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## REVIEWS

**Judith Ruderman, *Race and Identity in D. H. Lawrence: Indians, Gypsies, and Jews*.  
New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.  
Pp. xii + 292. \$90 (hardcover). ISBN 978 1 1373 9882 6**

*Reviewed by Keith Cushman*

Judith Ruderman explores the complicated, important and somewhat perilous topic of Lawrence's attitude toward the "racial other" in *Race and Identity in D. H. Lawrence: Indians, Gypsies, and Jews*. She declares early on that her "main subject" is the "formation of personal and national identities by reference to the other" (12). The definition of English identity is at play in Lawrence's responses to the "others" in question: Indians, Gypsies and Jews. Lawrence's own identity as defined against those others is even closer to the centre of this book. *Race and Identity in D. H. Lawrence*, expertly informed "by perspectives from history and cultural studies" (3), is also notable for its remarkably thorough, well-integrated research and its shrewd, insightful literary analysis. This clear-eyed, fascinating book is a major contribution to Lawrence studies.

After an introductory chapter titled 'D. H. Lawrence and the Racial Other', three chapters examine Lawrence's treatment of the Jews. 'Lawrence and the "Jewish Problem"' begins with a brief account of historical English anti-Semitism, commencing with the expulsion of the Jews in 1290. This chapter features analyses of Lawrence's "most fully-fleshed Jewish characters" (16): Kangaroo (in the novel notable for "the full force of [Lawrence's] animus against the Jews in their connection with money" [24]) and Mrs Eastwood, the "little Jewess" in *The Virgin and the Gipsy* (16). "'An Englishman at Heart'?" places Ruderman's discussion of

Lawrence, the Jews and the national identity debates “in the context of the major events of his time and place” (16), including World War I and the mass immigration of Eastern European Jews to England. In this chapter Ruderman considers the various “markers of Englishness”, which “included ruralism, whiteness, Christianity, masculinity, and the proper enunciation of the English language – none of which was associated with the Jew” (16). She points out that although he was “rootless and restless” (68), Lawrence emphatically saw himself as “English in the teeth of all the world” (69). At the same time his “personal history bears some resemblance to the history of the Jewish people” (68). ““Doing a Zion Stunt”” begins with Lawrence’s response to the Zionist movement and the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine and then intriguingly argues for his creation of alternative “Zioniads” in *Studies in Classic American Literature*, *Quetzalcoatl* and *The Boy in the Bush*.

Ruderman next devotes single chapters to Lawrence’s treatment of Indians and Gypsies. She discusses Lawrence as an “amateur ethnographer” in his essays on the American Southwest, arguing that he is like contemporary ethnographers in foregrounding “the interpretive, indeed inventive, nature of ethnography” (103–4). Her discussion of Lawrence’s versions of the Indian captivity narrative interestingly includes *The Plumed Serpent* as well as ‘The Woman Who Rode Away’. ‘Lawrence’s Caravan of Gypsy Identities’ focuses on several Gypsy tropes: kidnapping, ruralism, Gypsies as “bohemians” and Gypsy passion. ‘Hadrian’ (better-known as ‘You Touched Me’), *The Ladybird* and, of course, *The Virgin and the Gipsy* figure significantly in this chapter.

The book concludes with fascinating chapters that analyse three other aspects of culture and identity in Lawrence’s writings: ‘Clothing’, attitudes toward ‘Cleanliness and Fitness’ and ‘Purity, Hybridity, and the Concept of Race’. I will concentrate on ‘(Ad)ressing Identity: Clothing as Artifice and Authenticity’, which develops a significant topic that somehow has elicited almost no previous commentary. The chapter begins with the enjoyable

biographical information that, as children, Lawrence and his siblings invited friends over to play dress-up and that in later years the multi-talented Lawrence “enjoyed dressing his wife” and was also “known to tailor Frieda’s coat, decorate her hat, and perhaps even sew her calico bloomers” (150). Achsah Brewster remembered that in Ceylon Lawrence would bring home colourful bits of material from the bazaars that they would “fashion ... into garments” (150). Lawrence read Thomas Carlyle’s *Sartor Resartus* [*The Tailor Re-Tailored*] with Jessie Chambers and, like that book’s protagonist, developed his own “philosophy of clothes” (150).

That “philosophy” is based on his awareness that people choose the clothes they wear as a way of negotiating identity. Ruderman shows how this notion plays out in such works as *Sons and Lovers*, *Women in Love* and *The Virgin and the Gipsy*. She shrewdly observes that Lawrence presents Juliet’s nakedness in ‘Sun’ as a kind of clothing. The chapter aptly concludes with a discussion of the red trousers in Mellors’s letter at the end of *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* (and in the late newspaper piece titled ‘Red Trousers’). Ruderman was wise not to subtitle her book: ‘Indians, Gypsies, Jews, Clothing, Hygiene, Purity, and Hybridity’. Nevertheless, Chapters 7, 8 and 9 fit nicely and instructively into the book.

Ruderman has remarkable command of Lawrence’s fiction, expository prose and letters. Her extensive quotation from the letters – which demonstrate his attitudes “most revealingly, because most personally” (23) – makes for lively, though often uncomfortable, reading. Her critical analysis of the fiction is fresh and illuminating. She seems to have read and thought about every piece of criticism that bears on the major themes of her book. When she quotes a critic with whom she disagrees, she expresses her disagreement tactfully and respectfully. The endnotes are an excellent indication of the research that went into creating this book. The nine chapters plus a brief appendix add up to only 207 pages, but the 629 notes (who’s counting?!) that follow (about half of them containing additional information) fill 53 small-type pages.

