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**Lee M. Jenkins, *The American Lawrence*.**
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***Reviewed by Joseph R. Shafer***

In the 22nd Annual Presidential Lecture at Dartmouth College, Donald Pease found a "crisis of valuation" within the "crisis of the humanities" – and he found such crises to be revitalising precursors for the field's humanistic work. Critiquing August Wilson's play *King Hedley II* (1999), Pease witnesses "the Lazarus complex" from a figure outside the current social order who, as a result, proffers criticism of that existing social order which must be creatively re-imagined.[1] Such a complex also resonates with the re-imagining of D. H. Lawrence within American Studies, as the unaccountability of Lawrence's work within American Studies provokes a regenerative spirit for criticism.

Lawrence was indeed haunted by the American spirit, at least initially. As early as 1913, in the Italian essays he later revised for *Twilight in Italy* (1916), Lawrence increasingly foresaw pending doom in America's imperialistic and mechanised ideals, yet he continued to find exceptional solace in reading its literature. His readings of Walt Whitman were formative, yet Lawrence's *Studies in Classic American Literature* (1923) and dedicatory 'Epilogue' in *Fantasia of the Unconscious* (1921) further testify to his love-hate relationship with America. In the 'Introduction' for Edward Dahlberg's *Bottom Dogs* (1929), Lawrence wrote: "It is not till you live in America, and go a little under the surface, that you begin to see how terrible and brutal is the mass of failure that nourishes the roots of the gigantic tree of dollars" (*IR* 119). However, like America's Homeric "pioneer literature", Dahlberg's novel "reveals a condition that not many of us have reached, but towards which the trend of consciousness is taking us, all of us, especially the young. It is, let us hope, a *ne plus ultra*" (*IR* 124). But despite Lawrence's reliance upon America as a historical resource, or

cultural topos, a home and a literary audience, American Studies has branded Lawrence's vision as suspect: thus his theories remained censored in the USA long after his texts became legally uncensored. In recent decades, criticism on Lawrence has gone indirectly through the side-door of American Studies without directly confronting the field's exhausted contestation with Lawrence. For such reasons, Lee Jenkins's recent book, *The American Lawrence*, provides a much-needed historicisation of Lawrence within American Studies, while also producing a handbook for studying an "Americano Lawrence".

Jenkins's book comprises three chapters, which scrupulously contextualise Lawrence's *Studies in Classic American Literature*, his modern American "receptions" and coteries, and his literalised communitas in New Mexico. The chapters are also sandwiched by two hearty provisions: a well developed 'Introduction' on the methodical use of Lawrence throughout American Studies and a tactful 'Conclusion' on Lawrence's 'Wilful Women' in New Mexico, as captured by Georgia O'Keeffe.

*The American Lawrence* commences by reiterating John Muthyala's question from *Reworlding America* – "Can non-Americans write American literature?" – [2] and Jenkins's two-sentence introductory paragraph succinctly replies: "I read D. H. Lawrence as a non-American who, in one period of his career at least, wrote American literature" (1). Jenkins walks us through how "The Lawrence who wrote American literature has been occluded by the Lawrence who wrote *about* it" (2) and how the cold reception of Lawrence's *Studies* today is "in inverse ratio" to how the Cold War critics of America's myth and symbol school utilised it (3) – Leslie Fielder, Henry Nash Smith and others whose American exceptionalism had them labeled as "soldier-critics" by Pease and today's Americanists, as Jenkins recalls, and rightly so. But such divisions have rendered Lawrence symbolic of internal controversy, a "whipping boy for the purported crimes and misdemeanors of the myth and symbolists" (12).

From its inception *Studies in Classic American Literature* was resistant towards American critics, as even the title's reference to a "*Classic*" American literature "cocks a snook at the establishment" of America's New Humanism, which still regarded American literature as "a subset of English literature" (27). Jenkins does not mention Winfried Fluck, who in 1996 and 2003 did use Lawrence's *Studies* to illustrate resistance towards both US liberalism and cultural radicalism,[3] and with the ensuing "transnational turn" in American Studies, Jenkins sees Lawrence again on the horizon. As Pease stated in *Re-mapping the Transnational Turn* (2011), transnationalism "has effected the most significant reimagining of the field of American studies since its reception" (1), and Jenkins duly locates Lawrence's American "spirit of place" as "anathema to the national spirit", for Lawrence was "far from being 'conditioned to an alien nationalism' in America", argues Jenkins, since "Lawrence was himself the alien" (4).

