *Zennor in Darkness* (1993) Pacitto does not make the Lawrences characters in someone else's story; unlike H. D.'s *Bid Me to Live* (1960) they are not characters in the author's own story. The novel focuses on the Lawrences themselves, their relationship to the place and to Orazio (Pancrazio in *The Lost Girl*). A fourth important character is Orazio's brother Giovanni, an almost silent, apparently mentally disabled figure, who turns out to be the Lawrences' initiator into the "ancient gods" of the region.

It is a remarkable achievement. The most immediately striking thing about it is its style. Compare these passages:

Two men stood below, amid the crumbling of finely falling snow. One, the elder, had a bagpipe whose bag was patched with shirting: the younger was dressed in greenish clothes, he had his face lifted, and was yelling the verses of the unintelligible Christmas ballad: short, rapid verses, followed by a brilliant flourish on a short wooden pipe he held ready in his hand. Alvina felt he was going to be out of breath. But no, rapid and high came the next verse, verse after verse, with the wild scream on the little new pipe in between, over the roar of the bagpipe. (*LG* 323)

Below, two caped sheep-skinned natives, tall hats with red ribbons, long wild hair spilling over dark beards, were bellowing and blowing their instruments—the white animal-skin of a bagpipe, and a long pan-like flute—cheeks bulging, fingers flying, wild and frantic, clawing at the freezing air, ancient, primitive, yowling.

They stood in the knee-deep snow, an occasional glance from under the brims of their hats up to the balcony. Then the flute player stopped, opened his lungs, and a fierce high screaming sound issued forth as to burst the arteries, repetitive, relentless, the awful sound of a soul fighting to wake from a dream, naked of anything civilized, insistent, unforgiving, while the bagpipe droned on like a dying angel. (73)

Pacitto is perhaps “channelling” Lawrence – he is presenting this experience from Lawrence’s point of view – but the description is not at all a pastiche, and certainly not derivative. It is, if anything, more intense than the Lawrence and clearly derives from first-hand experience. His style is fluent, flexible and varied and, while obviously literary in the sense that the language is worth attending to for its own sake, is always natural-seeming. He creates a memorable and moving portrait of Orazio Cervi, the returned native lost between idealised but ultimately empty memories of his life in English society, and his civilised detachment from his home, symbolised by the outwardly rather fine but inwardly squalid “villa” that he has built there. His feelings tellingly counterpoint Lawrence’s own revolt from England and quest for a place beyond the reach of modernity. His chagrin at Lawrence and Frieda’s departure, and awareness that he has had a brief period of privileged existence that will never be repeated, are deeply affecting.

But the novel’s greatest triumph is the portrait of Lawrence himself, seen mainly from the perspectives of Orazio and Frieda, the stranger and the wife, yet sharing an uncertainty about the man who bewitches them. Pacitto captures Lawrence’s gift of instant yet unintrusive intimacy, his mercurial humour, his attentiveness, his attunement to the atmosphere and historical resonance of a place, together with his bitterness and occasional self-pity. It is a sympathetic and entrancing portrait, less sanitised than those of Huxley and Dunmore. Frieda is also sympathetically portrayed, as a loving free spirit, made anxious by Lawrence’s unpredictability: more, perhaps, how Frieda saw herself than how others saw her.

Pacitto capitalises on his knowledge of the region and matches Lawrence himself in his evocation of its flora.

The only flaws, apart from some minor errors inevitable in self-published books, are some over-literal suggestions about the inspiration of Lawrence's work, including an actual nephew of Orazio called Ciccio. I cannot imagine an admirer of Lawrence, or indeed any reader of literary fiction, who would not thoroughly enjoy Pacitto's novel.

**Simonetta de Filippis, ed., *D. H. Lawrence: New Critical Perspectives and Cultural Translations*.**

**Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016.**

**Pp. 385. £52.99 (hardcover). ISBN 978 1 4438 9444 9**

*Reviewed by Nick Ceramella*

This volume gathers together fifteen out of about a hundred papers presented at the 13<sup>th</sup> International D. H. Lawrence Conference, 'D. H. Lawrence: New Life, New Utterance, New Perspectives', which took place in Gargnano in 2014. Dealing with many different topics ranging from ecocriticism to psychoanalysis, philosophy to ethnography, and including essays looking at religion, translation, theatre, dance, cinema, travel, as well as sexuality, Simonetta de Filippis has done a good job in structuring this book harmoniously in two parts, each subdivided into two sections.

