

REVIEWS

**Catherine Brown and Susan Reid, eds. *The Edinburgh Companion to D. H. Lawrence and the Arts*.
Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020.
Pp 635. £150 (ebook). ISBN 978 1 4744 5662 3**

Reviewed by Neil Roberts

A book of 635 pages (463 in hardcover) on such a specific topic as D. H. Lawrence and the arts requires some justification. There is certainly much to be said about the importance of painting, sculpture, music, dance etc. in Lawrence's work – but this much? In fact, the title conveys a more limited scope than the book actually covers. There are indeed chapters on these specific topics, but many of the essays have a larger ambition and, at its best, especially in the opening section on 'Aesthetics', the book has a coherence unusual in edited collections.

Many of the essays explicitly or implicitly ask the question, what kind of writer was Lawrence? He was among other things, as Catherine Brown explores in her concluding chapter, an 'Icon' – represented and sometimes self-represented, complementarily or contradictorily, as Christ and Pan. An icon invites iconoclasm, of which there has been plenty since the 1970s. In all recent books about Lawrence there is necessarily an element of recuperation – Brown for example usefully suggests, borrowing the terminology of Charles Peirce, that Lawrence is better considered not as an icon but as an index, "which encourages us to look elsewhere" rather than at himself (592; e-reader page numbers).

Brown quotes Emile Delavenay's remark in 1985 that "Even though the prophet, the guru, is already dated, the poet, the novelist, the short story writer, transcends the boundaries of his period" (591). Many admirers, including the present reviewer, have taken

refuge in this line of defence, but it is evasive. Lawrence of course was an artist, but also a writer in whose work “art”, at least as defined in opposition to something else (most obviously “life”), is constantly interrogated.

D. H. Lawrence and the Arts opens with an outstanding essay by Michael Bell, ‘The Idea of the Aesthetic’, which lays bare this issue: “The larger history of the aesthetic shows an inveterate tendency to idealising whereby it is constantly reified as a putative value in itself rather than a crucial means of engaging life values” (46). Lawrence’s uneasy position in the modernist canon can be understood in terms of his rejection of this tendency, and the crucially different character of “impersonality” in his work. Whereas Eliot and Joyce “emphasise the impersonality of the artist vis-à-vis the artistic material ... Lawrence was concerned with impersonality as a quality of feeling as such” (37).

Bell’s argument that “Lawrence’s art arises from an exploratory struggle which is an integral part of its meaning” (31) is taken up in various and thought-provoking ways by other contributors. Susan Reid addresses the book’s theme in the broadest sense by considering Lawrence’s *oeuvre* in relation to *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the conflicts within which “illuminate our understanding of Lawrence’s oeuvre as a struggle between totalising and non-totalising aesthetics” (52). Focusing on *The Plumed Serpent* as Lawrence’s most “operatic” work, Reid sees Ramón as “the totalising Wagner figure” challenged by Kate representing “a dissonance, resisting totalisation”. Vincent Sherry portrays Lawrence in a historical context, epitomising the tension between two strands of Romanticism, seen in Shelley and replicated in *The Rainbow*: the turn from external political revolution to internal liberation.

Sherry sees *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* taken together as “one of the profoundest accounts we have of the import of [the First World] war in the deep time of European cultural, political and literary history” (87). This determination not to lose sight of the historicity of the aesthetic is borne out in other contributions. In his chapter on ‘Queer Aesthetics’ Hugh Stevens notes the contrast

between the “innocence” of the homoeroticism in the ‘Poem of Friendship’ chapter of *The White Peacock* (1911) and the self-consciousness of ‘Shame’ in *The Rainbow* (1915), which he attributes to Lawrence becoming aware of a “modern regime of homosexual and heterosexual identities” (184), which was also an influence on E. M. Forster’s *Maurice*. David Trotter’s chapter on ‘Technology’ focuses on Lawrence’s engagement with electromagnetism which, unlike other forces of nature, was technologised and industrialised almost as soon as it was discovered – Trotter sees Lawrence as attempting to redefine as “a force of nature what had already become a force of culture” (256). The imbrication of the aesthetic in history is epitomised in Andrew Harrison’s chapter on ‘Historiography and Life Writing’, ranging from *Movements in European History* to Lawrence’s apparently casual but “carefully crafted” late autobiographical essays and the ‘Introduction to *Memoirs of the Foreign Legion*’: Lawrence’s “recognition of the fundamental strangeness of the past” in *Movements* is paralleled with the stress on “the strangeness of experience and the provisional nature of our attempts to comprehend it” in the Introduction to *Memoirs* (169, 176).

The notion of “exploratory struggle” is developed by Peter Childs in his chapter on ‘National and Racial Aesthetics’ with reference to Lawrence’s belief in the insuperability of racial differences, in conflict with a “transcendent aesthetics beyond race and nation” (104). Stefania Michelucci develops the contrast between Lawrence and other modernists with reference to translation: whereas in Eliot, Pound, Joyce and Wyndham Lewis use of foreign languages issues from a would-be transcendent cosmopolitanism, in Lawrence it reflects “his need for a closer contact with and a deeper understanding of the peoples and cultures he encountered” (122). As Paul Eggert demonstrates in his chapter on ‘Revising and Rewriting’, the “exploratory struggle” was unending. As anyone who has studied Lawrence’s revisions knows, “His writings were always in a process of becoming, or of only gradual abandonment” (320). This chimes with Julianne

Newmark's persuasive argument in 'Traditional Aesthetics' that Lawrence's engagement with what might broadly be called "folk" culture, from the spinning woman in Gargnano to the Hopi Snake Dance, represents a commitment to art as "a process, rather than a finished material product or performance that connotes completion" (114).

It is well known to Lawrence's readers that, while he regarded traditional popular culture with something approaching reverence, his attitude to contemporary popular culture was overwhelmingly negative. Gemma Moss rehearses his critique of the mechanical and the passive in the production and consumption of cinema in particular and she enlists Adorno as an ally in the view that "popular culture plays a crucial role in robbing people of their capacities for critical thinking and their desire for change" (227). However, another reference to Adorno raises a more challenging topic: his assertion that the "high" cultural industry gives people a sense of being part of an "elite group" (237). This argument is taken up more extensively by Jeff Wallace in his chapter on 'Practitioner Criticism: Painting'. Wallace grounds his discussion of Lawrence's practice of and writing about painting in his social formation, starting with the fact that painting was less accessible than writing to the working class and that his rapid rise into a more cosmopolitan world gave him "the right to a discourse on painting". Lawrence understood "the social formations of exclusivity that made painterly modernism unreadable and a source of moral suspicion" (421). As this suggests, the aesthetic cannot be considered in isolation from the political, an issue that Howard J. Booth addresses directly in his chapter on 'Politics and Art'. Booth registers the turn in recent Lawrence studies away from the notion that he had "a consistent position and message, delivered using conventional literary forms and writing styles" and sees him as a writer who adopted "open forms and styles that create the conditions ... for an emergent utopian trajectory" (201).

The second part is titled 'Aesthetic Forms' and includes chapters that correspond more directly to what one might immediately

expect from a book with this title, on the novel, poetry, performance, drama, music, dance, painting, sculpture, and architecture, as well as less predictable chapters on book design and clothing and jewellery. Jonathan Long's chapter on book design is particularly informative, pointing out the inconsistency of Lawrence's attitude to the book as a physical object and also situating the designs of his books (and his participation in this) within the history of book design. Lawrence's patronage of young artists such as Jan Juta for *Sea and Sardinia* and Knud Merrild for *The Captain's Doll* is especially notable.

Susan Reid co-opts Adorno again in her chapter on music, drawing on three of his types of listener – the “good listener” who is expert, the “emotional listener” for whom it is a “source of irrationality” and the “culture consumer” and “resentment listener” for whom the cultural capital of music matters (364–6). Lawrence corresponds to the first two, while the reference to the latter pair recalls the references to cultural capital in Moss's and Wallace's essays. Reid cites Lawrence's enthusiasm for the “wild, entirely unaesthetic music” of the Italian bagpipe players in *The Lost Girl*, bringing us back again to his challenge to the idea of the aesthetic. Yet another contributor who brings Adorno productively to bear on Lawrence is Susan Jones in her chapter on ‘Dance’. Jones analyses his writings about Native American ceremonial dance largely in terms of his possibly second-hand knowledge of the Ballets Russes. This seems to me questionable not only because Lawrence was deeply familiar with the former and only slightly if at all with the latter, but also because of his well-known insistence, in ‘Indians and Entertainment’, that in the Pueblo dances “There is no spectacle, no spectator” (*MM* 63). However, the comparison does allow her to make a thought-provoking parallel between Adorno's theorisation of “the Primitivist turn in Stravinsky's music, where ‘subjectivity takes on the character of sacrifice, but ... the music identifies not with the victim but with the annihilating authority’”, and ‘The Woman Who Rode Away’ (405).