I hasten to add that the notes are informative rather than pedantic. Clearly, Ruderman did not cut any corners. In the bargain she writes with verve, wit and clarity. *Race and Identity in D. H. Lawrence* is as readable as it is thought-provoking.

The satisfyingly dactylic rhythm of Ruderman's subtitle – 'Indians, Gypsies, and Jews' – can be construed as somewhat misleading. Although the Indians and the Gypsies come first and second in the subtitle, Ruderman's comprehensive, full-scale account of Lawrence's attitude toward the Jews is the main takeaway of this book, at least for me. The Jews occupy much more space in the book than the Indians and Gypsies. Jews (and anti-Semitism) were part of Lawrence's actual life and the culture he grew up in; Indians and Gypsies resided more in the realm of an "idea", even when he was living in the American Southwest. Despite his anti-Semitism, Lawrence famously had Jewish friends (notably S. S. Kotliansky, Mark Gertler and David Eder) and he famously had Jewish publishers (about whom he uttered anti-Semitic slurs). Lawrence scholars have had to become inured to the anti-Semitism in Lawrence's writings and letters. Only Judith Ruderman knew that there was so much! The remainder of this review will focus on Lawrence and the Jews.

To Ruderman's credit, *Race and Identity in D. H. Lawrence* is not an attempt to apologise for Lawrence's anti-Semitism. She refuses to let him off the hook with the argument that he was just-a-product-of-his-time. Indeed she vigorously rejects that familiar whitewashing manoeuvre. She quotes Anthony Julius's rejection of this argument as it has been used on behalf of T. S. Eliot: "Writing an anti-Semitic [work] does not reflect the anti-Semitism of the times; it enlarges it, adding to the sum of its instances" (41). Rather than attempting to explain anything away, Ruderman sharply acknowledges that "Lawrence clearly considered the Jews a 'problem', and his writings reveal not only his particular issues and society's as well but also the human tendency to ... stereotype, to blame" (41).

But also to Ruderman's credit, *Race and Identity in D. H. Lawrence* is not the latest angry *J'accuse!* attack on Lawrence for his bias against Jews. Although she does not shy away from quoting Lawrence's anti-Semitic remarks at their most cringeworthy, she is not assembling an indictment. Perhaps Lawrence's "honesty on the subject" of Jews, Indians and Gypsies, "even if – even when – it offends, can inform and enliven our contemporary discussions of race and ethnicity" (20). Ruderman's unflinching honesty matches Lawrence's.

To an extent Ruderman aims to present a nuanced middle way. She argues that "Lawrence was conflicted about Jews; he had sympathy, even respect" at the same time he felt "antipathy for what he deemed ineluctable aspects of Jewishness" (42). She often provides some context when Lawrence seems to be representing or articulating those "ineluctable aspects". A character like Mrs Eastwood, the "little Jewess", reveals Lawrence's ambivalence, for she is a "woman whose positive flouting of convention" (a good thing) is "countervailed by her cosmopolitanism and materialism" (Jewish things) (60–1). And, as I noted above, Ruderman argues with some persuasiveness that Lawrence the outsider, the rootless wanderer, the scorned "person of the book", partly identified with the Jews.

Nevertheless, because Ruderman quotes Lawrence's offensive remarks so continuously, her nuanced reading of Lawrence's attitudes toward the Jews is more than offset by the shock of encountering so *many* unpleasant remarks. Item: a letter to Mabel Dodge Luhan in which he refers to a dude ranch for "Jews and Jew-gaws" (40). Item: a remark about advertising in which he refers to "Jewjew's hats" (40). Item: a *Birds, Beasts and Flowers* poem that alludes to America's "dark, unfathomed will, that is not unJewish" (40). Item: Mrs Eastwood, "a very small woman, with a rather large nose" (62). Item: "Mr Nosey Hebrew", a generic money-grubbing figure in the Benjamin Franklin essay (63). Item: an anthology of American writing for 1927–8 that is "pretty awful – and of course it's a *Jewish* selection" (40). Item: a letter to Frederick Carter in

which he complains that “the more one gets used to [St. John] the more Jewish he smells” and also refers to the “special Jewish-Jewy symbolism and *aim* of apocalypse” (36). St. John was one of the “moral Jew-boys” (36). Lawrence’s anti-Semitism was complicated, but it was also deeply ingrained.

*Race and Identity in D. H. Lawrence* is an exemplary, impressive – and provocative – work of scholarship. It boldly asks difficult, unsettling questions that Lawrence scholars almost uniformly choose not to ask. The book opens the way for further discussion at the same time it stands as a major scholarly achievement. It belongs on the bookshelf of every serious D. H. Lawrence scholar.

For the record: Harry T. Moore was not “Lawrence’s first biographer” (41). The British Empire was not “slipping away” (56) at the time Anton Skrebensky was courting Ursula Brangwen. It actually became larger after World War I with the addition of former German colonies and former Ottoman territory. Brewster Ghiselin was a poet and academic, not a painter (240).

**Matthew J. Kochis and Heather L. Lusty, eds. *Modernists at Odds: Reconsidering Joyce and Lawrence*.**

**Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2015.**

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*Reviewed by Michael Bell*

The combined thrust of this volume of new essays on Joyce and Lawrence is to argue the commonality of themes and concerns between these two authors, who are commonly perceived as polar opposites with irreconcilable discipleships. I suspect that this common perception is itself now partly mythic: a view sustained by being alluded to, rather than espoused, precisely in order to deny it. In my experience at least, declared appreciation of both authors has