Part I includes new readings of Lawrence's writings and ideology seen through different philosophical and theoretical approaches, which draw comparisons with philosophers including the existentialist Martin Heidegger, the surrealist Georges Bataille and the naturalist Charles Darwin. The opening section, 'A Philosophical Focus', compares some of Lawrence's main themes, such as sexuality, primitive rituals, criticism of the industrial world and evolutionism, with these philosopher's theories.

The first essay, by Masashi Asai, 'How to Have Meaningful Relationships with the Other: Lawrence, Sade, and Bataille', explores how, despite their "fundamentally different" strategies, these writers "try, in their own ways, to overcome the agony of egoistic human nature which has come to be overwhelming in the modern age" (33). The next essay, 'Dancing Bodies: D. H. Lawrence and Antonin Artaud's Poetics of Cruelty', is by Sergio Crapiz. In this he examines differences between Lawrence and Artaud, the French theatre director, who "aims at creating a new form of theatrical language through the physical, looming presence of the actor's bodies on stage and the amplification of the magical power of gestures" (39). Indrek Männiste's essay, 'D. H. Lawrence: Nature, Technology and the Sense of Enframing', concentrates on Lawrence's affinity to Heideggerian thinking, particularly in respect of technology, which Lawrence saw as destabilising the relationship between man and nature.

Jim Phelps's essay, "'Flesh cometh only out of flesh': Darwinian Considerations of D. H. Lawrence', focuses on Lawrence's 'Foreword to *Sons and Lovers*' to consider the impact of Darwin on Lawrence's thought and how "this influence might render Lawrence peculiarly amenable to evolutionary criticism, especially with reference to embodied cognition and evolutionary psychology" (77). This subsection is closed by Youngjoo Son whose study, 'Why Matter Matters: Things and Beings in D. H. Lawrence', applies Bill Brown's "thing theory" to many of Lawrence's works, particularly his short story 'Things'. Youngjoo Son observes that "many philosophers and anthropologists accuse modernist thought of conflating ontological and epistemological questions, and of converting the former into the latter". However, she points out that Lawrence, "consistently suggests that ontology and epistemology are not and should not be entirely separate from each other" (95).

The second section of Part I, 'New Critical Readings', opens with Flora de Giovanni's examination of some of Lawrence's experiences with indigenous traditions. Her essay, 'Identity, Performance and Ritual in *The Lost Girl*', "focuses on the role that the Natcha-Kee-

Tawaras, an itinerant mock Red Indian troupe, play in the development of [Alvina's] female identity", which allows "her to get in touch with her innermost drives and desires" (123). The next essay, 'The Animal in D. H. Lawrence: A Struggle Against Anthropocentrism' by Jamie Johnson, focuses on the role of animals in Lawrence's poems, short stories, novels and essays, suggesting that they may "reflect the author's [Lawrence's] progressive struggle against anthropocentrism" (145). Feroza Jussawalla's essay, 'Transnational, Postcolonial D. H. Lawrence: Coloniser, Colonialist, or Assimilationist?' raises questions about the way natives are presented by Lawrence in works such as *Mornings in Mexico* and *The Woman Who Rode Away*. Considering Lawrence to be a "'postcolonial' in intent", Jussawalla notes that "even if Lawrence sometimes represented the peoples he encountered in derogatory ways, he also seemed to develop a genuine fondness for the natives and an interest in their causes and politics" (165).

Andrew Keese's essay, 'Hybridity and the Postcolonial Solution in D. H. Lawrence's *The Plumed Serpent*', looks at Lawrence's portrayal of the Aztecs, whom he sees as having lost their original cultural identity without really acquiring that of their Spanish conquerors. Identifying these people as what Homi Bhabha describes as hybrids, Keese "draws on theories by Bhabha, Bakhtin and Young to help explain how Lawrence engages with hybridity and, ultimately, what his experiment [in *The Plumed Serpent*] can mean for other decolonized peoples to inject a new spirit into their countries" (187). The closing essay in this first section is 'Revising *Women in Love*: Lawrence and the "Over-Emphatic Explicitness" of Theory' by Laurence Steven, who analyses Lawrence's 1916 and 1917 revisions of *Women in Love*, focusing on the chapter 'Excuse'. Steven highlights the duality of Lawrence's writing and suggests that, "Reading the original and revised versions [of the novel] urges us to reevaluate the role *criticism* plays in recognising when imposed theory subverts or deflects the emergent fictional world" (213).