Elsewhere in this section Jane Costin helpfully contextualises Lawrence's writing about sculpture (which she extends to include Will Brangwen's wood-carving), with reference to the revival of classical direct carving and his connections with Eric Gill, Henri Gaudier-Brzeska and Jacob Epstein; and Loerke's ideas about the integration of sculpture and architecture with the Deutscher Werkbund movement which was influential on the development of the Bauhaus. Judith Ruderman, in her chapter on 'Clothing and Jewellery' echoes Angela Carter's declaration that Lawrence's interest in stockings betrays "gender identity confusion" (500) but also argues that "Fashion for Lawrence is best adopted as a hallmark of transformation and revitalisation: not for the sake of impressing others, but, rather, for expressing the self" (509).

There are separate chapters on 'Performance' and 'Drama and the Dramatic', by John Worthen and Jeremy Tambling respectively. Worthen comments both on the contradiction between the negativity of Lawrence's comments on "performance" and his love of mimicry, charades and performing his own writing, and on the value he attached to the non-performative character of Native American dance. Tambling discusses Lawrence's plays primarily as literary texts, in the context of the influence of the myth and ritual school of anthropology, especially Gilbert Murray's *Hamlet and Orestes*, and Leavis's claims about the dramatic character of the novels. These approaches are both productive, and it would have been good to see a dialogue between them.

The third and final section is titled 'Lawrence in Others' Art'. As well as the chapter on 'Lawrence as Icon' that I discussed at the start of my review, this section includes Lee M. Jenkins on 'Lawrence in Biofiction', Bethan Jones on 'Lawrence Set to Music' and Louis K. Griefff on 'Lawrence and Twenty-First Century Film'. Jones's chapter is a wide-ranging and expert analysis of settings of individual poems and sequences, musical accompaniments to prose (notably Britten's for a radio adaptation of 'The Rocking Horse Winner') and an operatic adaptation of this story. In a number of cases these settings are available online and the opportunity to

listen to them beside Jones's analysis is one of the incidental benefits of this book. An obvious question about Grieff's chapter is why he confines himself to the twenty-first century and avoids iconic adaptations such as Russell's *Women in Love*. He justifies this approach on the grounds that little has been written about more recent adaptations, that the collection as a whole focuses on "Lawrence's ongoing reception and current relevance", and perhaps most importantly that this century has "seen a new boldness in adaptations" (555). Most of the films he discusses are based on short stories, are often short themselves and have not had theatrical showings, though he devotes most attention to Pascale Ferran's well-known and comparatively faithful adaptation of the second version of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, titled *Lady Chatterley et l'homme des bois*. More interesting is Grieff's argument that no fewer than four recent adaptations of 'The Rocking Horse Winner', all updated to the present, testify to Lawrence's pertinence to the social and economic dysfunction of the past two decades.

Jenkins's chapter on biofiction covers a large range of texts from fictionalised versions of Lawrence in his lifetime, such as Rampion in Huxley's *Point Counter Point* and Logan in Gilbert Cannan's *Mendel*, to more recent works by Helen Dunmore, Anthony Pacitto and Annabel Abbs. Between, in the immediate aftermath of Lawrence's death, are *romans à clef* published after his death such as Helen Corke's *Neutral Ground* (written in 1918 but not published till 1933) and H. D.'s *Bid Me to Live*, which answer back to Lawrence's portrayal of their authors in *The Trespasser* and *Aaron's Rod*, and fictions by Osbert Sitwell, H. G. Wells and Keith Winter which are "closely related and often directly respond" to the cluster of biographies by Murry, Brett, Carswell and others that followed Lawrence's death. Jenkins suggests that whereas the biographies "peddle competing fabrications of the biographical facts ... biofiction, in translating life into art, may have the greater truth value" (525).

The book includes 38 colour plates. However, I'm unable to comment on these since Edinburgh University Press refuses to send

out hard copies for review, and my e-reader is monochrome. Any reader contemplating buying the book might take this into account, since both versions are the same price.

The *Edinburgh Companion to D. H. Lawrence and the Arts* offers a great deal of new information, fresh and original approaches, and above all a robust response to the challenge Lawrence presents about the nature of art itself.

**Frances Wilson. *Burning Man: The Ascent of D. H. Lawrence*.
London: Bloomsbury Circus, 2021.
Pp. x + 491. £25 (hardcover). ISBN 978 1 4088 9362 3**

Reviewed by Jonathan Long

Publicity for this eagerly awaited book began well in advance of its publication date, raising concerns about the unconventional approach Frances Wilson was to take. But I wanted to keep an open mind about a biography intended to revitalise Lawrence's reputation, specifically after Kate Millett's attack in *Sexual Politics* (1970). It is an attractively produced volume with an eye-catching dust jacket featuring a serpent coming out of a fire, the bright orange colour used in the design making it unmissable on a bookcase, and the lengthy praise on the back (including by Geoff Dyer) suggesting it is an unmissable read. The title refers to how St. Lawrence was martyred, alluded to by Lawrence in a letter to Ernest Collings of 24 February 1913. The main text extends to about 410 pages, with about 40 pages of notes, 15 pages of bibliography, an index plus over 30 illustrations and a couple of pages of acknowledgements. These and the note on the author listing the plaudits she has received for her previous biographies bode well. The publishers even included a note on the type used.

The main text begins with an 'Argument', preparing us for Wilson's different approach focusing on the years 1915 to 1925, structured as a triptych of three sections based on the three books of

Dante's *Divine Comedy*, 'Inferno', 'Purgatory' and 'Paradise'; her emphasis is on Lawrence's less well-known works and less well-known people in his life. Stating that, contrary to conventional wisdom (and disappointingly in view of Lawrence's opinions on the pre-eminence of the novel recorded in his essays on that genre), she does "not consider" that Lawrence's novels are his "major achievement" (2), Wilson nevertheless discusses ones published in the period.

I soon found issues with Wilson's style, the to-ing and fro-ing over the period was difficult to follow for someone familiar with Lawrence's life, let alone someone new to it. The main text begins with the *Rainbow* prosecution and the move to Cornwall in 1915. This is followed by Lawrence's birth (27), his early years and early work, before returning to Cornwall (64) then back to 1912 (75), and then forward again to Cornwall (105). As the book is intended to reignite Lawrence's reputation and new readers are its probable target audience, this is likely to be confusing.

But nothing in the 'Argument' prepared me for just how much space would be devoted to just a few players in the very involved drama of Lawrence's life. Maurice Magnus dominates pages 151 to 275, with significant reference to Norman Douglas along the way. It is instructive to note that the main text of Louise E. Wright's excellent and comprehensive biography of Maurice Magnus extends to only 139 pages. The spell that Magnus cast on Lawrence is part of a fascinating episode in Lawrence's life and tells us a lot about his personality. But is such prolixity appropriate, particularly as Wilson merely quotes or paraphrases what Lawrence wrote in *Memoir of Maurice Magnus*, rather than analyses it? There is also much on Magnus's life before he met Lawrence which contributes little if anything to our understanding of the relationship between him and Lawrence. Although these extended sections are the best-written parts of the book, there can be no justification for such lengthy episodes, however significant these people were.

The Mabel Dodge Luhan section, which monopolises pages 281 to the end of the book (Hilda Doolittle receives significant coverage

too), is an extended biography from her early years to the end of the period covered by this book, with considerable coverage from her memoirs other than *Lorenzo in Taos*, such as *Intimate Memories*. This is excessively lengthy, and it is difficult to argue that Luhan has received insufficient attention in previous biographies. The irrelevances in Wilson's text continue. What is the significance of Luhan's sexual abuse of her son, abuse of her by her father, the fact that she and her husband Tony Luhan had extended treatment for syphilis, and that "Mabel found pleasure in other women's breasts" (402), other than to spice up this overlong narrative?