Jenkins has edited numerous publications on Modernism – including *Locations of Literary Modernism*, *The Cambridge Companion to Modernist Poetry* and, most recently, *A History of Modernist Poetry* – which no doubt inform her positioning of Lawrence within modern American poetry.[4] An initial step across the pond for Lawrence, records Jenkins, was the "creative nexus between Lawrence and the Stieglitz circle", which seems to have transplanted Lawrence straight into the New York city network of Alfred Stieglitz, a man Hans Ritcher called the "'nucleus' of the avant-garde in America" (47). In accounting for Lawrence's rapidly extending receptions, from American poets to socialites alike, Jenkins's narrative is meticulously composed, while she also highlights Lawrence's preliminary intentions to write for Americans. In 1921, he told Amy Lowell, "I always write really towards America" (10), and Jenkins underlines this aim throughout her studies of Lawrence's appropriations of Whitman, his relationship with H. D., and his resonance with Williams's *Spring and All* or Stevens's *Harmonium*, both published in 1923 alongside Lawrence's *Studies* and *Birds, Beasts and Flowers*, which captured

the ravenous American spirit in its flora and fauna. Lawrence's writing and the assembled works of New Mexico, like *The Plumed Serpent* and *Birds, Beasts and Flowers*, would become elemental for America's third-generation of poets, who are not explored in Jenkins's book, however, for her focus in *The American Lawrence* is on Lawrence's contemporaries, specifically in New Mexico during the composition of *St. Mawr*, 'The Princess' and 'The Woman Who Rode Away'. Jenkins's narrowed scope here, with these selected texts and their critical receptions, enables her work to be a likely harbinger for future American studies in related areas.

For example, Lawrence's story 'The Woman Who Rode Away' became a "doctrine of male supremacy" in Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* (1970), but Jenkins runs through its contextual significance to tease out the story's "critique, not of female agency, but of U.S.-American neo-imperialism" (99). Moreover, the story seems to produce "a satire on, not an instance of, the appropriation of the American Indian as a 'savage stunt' for an Anglo audience" (100). So, from the outset, Jenkins's re-evaluation of Lawrence's New Mexico writing appears as her chosen site to combat various camps of criticism that had pushed Lawrence back into the closet. Still able to acknowledge the snares that Lawrence's texts leave for those taking him at his word, Jenkins is equipped to revisit Lawrence's Kiowa ranch and to explore the communal anarchism and feminised collaboration behind some of his most American literature. In her 'Conclusion', Jenkins introduces Dorothy Brett's painting, *Lawrence's Three Fates*, and Georgia O'Keeffe's *The Lawrence Tree* to further depict the women co-authoring Lawrence's work; women like Mabel Dodge Luhan, Brett herself, Catherine Carswell and Frieda Lawrence. Jenkins's engagement with criticism, on several hot issues, seems to spark debates rather than end them, which makes the work all the more inviting and particularly useful.

The sustained attentiveness to past criticism in *The American Lawrence*, and its investment in situating Lawrence within the American literati, can limit the extent to which theoretical and

literary arguments can be developed. For instance, what exactly constitutes an American prose, poetry, literature, identity, citizen or intent? Lawrence did often write in an American tongue, for example, but often in a cheeky manner. Yet, for the same reasons that *The American Lawrence* cannot close the book on all the questions it raises, it has boldly put its foot in the door, and entices those interested in American Studies, American literature and Lawrence in general. .

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[1] Donald Pease, 'August Wilson: The Work of the Humanities after Humanism', Dartmouth College's Annual Presidential Lecture, 18 February, 2009.

[2] John Muthyala, *Reworlding America: Myth, History, and Narrative* (Athens, OH: Ohio UP, 2006), xiii.

[3] Winfried Fluck. *Theories of American Culture, Theories of American Studies* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 2003), 66–9. Winifred Fluck, 'Literature, Liberalism, and the Current Cultural Radicalism', in *Why Literature Matters: Theories and Functions of Literature* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1996), 222.

[4] Alex Davis and Lee M. Jenkins, eds, *Locations of Literary Modernism: Region and Nation in British and American Modernist Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011), Alex Davis and Lee M. Jenkins, eds, *The Cambridge Companion to Modernist Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007) and Alex Davis and Lee M. Jenkins, eds, *A History of Modernist Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2015).

**John Beer, *D. H. Lawrence: Nature, Narrative, Art, Identity*.**
**Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.**
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***Reviewed by Terry Gifford***

John Beer cites Roger Ebbatson's *Lawrence and the Nature Tradition* (1980) as contextualising Lawrence's writing within a nature tradition much influenced by Richard Jefferies. Beer suggests that a narrative challenge followed from Lawrence's