Part II of the volume, "Cultural Translation", is also divided into two sections: 'Lawrence and Translation' and 'Translating

Lawrence'. It deals with translation not only as the rendering of texts from one language into another, but also as cultural mediation and transcodification through the adaptation of novels into films. Jane Costin opens the first section with her 'Found in Translation: Lawrence's Fascination with Verga's "Red-Headed Brat"', which analyses Lawrence's 1928 translation of Giovanni Verga's short story 'Rosso Malpelo'. She compares this with other translations, including Alma Strettell's 1893 version, which is the earliest translation of this story into English. This reveals changing attitudes to translation and the benefits of Strettell's and Lawrence's attempts at cultural translation, leading to a call for a reassessment of Verga's skills in the English-speaking world and for the recognition of the need for fresh translations.

Describing Lawrence as a "cultural mediator between English readers and the Italian culture" (265), Simonetta de Filippis's essay, 'D. H. Lawrence and Cultural Mediation', expands on some of the topics touched on in Costin's essay and shows how some of Lawrence's travel writing, inspired by his travels in Italy, fed into his translations of Italian dialect. In the next essay, "'Translation is no Equation": D. H. Lawrence and the Art of the Original', Judith Ruderman underlines that translating is "living material" and not a simple equation. Looking in particular at Lawrence's use of foreign words in his writings, Ruderman focuses on "what he believed would be lost in translation, or gained by non-translation" (293). A different sort of translation is introduced by Jill Franks in '*Lady Chatterley* Films as Cultural Translation', which contrasts the film adaptation of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* by the French film director Pascale Ferrand with Ken Russell's earlier adaptation of the same novel.

The volume concludes with Stefania Michelucci's essay, 'Translating Lawrence: A Personal Experience with an Elusive Fox', where she discusses the translational issues which occurred during her personal experience of translating Lawrence's *The Fox* into Italian. She compares her work with the translations made by Carlo Linati in 1929, and Flavia Sortino in 1991, which are characterised by the Italian spoken in their respective periods. She highlights that

“literary works belong to their time”, whereas, “Translations, on the contrary, *must* be written in the language of the present” which leads to “an inevitable obsolescence” (339). Thus, Michelucci is in agreement with Costin in maintaining that fresh translations should always be encouraged and welcomed. Furthermore, one important issue Michelucci raises regarding translation is one of gender, a feature of the Italian language which is often irrelevant in English. She gives many examples from the story, but it is the word “fox” that gives her the most trouble in translation because, in Italian, this word is gendered as feminine. However, in Lawrence’s story, the fox is regarded as masculine and symbolises the masculine attributes and desires of the male character Henry. This case provides a glaring example of one of the significant problems of translation.

This volume’s exploration of critical perspectives and cultural translation shows how Lawrence studies are developing in the twenty-first century and make it a book worth having on one’s desk.

**Isabelle Brasme, Jean-Michel Ganteau and Christine Reynier, eds, *The Humble in 19th- to 21st-Century British Literature and Arts*.**

**Montpellier: Presses Universitaires de la Méditerranée, 2017.**

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*Reviewed by Andrew Keese*

In her well-known article, ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak postulated that the subaltern cannot. The main thrust behind her premise was a powerful argument about how the status of the Other can be limited, in an extreme way, because of social status. Even so, the editors of *The Humble in 19th- to 21st-Century British Literature and Arts* have shown how authors have the special power to enlighten, which can bring in the voices of the Other. While not obvious as a term to inform literary analysis, in this book, the editors explore the full range of meanings behind the word

humble. It can refer to a person's station, economic class, or even a virtue, especially through "its related terms, 'humility' and 'humiliation'" (13). The introduction, which orientates and familiarises scholars with the collection's approach states:

Many of the works studied here develop an art of humility that is far from the humility the believer cultivates in his vertical relation to the divine. It is not a self-sacrificing or self-abnegating feeling, but one that makes the acknowledgement of the other and of the world possible. Through a specific narrator, a singular use of voice and in many other ways, writers and artists stage and develop a relation to the other, make room for the other or let the other speak. (18)

This is a powerful assertion which does not attempt to absolve authors or artists of the practical limitations of perspective that Spivak considers. However, the art of humility strikes at one of the common claims about the power of authors: the ability to empathise.