Outside her remit of 1915 to 1925, Wilson also provides commentary on *The White Peacock*, *The Trespasser*, *Sons and Lovers* then *Quetzalcoatl / The Plumed Serpent* but with little reference to *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Given the fact that she has over 400 pages to work with it is difficult to understand why the latter is not covered in the way the other novels are, accepting the exclusion of *The Boy in the Bush*, Lawrence's collaboration with Mollie Skinner. A newcomer to Lawrence biography would surely be interested in Wilson's opinion of his most well-known novel. A significant number of pages of the first "triptych" of this book relate to the period before the prosecution of *The Rainbow*, which is Wilson's stated starting point, the beginning of the "the decade of superhuman energy and productivity" (1), so why is there not a similar coverage for the period after 1925 when Lawrence wrote some of his key works? It is good to see foregrounding of *Sea and Sardinia*, *Mornings in Mexico* and *Studies of Classical American Literature*, although Lawrence's poems other than the *Birds, Beasts and Flowers* collection are neglected. Given the space available, surely more (or in some cases something) could be said about Lawrence the artist, the playwright, the translator and the writer of short stories, novellas and much-admired correspondence to demonstrate the breadth of his achievement. Only a few short stories are mentioned, needless to say *The Woman Who Rode Away* and *None of That* in the context of Mabel Dodge Luhan.

Wilson's use of Dante's *Divine Comedy* accounts for a considerable amount of the structure and content of her book. The headings of 'Inferno', 'Purgatory' and 'Paradise' in her scheme cover 'England, 1915 – 1919', 'Italy, 1919 – 1922' and 'America, 1922 – 1925' respectively. Each of those three sections is divided into three parts, to create a symmetry that of course did not exist in Lawrence's life. She claims to have written the three sections as "a triptych of self-contained biographical tales which take as their subject three versions of Lawrence" (1), a simplification which suggests that Lawrence's life was self- or pre-determined. There is regular reference in the book to events in Lawrence's life happening at about Easter time; an apparent coincidence that only stacks up by ignoring all the other events. Her conviction that "Lawrence structured his life ... around Dante's great poem in the way that James Joyce shaped *Ulysses* around *The Odyssey*" (60) is simply ill-founded. Much space is given to her forced and wholly unconvincing comparisons between Dante's characters and events in his fictional work and those in Lawrence's life, which she endeavours to back up with often lengthy quotations from *Divine Comedy* and references at random intervals. For example, Magnus is said to have "carried, like Dante's doorkeeper, his keys on a chain" (205), and Brett, Frieda and Mabel Dodge Luhan are likened to the "three ... blessed women", Beatrice, St. Lucia and the Virgin Mary (411). Unfortunately, the book is saturated with such comparisons, which do not stand up to the lightest of scrutiny, let alone close scrutiny, and the messages in Dante's work sit uncomfortably with Lawrence's religious views. Excessive reference to Shelley is also a motif here; the index lists 40 references for Dante, some of them multiple pages, Shelley and his works have 35.

Wilson is to be congratulated for making no excuses for hiding Lawrence's difficult personality, but his perceived character flaws appear rather too regularly for what is a selective biography. Her simplification of Lawrence's complex and unpredictable character as "opposing personalities", "Self One" and "Self Two" (16),

referred to at regular intervals throughout the book is also unconvincing. Equally puzzling in a volume designed to focus on “episodes and experiences that earlier biographers have passed over in a paragraph” and to place them “centre stage” (2) is Wilson’s habit of digression, offering throughout the book, a significant amount of extraneous material nothing to do with Lawrence, such as the area of oak and beech copses in Hampstead Heath (7), the fact that Dick Turpin’s father was landlord of the Spaniards Inn in Hampstead (8), the potted history and connections of the Vale of Health (9), details of famous trials at Bow Street Magistrates Court (10) and commentary about Shelley’s life and works (13–14). And so it goes on throughout the book.

In her acknowledgements Wilson pays tribute to the Cambridge University Press three-volume biography, but little of the technical skills displayed there seem to have rubbed off. She relies almost entirely on readily available printed sources, giving some university collections acknowledgements, but these are the ones that provided illustrations. These are a combination of the well-known and the surprising; on one hand some of Bynner’s photos of Lawrence and on the other ‘Image of the Harpie’, printed in 1497. The bibliography is extensive reflecting the wide range of sources that she has used. However, although references are given for many quotations or statements a significant amount have no reference, or evidence of substance. This applies to important points, for example, that at Tregerthen Frieda was “convinced [Lawrence] was conducting an affair” (42), Frieda’s alleged affair with Peppino d’Allura, a dubious claim stated as fact (228), or the story told to Wilson by “the sister of a friend”, that Frieda, Mabel and Brett ate Lawrence’s ashes (410), this unfortunately coupled with a photo of the three of them together smiling and Brett’s painting of them, ‘Three Fates’.

Wilson does not appear to have followed Wright’s method, detailed in the preface to her Magnus biography, of checking and then rechecking her material – and then checking it again – as there are a number of avoidable typographical errors and slips, such as

“Millet” (2), “Adam Parks” (10 n. 7), “Possum” (119), “Aaron Sissons” (138), “Bach’s Matthew Passion” (189) and the manuscript of *Sons and Lovers* was apparently worth £50,000 not \$50,000 (452 n. 29). The letter to Ernest Collings, mentioned earlier, is also misdated.

Wilson makes numerous errors of fact. *Sexual Politics* was published in 1970 not 1969 (2 and 389), Lawrence’s cousin was not killed with a “kitchen pot” but a steel (35), the young man and woman in Maurice Greiffenhagen’s *An Idyll* are not “semi-naked”, as can be seen from the illustration on the next page (45–6), Lawrence did not only leave Zennor for a medical examination at Bodmin – he had various trips away including those to London and the Midlands (71), Captain Oates died in Antarctica not “in the Arctic wastes” (75) and in Herman Melville’s *Typee* the narrator is not “marooned on the island of Nantucket” but on Nuku Hiva (349). The ambiguous phrase, Frieda “left no record of her voice” (78), overlooks her recording of some of Lawrence’s poems, the assertion that “until recently the *Memoir of Maurice Magnus* has been hard to find” (153) is contradicted by Wilson’s own bibliography, and the publication date of Rosalind Baynes’s memoir, *Time Which Spaces Us Apart*, was 1991 not 1954 (239). Other errors include the statements Lawrence’s “pilgrimage had brought him from the parish church in Eastwood, with its fanatical pastor” (205), and that Mabel Dodge Luhan was “as famous when she knew him as Lawrence was himself” (281). Wilson’s assertion that each of Lawrence’s houses was higher above sea level than the last – “Followed horizontally on a map, Lawrence’s movements look like a mad flight ... Follow his footsteps and you see that every house Lawrence lived in, from birth to burial, was positioned at a higher spot than the last; he rose from underworld to empyrean” (61), reflected in the subtitle of the book – seems another unsuccessful attempt at finding something previous biographers have missed. Unfortunately, this is just a selection of such errors.

Wilson also makes many gushing assertions or generalisations, for example “it was in Byron Villas that Lawrence also became a Romantic outlaw” (9), “Lawrence’s friends all hated his wife” (24), Claire Tomalin’s suggestion that Lawrence passed on tuberculosis to Katherine Mansfield was an understatement and that “it is a fitting enough irony that he killed Mansfield” (108), with reference to *Women in Love* that “the only people who agree with Birkin are teenagers” (113), and that Frieda was a “fat German Christmas pudding” (136). Notwithstanding Norman Douglas’s penchant for young boys not girls, Wilson records “Douglas, Nabokov told his wife, was a ‘malicious pederast’, and as such is surely the model for *Lolita*’s Humbert Humbert” (168), that Lawrence was Moby Dick, Tony Luhan Queequeg and Mabel was Ahab (348–9). Wilson also states that “Lydia Lawrence became the Virgin of the Rockies” (351), “Buffalo is a city much like Freud’s Vienna” (402) and, perhaps most incredible of all, that “Lawrence never knew or cared what his novels were about and this is part of what makes them interesting even when they are bad” (400). Again, this is just a selection.

Wilson has entered a crowded marketplace. Significant research has been carried out on Lawrence in the past 40 years resulting in new material. Yet many of the earlier biographies are still sufficiently accurate to be worth reading. John Worthen and Andrew Harrison have produced very different and excellent single volume biographies, but unfortunately, Wilson has not succeeded in writing one that should be read in addition or instead of these because there are two fatal flaws in this book. Wilson attributes her copyeditor with being “without compare” (488), but in her rushed quest for originality there remain far too many errors of fact and gushing assertions or generalisations that are simply incorrect, which makes this book unreliable. Furthermore, following her statement in the ‘Argument’ that her book “is a work of non-fiction which is also a work of imagination” (2), Wilson makes the shocking statement that it “is in the biographer’s remit to edit those facts that don’t fit” (136). Wilson’s book adds nothing to the

insights already to be found in the great tradition of Lawrence biography, but let us hope that its overemphasis on a few of the many key events and characters in Lawrence's fascinating life and its challenging of conventional approaches to what a biography should be, will generate sufficient controversy to bring Lawrence back further into the limelight and reverse the trend instigated by Millett and other detractors.

Rachel Cusk, *Second Place*.

New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2021.

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(Published in the UK by Faber. £14.99 (paperback). ISBN 978 0 5713 6629 3)

Reviewed by Keith Cushman

Rachel Cusk, the eminent Canadian-born English novelist, has published eleven novels and four works of non-fiction. She is best-known for the so-called Outline Trilogy: *Outline* (2014), *Transit* (2016) and *Kudos* (2018). These digressive, precisely measured, inward-looking novels are often characterised as works of autofiction. They also seem to be pushing beyond the conventional novel. In a *New Yorker* interview concerning *Kudos*, Cusk observes that she is “not interested in character” because “character doesn’t exist anymore”. Among Cusk’s miscellaneous writings is an Introduction to the 2011 Vintage edition of *The Rainbow* (collected with other of her essays in *Coventry* [2019]).

Character is definitely present in *Second Place*. In this rather elusive novel, an intense, insecure, middle-aged woman whom we know only as M tells the story of her fraught relationship with a painter known as L. Earlier in her life she had seen a psychoanalyst because of her fear that she might commit suicide. A patron of the arts, M has invited the painter to come to visit her and her “big and tall, and strong” husband in the “place of great but subtle beauty,

where artists often seem to find the will or the energy or just the opportunity to work" (42). She wants to "see what [the landscape] looks like through [L's] eyes" (17). The guesthouse where he will come to stay is called the second place. "Second place" also "pretty much summed up" how M felt about herself and her life (145).

The painter L is interested in taking M up on her offer, though he wonders whether the small town she mentions harbours "a cluster of arty types" (19). He puts her off twice, first going to an island that belongs to someone he knows and then travelling to Rio, where an exhibition of his paintings is opening. When L does arrive, he is accompanied by "a ravishing creature somewhere in her late twenties" (46). He is "quite wiry and small", he seems "dapper and goatish", and he has "a kind of light, capering demeanour" (46–7). L "felt like the first entirely integrated being [M] had encountered". He seems like "a wild creature that needed to be ensnared" (58), and he "talks about his weariness with society and his continual need to escape it" (59). In a later encounter "there was always the sense that he could burst out at any minute in some violent physical act" (95).

The story of M and the painter L is "partly a story of will, and of the consequences of exerting it" (32). Indeed, a character in the novel tells M that L "intends to destroy [her]" (123). But M wins the battle of wills: "for all [L's] talk of destroying [her, she] ... had destroyed him first" (157). L suffers a stroke, but his remarkable post-stroke paintings bring about "the renaissance of his reputation" (158). Miraculously, L found "a way of capturing the ineffability of the marsh landscape, and thereby unlock[ed] and record[ed] something of [M's] own soul" (172).

Is any of this beginning to sound familiar? Did you notice that M and her husband live at a marsh, just as Tom, Lydia, and Anna Lensky do in *The Rainbow*? (The reader never learns in which country or even on what continent M's marsh is located.) Would it help if I told you that L's companion is named Brett, and that she is getting him to teach her to paint? (Of course, unlike Cusk's character, Dorothy Brett could not be described as "ravishing", she

lacked the fictional Brett's "air of poise and fashion" [46], and she had studied at the Slade School to become a painter.) What about the fact that M's husband is named Tony, is "dark-skinned", and looks like a "Native American" (42–3)? And here is the clincher: M addresses her narrative to an unidentified person named Jeffers. Could this be the American poet, Robinson Jeffers, who died in 1962 – even though *Second Place* seems to be taking place in the present day?

A rather eccentric feature of Mabel Dodge Luhan's *Lorenzo in Taos* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1932; hereafter cited as Luhan) is that she addresses her memoir to the American poet Robinson Jeffers, whom she had hosted in Taos along with his wife Una. The information that Rachel Cusk divulges three pages after the conclusion of her 180-page novel will not surprise the knowledgeable student of D. H. Lawrence:

Second Place owes a debt to *Lorenzo in Taos*, Mabel Dodge Luhan's 1932 memoir of the time D. H. Lawrence came to stay with her in Taos, New Mexico. My version – in which the Lawrence figure is a painter, not a writer – is intended as a tribute to her spirit.

Although *Second Place* stands alone, the ideal reader of the novel has read *Lorenzo in Taos* and is generally familiar with Lawrence's time in New Mexico. This knowledge complicates any reading of *Second Place*.

Luhan's portrait of Lawrence is anything but flattering. *Lorenzo in Taos* is rich in piquant details, such as an exchange between Lawrence and Frieda, "at the end of an evening when he had not particularly noticed her":

"Take that dirty cigarette out of your mouth! And stop sticking out that fat belly of yours!" he yelled once, shaking his finger in her face.

“You’d better stop that talk or I’ll tell about *your* things,” she taunted. (Luhan 72)

M is much less sure of herself than the Mabel of *Lorenzo in Taos*. L is much nastier and more self-absorbed than Lawrence. L has no wife in *Second Place*, and consequently the novel lacks a version of Frieda. Mabel believed that Lawrence was “the only one who can really *see* this Taos country and the Indians, and who can describe it so that it is as much alive between the cover of a book as it is in reality” (Luhan 3). Whether or not he accomplished that in his Southwestern essays is a matter of critical debate. *Second Place* concludes rather problematically. L leaves the marsh for Paris, where he dies. Along with unlocking and recording M’s soul, he “had corresponded with a number of people in the second place, and had wasted no opportunity to tell them the most terrible and vituperative things about me and about the controlling, destructive kind of woman I was” (176).

Second Place explores the dynamic of gender roles. It is also concerned with parenting, for M has a grown daughter named Justine. The novel plays out a Lawrentian dialectic between art and life. Ultimately, M sides with Tony, as regards “life”, but

Tony and L were both right, ... Tony was right in a way that was sadder and harder and more permanent. Tony accepted reality and saw his place in it as something he was responsible for: L objected to reality and was always trying to free himself from its strictures, which meant that he believed himself responsible for nothing. (150)

Tony, locked in “an ocean of silence” (22), “didn’t believe in art” (149), writes Cusk, the author of eleven novels.

The reader who comes to *Second Place* by way of D. H. Lawrence notices and enjoys Cusk’s use of Lawrence’s biography, sometimes directly, sometimes in a skewed manner. In his first letter to Mabel Dodge Sterne (as she was at the time) Lawrence

asks exactly what L asks in the novel: “[I]s there a colony of rather dreadful sub-artzy people?” (4L 111). Like L, Lawrence made two major stops before showing up, and, like L, the first stop was on an island (Ceylon). (This detail also brings “The Man Who Loved Islands” to mind.) L’s angry encounter with Tony after Tony had shot a deer (149) resonates against the *Birds, Beasts and Flowers* poem, ‘Mountain Lion’. The letter from M that concludes the novel ends with “This is a bad place” (180), unmistakably echoing the postscript to a letter Lawrence wrote Maria Huxley ten days before his death: “This place no good” (7L 651). Near the end of the novel L glimpses M and her daughter Justine swimming naked together at night. A “oneness miraculously occurs” in his “mysterious and beautiful” (178–9) painting of the scene. Something like that also seems to occur when Ursula and Miss Inger swim naked together in *The Rainbow*. I could go on.