Brasme, Ganteau and Reynier's book is split up into six sections: 'Humble Art Forms', 'Aestheticizing Religious Humility', 'Gendering the Humble', 'Precariousness', 'Self-Effacement', and 'The British Humble Abroad'. Some of the modernist authors and their works covered in the wide-reaching study include D. H. Lawrence's *Aaron's Rod*, Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room*, Leonard Woolf's *The Village in the Jungle*, Christopher Isherwood's *Goodbye to Berlin* and E. M. Forster's *Where Angels Fear to Tread*; complementing an earlier work by the same press, *Ethics of Alterity, Confrontation, and Responsibility in 19th- to 21st-Century British Literature* (2013). The editors state that *The Humble* "reads as an invitation to crisscross disciplines, reveal the depth of literature, show its philosophical relevance, its ethical and political dimension and its connection to life" (20). This indicates that considerations of the humble allow for an understanding of the world that is not necessarily a reflection of the powerful and, for that, it can be a valuable tool for literary scholars and scholars of other disciplines.

Of the many interesting essays in this collection, the article that will be of most interest to readers of this journal is Shirley Bricout's 'The Humble Touch of the Good Samaritan in D. H. Lawrence's *Aaron's Rod*', which reveals Lawrence's appropriation of the biblical story of the Good Samaritan for his novel. Bricout, who is the author of *Politics and the Bible in D. H. Lawrence's Leadership Novels*, mentions that she bases much of her criticism on Paul Ricœur's 'Biblical Hermeneutics' (1975), which shows "the pattern of orientation, disorientation and reorientation" behind the narrative structure of the parable which Lawrence parallels (78). Bricout's article focuses around the care that Lilly, the Good Samaritan, provides for Aaron in the novel. While her essay shows how Lawrence makes use of this biblical pattern and provides a useful way to read the novel, Bricout makes a couple of references to an earlier article about Lawrence's *Mr Noon*, which appeared in *Ethics of Alterity*, which do not add to her criticism of *Aaron's Rod*.

However, what Bricout does well is connect *Aaron's Rod* to the biblical parable of the Good Samaritan, following Ricœur's points about orientation, disorientation and reorientation as the framework for her article. In the first section about orientation, Bricout points out that "Once Aaron becomes estranged from the ordinary and sets out on this adventurous quest, he stands as the needy character that relies on the philanthropy, and even on the care, of members of higher social classes" (81). It is Aaron's needs that make him an inviting focus for the humble.

In the disorientation section, Bricout reveals how Lawrence complicates Lilly's character by showing him having doubts about caring for Aaron. She writes, "Thus, the modernist novel, just like Aaron's body, becomes an ethical space where, thanks to multiple voices, questions and doubts are formulated to trigger the same debates in the reader's mind" (84). This not only echoes what the editors state that the humble is capable of, but it shows the relevance of Lawrence's novel to modernist studies at large. Bricout states:

the humble as a category is the aesthetic means by which the author can induce his reader to probe various trends of thought; thus, it is turned into an aesthetic foil. The very presence of Aaron—both the humble character and the Everyman character—in wealthier homes triggers conversations about care and philanthropy, and about the destitute. (85)

This attempt to relate these complexities also mirrors what many modernist authors attempt to demonstrate about life in their works.

In the reorientation section, Bricout shows how Lilly makes his care of Aaron more about himself. She states, “The tensions fostered by his ambivalence expose the complexity of the Golden Rule while commitment is set on par with sacrifice” (86). Showing how good deeds are not necessarily selfless acts but can be selfish is quite astute on Bricout’s part and certainly makes the so-called humble an intriguing course of inquiry. She notes that “the category of the humble draws the attention of the reader to the complexity of human relationships” (85). For me, this is the ultimate value of the humble in literary criticism and why this collection of articles makes a worthwhile contribution.