I found it difficult to read *Second Place* without substituting Lawrence for L, Mabel for M, and Tony Luhan for Tony. This is surely unavoidable for any person who comes to the novel with a knowledge of Lawrence and *Lorenzo in Taos*. Understandably, Cusk wanted to create a “tribute” to Mabel Dodge Luhan’s “spirit” by reimagining her relationship with Lawrence. Perhaps Cusk was also wrestling with her own complicated feelings about Lawrence. In the end M “gave up L, gave him up in my heart, and filled in the secret place inside myself that I had kept free for him all along” (178). It is not clear what sort of meaning – if any – Cusk intends for the reader to discover in the space between *Second Place* and *Lorenzo in Taos*. Cusk’s use of Luhan’s *Lorenzo in Taos* in *Second Place* is an unusual and engaging element in an unusual, strangely affecting novel.

Geneva M. Gano, *The Little Art Colony and US Modernism: Carmel, Provincetown, Taos*.

Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020.

Pp 309. £80.77 (hardcover). ISBN 978 1 4744 3975 6

Reviewed by Lee M. Jenkins

Geneva Gano's book, as the title of her Introduction explains, is a study of 'Modernism beyond the Metropolis'. Taking the form of "case studies" of three early twentieth-century little arts or artists' colonies, in Carmel, Provincetown and Taos (3), the book is structured accordingly in three parts, each comprising two chapters. The first chapter in each part provides an overview of the colony concerned, while the second focuses on a major author and text associated with that colony. Gano covers three genres, one for each of her chosen colonies: Robinson Jeffers's long poem 'Tamar' (1924) for Carmel; Eugene O'Neill's play *The Emperor Jones* (1920) for Provincetown; and Lawrence's novelette *St. Mawr* (1925) for Taos.

In her Introduction, Gano defines Carmel, Provincetown and Taos as "uncivilised" locations which, in comparison to metropolises like New York, "have been characterised (and largely dismissed) as minor and arguably peripheral to modernism" (3). Gano overstates her claim here to an innovative remapping of marginal locations of modernism: extant scholarship in the field is cited selectively and relevant recent studies are bypassed, such as Neal Alexander and James Moran's collection *Regional Modernisms* (2013), also published by Edinburgh University Press, which includes a chapter, by Andrew Harrison, on Lawrence as a regional writer. Gano's interest is in tracing comparative and translocal – or what she calls "horizontal" – connections between marginal sites of US modernism (3), but she is interested, too, in how her little art colonies operate within "a mobile modernist network" which extends beyond national borders (4). Instead of tracing local-global connectivities, however, Gano too often falls

back on catch-all totalisations like Immanuel Wallerstein's world-system theory. There is comparatively little engagement with "ground up" and contemporaneous concepts of space and place posited by modernists like William Carlos Williams, Alfred Stieglitz and, indeed, Lawrence himself in 'The Spirit of Place', the Introduction to *Studies in Classic American Literature*.

Gano aptly deploys Lawrence's key word, "node", to define the little art colony's magnetism for creative types, although in her Introduction she could have made more perhaps, of the integral and integrative role of Mabel Dodge Luhan, who was associated with all three of the cultural nodes explored in the book (4). It was at Mabel's invitation that Lawrence travelled to Taos in 1922, where he was to be installed as a writer-in-residence of kinds at her little arts colony there, a role that would be taken over by Jeffers, who is the addressee of Mabel's memoir, *Lorenzo in Taos* (1932). As Mabel envisaged it, Lawrence's remit, at Taos, was to put the place between the pages of a book as vividly as he had done with another place in *Sea and Sardinia*, extracts from which Mabel had read in *The Dial* in 1921.

Of the two chapters she devotes to Taos, Gano focuses in the first on essays on Native American ceremonial dances by Marsden Hartley and by Lawrence. Her absorbing discussion of Hartley's 'Red Man Ceremonials: An American Plea for an American Aesthetics' is an important recovery of the (problematic) Primitivist imaginary of the American avant-garde, but Gano's comparison between Hartley's account of the Corn Dance at Santo Domingo Pueblo and Lawrence's 'The Dance of the Sprouting Corn' is less convincing. Unlike Hartley, Lawrence wasn't looking for an aesthetics, American or otherwise, in the ceremonial dances he witnessed in the pueblos but for what his posthumously published essay 'New Mexico' (1931) calls "a sense of living religion" (*MM* 178). Curiously, because it is to the detriment of her own analysis, Gano doesn't engage in this chapter with Neil Roberts's highly-informed and nuanced chapter on 'Lawrence and Native

Americans' in his *D. H. Lawrence, Travel and Cultural Difference* (2004).

Gano's second Taos chapter is concerned with Lawrence's novelette, *St. Mawr*, the final stages of which are set on Lawrence's Kiowa Ranch in the Sangre de Cristo mountains to the north of Taos. In Gano's close, contextualised and persuasive reading, the story is a cautionary tale, critiquing the savage pilgrimages undertaken by those who, like Lawrence himself, sought in "uncivilised places" like northern New Mexico an alternative to the malaise of modernity. The paean to place at the end of *St. Mawr*, Gano argues, is uncomfortably close to touristic promotions of New Mexico as the Land of Enchantment. Lawrence's protagonist, Lou Carrington, pays her money down for a piece of the wilderness which is, also, prime real estate. There is, then, no "escape from the modern world-system" for Lou – or, one might say, for Gano's reader, who by this late stage in the book has encountered some sixty iterations of Wallerstein's phrase (218).

Otherwise, Geneva Gano's book is a highly readable study of an intrinsically fascinating phenomenon and as such is a welcome addition to Edinburgh University Press' flagship 'Modern American Literature and the New Twentieth Century' series. The question of its original contribution to modernist studies, at least in Gano's Introduction, may be moot, but *The Little Art Colony and US Modernism* should be of considerable interest to readers and scholars of Lawrence, and of Jeffers and O'Neill.

Benjamin D. Hagen, *The Sensuous Pedagogies of Virginia Woolf and D. H. Lawrence*.

Clemson University Press in association with Liverpool University Press, 2020.

Pp xii + 262. \$120.00/£85.00 (hardcover). ISBN: 978 1 94997927 5

Reviewed by Jeff Wallace

Why, asks William James in *Pragmatism* (1907), does Herbert Spencer attract so much reverence, given that the wooden and mechanical weaknesses of his system of thought are obvious to any rationalist temperament? “Simply because”, writes James, “we feel his heart to be *in the right place* philosophically” (1981 edition by Bruce Kuklick [Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett], 21). I am reminded of this extraordinary statement in reading the concluding admission of Benjamin D. Hagen’s highly original study of Woolf and Lawrence. “When I write about Lawrence”, Hagen contends, “I try and often fail to repair texts that seem murderous into the nourishing wholes I feel they can become” (211).

Sensuous Pedagogies obliges us to think afresh about the kinds of personal investment and motivation we bring to bear on our literary criticism. Is not our critical attachment to a writer like Lawrence an act of generosity of feeling and human accompaniment? Isn’t this at least as important as the hermeneutic of suspicion that seeks out the murderous implications of the gaps and silences, the things that a writer doesn’t say or should say? A lifetime’s commitment to a writer as contradictory as Lawrence will inevitably be, Hagen reminds us, a complex act of love, given that somewhere along the line we have decided that the Lawrentian heart is in the right place. Criticism becomes, in this light, an attempt at repair, a dialogue whose elements of complementarity and compensation we may lose sight of as we try to establish our truths about Lawrence or note his failings. The contradictions are familiar. Lawrence cared deeply about other human beings; and yet,

he didn't care. He was profoundly alert and sensitive to life; except when he wasn't. He supported women's independence yet preached phallic pride. He was an educator yet opposed universal literacy. What if, in the face of these, our criticism is an act of collaborating with Lawrence to produce the most nourishing wholes we can, virtualities that did not exist before but that can take us forward in the adventure of Lawrence Studies? Most of us would probably stop short at redemption; Hagen certainly does, producing instead a Lawrence we are provoked into asking new questions about.

Studying Woolf and Lawrence together is still relatively rare, and in this too *Sensuous Pedagogies* is an act of reparation, like "starting from scratch" (3). The context, drawn from a growing body of scholarship, is the preoccupation of modernist writers with the processes of education. Woolf and Lawrence are teachers and learners – not, however, in the formal institutional sense (where Lawrence of course had a far more conventional formation than Woolf, both in education and as an educator), but in being forever "on the lookout" for those resources, grounded in affect and interaction, by which "human beings learn (and ... teach others) to become what they wish to become" (7). Literature is one such resource, and Hagen's address is to readers who are also literary teachers and learners, faced with the problem of how to teach Lawrence in the seminar room, but also themselves on the lookout for wisdom, nourishment and self-development. As befits this radical project, Hagen's voice is unusually distinctive, impassioned, confessional and cajoling, pushing at the boundaries of critical decorum but without ever becoming coercive or falsely conspiratorial. We can benefit from regular "Assignments", counter-intuitive to today's market-driven metrical obsessions and instrumentalised learning outcomes ("Assignment No. 1: How do your favourite writers teach? How do they read? How do they love?"). Dare we learn from our literary encounters how to live and feel? It seems a long time since we were given permission to do so.

In the first of three chapters on Lawrence, *The White Peacock* duly "unmoors education from the classroom" (50) to situate it in

the natural world around Nethermere and its connection with the highly-charged, suppressed dynamic between Lettie and George. The piano lesson between the two is re-staged as a richly sensuous pedagogical event; Hagen's attention to a vocabulary of "lickings" and "danglings" emphasises the role of touch in learning and, even at this early stage, Lawrence's preoccupation with a plane of life or circumambient universe that merges human with non-human. The conclusion is unequivocal: "Lettie does not ruin George" (81). Hagen is determined not to take the lesson that a misogynistic doctrine and complicit criticism have previously foisted upon us, that modern women (with Lettie as the first and Miriam Leivers soon to follow) betray men into abstraction and the denial of the body. Setting this lesson aside frees us up to learn things that Lawrence might not have intended to teach, in this case concerning the inspirational breadth of Lettie's interactions as a "relational pedagogue" (67).

Learning through active disobedience then emerges as the keynote of Lawrence's own reading practices in a chapter on the "reparative pedagogy" of his literary criticism. The challenge is laid down in Assignment No. 10: what kind of readers would we be if Lawrence (or Woolf) had influenced twentieth-century criticism as much as T. S. Eliot did? As attentive to affect and ethics as to analysis, perhaps. Hagen's way of saying things about Lawrence that we might often have thought but weren't quite sure what to do with sets up a brilliant account of just what is singular about Lawrence's criticism, especially in the discursive masterpiece *Studies in Classic American Literature*. Lawrence reads texts in all the ways we're not supposed to, trying books "on and out as if they were a new pair of running shoes" (12). This is not merely selfish, even if it can produce a "perplexingly odd" (131) attack on Benjamin Franklin or an account of Thomas Hardy that is about everything but Thomas Hardy. It is about what Hagen calls "essaying affects", following Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the impersonal intensities or blocks of sensation that are built into the scenarios of artistic production. In partaking of these, perhaps in the

manner of Lawrence's essentially "improvisational" critical style, we try out our own histories, desires and needs in the manner of transformational reading. Lawrence's confessed childhood love of the American classics is deeply moving, but what happens when you grow up? What is the childishness that first resonated with you, and how does this relate to the "pitch of extreme consciousness" that the Americans have, at the same time, reached? If this is a reparative exercise, it is worth noting that it cannot proceed without an older-school critique of some rigour: Hagen finds Lawrence setting out to "assess – severely – what these books need, where they fail, and what will help them grow up" (128). For those sceptical of Deleuze, it is further noteworthy that in Hagen's hands the essaying of affects is perfectly compatible with the human and humane aspiration to "learn how to feel and live more fully" (117).

In the last of the Lawrence chapters Hagen turns, in a more overtly metacritical way, to take on the state of play on same-sex relations in Lawrence and the "baffling absence of a *queer* Lawrence" (176). He is impatient with the previous entrainment of debate within forensic investigations around homosexuality, in how far Lawrence was innocent or ignorant, initiated or uninitiated. It is obvious in Lawrence that men love each other: "Who needs 'Gladiatorial'?" (192). Following Sara Ahmed, sexual orientation is something we do rather than are; this queered understanding then frees us up to examine the correspondingly subtler processes of "queer tutelage" that are ongoing in Lawrence's fiction: Cyril and George, Rupert and Gerald, Ursula and Winifred. Queer theory itself here does the reparative work, revealing a debt expressed throughout the book to the pioneering writing of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick.

The value of *Sensuous Pedagogies* both as a superb stimulus to teaching Lawrence and Woolf, and as a critical study in its own right, is unquestionable. That value however is also dependent upon the continuing possibility that readers will turn up to learn from it. As you read this, university departments of literature, arts and humanities are steadily being dismantled, in the context of the

expansion of extremist politics in UK government and around the globe. The virtues of the wonderful edifice of disinterested scholarship that has over decades made Lawrence Studies possible are now ever more in danger of being caricatured as dispensable, in the face of economic and environmental post-pandemic crisis. What is to be done? Perhaps our work can no longer afford to be neutral; what, now, can literature, and Lawrence, help us with? We might as well fight (I realise I am channelling my inner Lawrence). Fighting however might mean in this case, and paradoxically, projecting more actively and pragmatically the resources of peaceable human solidarity and compassion to be gained from our discipline. To do this, we need critics such as Benjamin Hagen whose hearts, as well as considerable critical acumen, are assuredly in the right place.

Rachel Murray, *The Modernist Exoskeleton: Insects, War, Literary Form*.

Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020.

Pp. xiv + 210. £80 (hardback). ISBN 978 1 4744 5819 1

Reviewed by Maria Trejling

An exoskeleton is a skeleton that is exterior to the rest of the animal body, such as a tortoise shell. Many insects have exoskeletons, defending them from outside threats and supporting their interior muscular structures. The exoskeleton is also an operative methodological concept in Rachel Murray's new book, *The Modernist Exoskeleton: Insects, War, Literary Form*, where it connotes both a defensive system and a layer enabling contact between inner self and outer world. In a prose commendable for its lucidity, Murray sets out to show how modernist writing "strives to emulate the polymorphousness of the insect body" as well as its exoskeletal defensive and enfolding functions (13). The basic premise of this book, then, is that the sensory, protective and transformative abilities of insects and other small creatures, such as

spiders and worms, were influential for modernist literature, and especially its formal experiments.

To what extent Murray considers this influence to be conscious and the experimental reworking of it into textual innovation deliberate is rather unclear. The four authors studied were all interested in insects, however, and the Introduction convincingly outlines the associations between literary insect imagery and historical contexts. In particular, the First World War and its effect on psychoanalytic trauma theories are important historical contexts, but also the growth and popular spread of the field of entomology around the beginning of the twentieth century. Insects were perceived as both vulnerable and radically other, yet capable of astonishing perseverance as well as creative achievements such as remodelling their own bodies into new forms – an evocative feat for modernist writers trying to make things new. Therefore, Murray shows, insects were pertinent sources of inspiration for working through the alienation of modernity and the shock of modern warfare with its disfiguring of human bodies and psyches.

There is always a risk that a strong theoretical idea becomes too rigid for the literary texts it is meant to illuminate. Such tendencies are rare in *The Modernist Exoskeleton*, since it is for the most part armoured against them by the versatility of the creatures inspiring the central concept of the exoskeleton, the literary works studied with its help, and Murray's employment of it.

Four chapters each examine a modernist writer. Since a number of works are considered, the analyses give a sense of development and recurring structures rather than providing close examinations of particular texts. In the chapter on Wyndham Lewis, his exoskeleton is outlined as a defensive shell, but one that sensitively adapts to its environment rather than forming a hard impenetrable surface, and which sometimes turns into an "optical trap" of mimicry for his readers (42). The chapter on H. D. shows how her writing, like a cocoon, is at once sheltering and metamorphic. It is also marked by the perceptive abilities of antennae and spiderweb, vulnerably exposed to dangers and yet protectively vigilant. Thereafter,

Samuel Beckett's "larval" minimalism is presented as a development from high to late modernism, in which "the exoskeleton is in the process of dissolving" (135). Beckett utilised this dissolution in his formal innovations, inspired by the mistaken belief that worms merely reproduce when cut in half. Lastly, the conclusion gives a brief indication of entomological influences in a number of works from the 1950s and 60s.

D. H. Lawrence is the focus of the second chapter, which regards his texts as insectile forces attempting to produce awareness through stinging provocations. In *The Ladybird*, for example, the destructiveness of Count Dionys is read as an invitation to both characters and readers to entertain atrocious ideas not in order to adopt them but to extend and reform stagnant preconceptions. This is related to the word *formication*: the hallucinatory experience of ants crawling upon and underneath the skin. The term is employed to suggest a distressing experience of an unwelcome absorption of the other into the self, with which Murray ascertains the customary notion that Lawrence struggled with conflicting desires for separation and intimacy. Murray traces a gradual development from an attempt to maintain complete singularity in *Aaron's Rod* to a partial and still reluctant surrender to the collective in *Kangaroo*. With *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, she further argues, the turn toward connection was more distinct, but between lovers rather than with a group. Instead of a formicatory recoil at the touch of the outside, Lawrence emphasised the importance of a threatening but affirming intimacy with the other as a source of renewal. The uncomfortable political extremism of the leadership novels, based in their despise for and fear of the collective other, was thus shed together with Lawrence's desire for complete separateness, which persisted well into the initial drafts of his last novel.

Murray reflects that the problematic ideological expressions of some modernist texts can be seen as an adaptive defence against the traumas experienced by societies and individuals during the early twentieth century, but that such defence mechanisms also enabled some of the experiments of modernism. The use of insect

terminology to show how Lawrence's sometimes awkward ideological views also led him to formal innovations is perhaps the most interesting contribution of *The Modernist Exoskeleton* to Lawrence research. For example, the simultaneous disdain of and surrender to the collective in *Kangaroo* is analysed with the term *swarm*, both connoting abhorrence against the swarming crowd and the transformation "into a swarming multiplicity" of the allegedly unsuccessful disintegration of the narrative form of the novel (83).

Such structural analyses are one of the principal rewards of this book, but occasionally Murray's more stylistic descriptions would have benefited from closer textual analysis. What does it mean, precisely, that the language in Lawrence's interwar texts "quakes, shudders and writhes" (63)? The metaphor is intriguing and, I believe, appropriate, but hardly sufficient on its own, without close scrutiny of textual examples.

Despite its title, *The Modernist Exoskeleton* should be of great relevance even to readers with little interest in literary animal studies. Concepts borrowed from entomology are not primarily employed to understand representations of insects in modernism, but to study literary form. There is a risk that this methodology reproduces the anthropocentric failure to consider animals for their own sake, yet again reducing them to human instruments. Murray convincingly demonstrates the potential importance of insects both for literary analysis and form, but gives scarce consideration and credit to the actual and literary insects that are part of this process. However, illuminating how insects can influence literature does indicate the importance of animals in and for human culture, and the structural similarities between certain defence mechanisms of humans and insects also highlight our kinship. Most importantly, species equality and the subversion of anthropocentrism are neither the stated nor the implicit objectives of this book. Rather, Murray aims to discuss the form in and of a number of important works and, by extension, modernism. In this, *The Modernist Exoskeleton* is an interesting and inspiring new contribution.

Paul Eggert, *The Work and the Reader: Scholarly Editing and Book History*.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.

Pp. 242. £22 (paperback). ISBN 978 1 108 72449 4

Reviewed by Christopher Pollnitz

I should declare an interest. Readers of this review will be aware that I am a fellow editor with Paul Eggert in the Cambridge Edition of Lawrence's Works. They will know that in the 2020 number of the *JDHLS* Eggert and I played tag, he offering a primer on how to read the apparatus in Volume II of the Cambridge *Poems*, while with his help I sought to enlarge the corrigenda of *The Poems*. Eggert is a friend who encouraged me over decades in my struggles with *The Poems*.

Editing the two revised typescripts from which American and English proofs of *The Boy in the Bush* were set, Eggert developed a strategy. Decades on, I adapted the strategy to edit the surviving one of two revised typescripts which Lawrence expected would be used to set the English and American proofs of *Collected Poems*. In the typescripts for *The Boy in the Bush* Lawrence entered autograph revisions in one pile of typescript, sometimes changing the revision when he turned to the second pile, sometimes inscribing a third layer of revision when he returned to the first pile. Most critical editors would have chosen one typescript as the base-text and consigned to the apparatus revisional variants in the other typescript. Eggert argued that it was the *process* of revision going forward in both documents which needed to be recorded in the apparatus and should be presented or "re-presented" in the reading text (224). With a fascination for what others shrink from as too difficult, Eggert has been reconceptualising scholarly editing since the 1980s. In *The Work and the Reader* he reports on new techniques for re-presenting the "versionality" of literary works (150) and demonstrates how, with improved software, digital

archives will enlarge the scope of twenty-first-century scholarly editions.

Post-World War II, practitioners of New Criticism demanded of their editors “‘concrete’ works” – static, singular and in a positivistic way ideal – “so that they could get on with what they thought of as the real job, interpretation” (66). By contrast, Cambridge editors like Mark Kinkead-Weekes spoke of *The Rainbow* as embodying change and process: “there are vital ways in which a work of Lawrence’s *is* its process of becoming, which an edition should try to preserve in some fashion” (*R* lxiv). More than descriptive terms, “becoming” and “ideal” are philosophical terms, still used by editing theorists in their contentions about the ontology or phenomenology of a work. In *The Work and the Reader* Eggert takes up cudgels against W. W. Greg, René Wellek and Austin Warren, G. Thomas Tanselle and, most recently, Hans Walter Gabler. To free the literary work from being looked up to as a Platonic ideal or reduced to a phenomenological description, Eggert defines the work as a “regulative idea” (33), regulated by readers’ experience of other documents that they know are works. Works grow and live through the bibliographical and book-historical centuries as generations of editors and readers retrieve and renew them: “because the work unfolds over time it can, in principle, never be comprehended editorially”. Work-editing “can never be fully achieved” (174) because, like Lawrence’s phoenix, works continually subside and then, rediscovered and re-edited, blaze up anew in readers’ minds.

To Eggert any scholarly edition worthy of the name is “an argument, embodied in its reading text and apparatus” (5): it is an argument addressed to readers of the edition. Readers are the propulsive medium of the work. From the moment a “textual agent” (5) – Eggert still shies away from “author” – makes a first pen-stroke or taps a first key, she or he becomes the first reader of the work being written. Other readers might include a friend asked to look at a draft, an amanuensis or a typist; during production, agents, publishers and their readers, typesetters and proof-readers read the

work; after publication, reviewers, critics, scholars of book history, students and the general public read the work, as may screenwriters, actors or those adapting it for audio or video presentations (9–10). John Worthen has pointed out that the lengthening of ‘Reception’ sections in the Cambridge Works, as the volumes progressed towards the fortieth, is a measure of the growing appreciation of reception studies. Eggert too, alert to the multifaceted afterlives of some literary works, tracks how Rolph Boldrewood’s *Robbery under Arms* has interbred with the disputed histories and legends of Ned Kelly to create a blended race of serialisations, plays and films, adaptations and novels. For Eggert there remains a special class of readers, who search out variant passages in appendices and envisage alternative editions as they read. To this class of younger readers – “digital natives” (35), he calls them – he addresses many of his arguments in *The Work and the Reader*.

Eggert sees Lawrence as a prime candidate for a digitised archive and edition, first, because of the largely but not comprehensively completed Works and Letters. Second, there is “the essential versionality of Lawrence’s writing”, revealed as editor after editor of the Works mined the dispersed archive of Lawrence’s versions without always being able to re-present it fully (150). A digital archive, offering Lawrence scholars and editors access to the full range of his versions, is at once a highly desirable and dauntingly large project. The Cambridge Scholarly Editions On-Line initiative also seems full of promise, but fashioned as it presently is on the Oxford University Press initiative, Eggert cautions against the plan. The Oxford model restricts readers to “the print editor’s perspective or the series perspective” and cuts them off “from the original sources” (151). Again, using the software Oxford employs, Text Encoding Initiative (TEI), makes recording variants in transcriptions “almost impossibly complex” (197). During the past decade Eggert has been editor and leader of a project, the *Charles Harpur Critical Archive*, which gives access to original sources by means of an easy-to-use software, Twinview,

and affords users the opportunity to frame independent hypotheses about Harpur's works. Readers of this review might like to open <www.charles-harpur.org> and judge for themselves what a twenty-first-century digital archive has to offer.

Harpur was the first Australian-born poet to produce a body of estimable verse. His oeuvre, produced in the period 1833-68, consists of some 700 works in 2,700 versions, 900 of which appeared in colonial newspapers. Harpur's ambition of having a collection published in England was not realised in his lifetime. Published in 1883, the posthumous *Poems by Charles Harpur* was edited by H. M. Martin, whose idea of editing was bowdlerising as he saw fit. A century after Martin, Elizabeth Perkins rectified the texts of Harpur's verse in a *Poetical Works* (1984) which included one version of nearly every Harpur poem, but made no attempt to trace Harpur's poetic development. Opening the *Harpur* archive, we find Twinview displays a facsimile of a newspaper publication or Harpur manuscript on one half-screen side-by-side with a transcription on the other. A reader who calls up Harpur's 'A Basket of Summer Fruit' will find two newspaper versions (of 18 March 1854 and 1854-58) and two manuscript versions (of 1863 and 1867). Layers of revision within a manuscript can be read in the transcription, and any two versions compared and collated. All versions are dated to within a year, and most newspaper versions to the day and month, the second newspaper version of 'A Basket of Summer Fruit' being a rare exception. The archive is a superb platform on which to mount an argument about the versional development of Harpur's poems. And as Eggert points out, the archive provides the basis for a range of independent perspectives and alternative editions.

Dauntingly large as the task of amassing an equivalent Lawrence archive or series of linked archives might be, much bibliographical and chronological spadework has been done in the Works. I am uncertain what the position with regard to copyright will be. Having been frustrated by my inability to offer, within the confines of the 690-page print edition *Uncollected Poem and Early*

Versions, any more than a token sample of transmissions from the hundreds of versions in Lawrence's verse notebooks, I find the prospect of a Lawrence poetry archive deeply attractive. Let us hope teams of skilled "digital natives" step forward to realise Eggert's vision of future Lawrence archives and editions.

Elliott Morsia, *The Many Drafts of D. H. Lawrence: Creative Flux, Genetic Dialogism, and the Dilemma of Endings*. London & New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021. Pp. 234. £85.00 (hardcover). ISBN 978 1 3501 3968 8

Reviewed by John Worthen

To start positively: this is one of the few works of Lawrence scholarship which in prospect whets the appetite. It takes seriously – and quotes at length – manuscripts and typescripts which have in general been ignored by scholars (except for those concerned with editing). It takes its reader through 'Odour of Chrysanthemums', a good deal of *Women in Love* and especially the ending of *The Plumed Serpent*.

This is not to say that I always think that the book is doing sensible things with its material. But let me first do something to unpick (as they say) the book's title. What is "genetic criticism" and this offshoot "genetic dialogism"?

"Genetic criticism" concentrates not on the work produced but on its production. It studies how evolutions in text take place, and what is involved when they do. Morsia is concerned that, over the past thirty years, literary critics of Lawrence have been far too concerned with texts as stable, finished entities, as they have with the supposed "development" (46) of their author towards "maturity". Those criticisms may well be true. He contrasts "traditional critics" treating Lawrence's "finished works as complete and self-sufficient" with the way "Lawrence was generally opposed to self-sufficiency and completion" (he gives the

example of Lawrence's characters "striving either to be or not to be self-complete" [57]). All texts have histories, sometimes considerable and extensive pre-histories, and contain at times multiple versions of their own production. The "dialogism" in his title is what Morsia perceives as the interplay within the revisions of texts explored genetically: the inner dialogue he feels most strongly emerges from *Women in Love*, for example, is that between flux and stasis.

Scrupulous attention to surviving materials and astute insights into the dating of versions and typescripts characterise Morsia's work. So far, so very good.

He is, however, at times the victim of his own tendency to draw his conclusion about flux and stasis to fit every situation, every twist and turn. He must be the first critic ever to find it the dominant motif at the very end of *Women in Love*, when Birkin tells Ursula "I don't believe that" in response to her rejection of his ideas about male love. In a way that suggests a re-iterative mechanism rather than critical writing, Morsia says that Birkin's response gives voice "to the author's own resistance to completion and stasis" (161).

I want to bear in mind what Morsia himself argues for as the point of his work: to "re-evaluate" the work "on the basis of original genetic study". But unlike most critics, he is not very bothered about us reading better (I'm not sure if his work should really be called "literary criticism"). He wants us more richly involved, perpetually fascinated by the possibilities of meaning which he is drawing out. He is critical of the way that criticism and commentary over the years have paid primary attention to how works like stories end, rather than to the ways in which earlier drafts stand as texts in their own right (at least they do if you have access to them: but it is very clear that this is a book written for the community of scholars). Comments (especially those made in the Cambridge University Press editions) almost invariably regard preliminary versions as drafts leading towards published texts. Morsia is right in concluding that my generation of textual scholars

was far less interested in how things grew or contrasted than in how they concluded. This was for the simple reason that many of us had to produce conclusions, literally so, in getting better texts of Lawrence into print.

For Morsia, criticism involves an almost endless study of linguistic possibilities; he limits the scope of his own study by insisting on the word “dialogic”, which at least means that he is frequently concerned with disagreements between people talking, along with dramatic contrasts. He gets out of the revisions of dialogues what he wants, however, and sometimes not much else: an example comes from the dialogue between Birkin and Gerald at the end of Chapter XXX of *Women in Love*. Morsia offers it in the contrasting drafts of the final handwritten stage before the enterprise of typing. In the first draft, in which Gerald describes his feelings for Gudrun, Morsia suggests that Gerald offers “detailed analogies for his feelings, describing being cut to bits and being smashed like a piece of ice”. (It is striking how such feelings, which are so extraordinarily violent, communicate to Morsia the primary sense of “more detailed analogies”.) He is less interested in the second draft of the dialogue, which “repeats the single phrase ‘nothingness’ three times in quick succession”. Although such language is utterly different, and very telling, for Morsia “Overall though” the second draft does not show “a great shift” (139): what is of “greater significance, genetically, is the context of both passages, as climactic, dialogical and conflicted”. What interests him is the way the passages “represent a genetic dialogue”. That is why he has quoted them.

It feels pedantic to retort that “nothingness” is not a “single phrase”, but it’s not pedantic to note that the word “nothingness” does *not* appear “three times in quick succession” in the passage quoted, as Morsia claims. It appears once: it is preceded by two uses of the word “nothing”. I feel small-minded pointing this out: but it shows me how, here and elsewhere, Morsia is less interested in reading than in summarising: he is happier analysing than reading.

What matters more to me, however – and I suspect to many readers – is that Gerald's terrible series of confessions about his feelings for Gudrun to Birkin in the first quoted draft provoke Birkin's rather vague and clearly inadequate reassurance that "When you get more satisfied ... things will resolve out", which suggests he has no real understanding of – and not much sympathy with – Gerald's situation. In the second draft, however, Birkin has changed, and his questions actively try to prevent Gerald going on in his terrible pursuit of Gudrun: "Haven't you had enough now? ... Can't you stop now?" He has understood how dangerous for Gerald his passion is. That is surely a major shift "between the two versions", but it is not of the kind that interests Morsia.

Morsia cannot, however, help revealing his shock that Lawrence himself did not treat his own surplus manuscript material with the respect he (Morsia) has for it: he refers to "Lawrence's nonplussed treatment of his own manuscripts and physical copies of his own books, which he seemed to regard as the dead material remainder of his creative life" (57). The obvious comparison is with Joyce, and there are moments when Morsia glances enviously towards Joyce scholars focussed on texts and variations as they have been (18). Joyce himself told a friend that his unused notes for *Ulysses* weighed twelve kilos. You have to be very proud of your draft materials to weigh them! Lawrence only began taking an interest in preserving his manuscripts when it was borne in upon him that not only were they valuable, but would prove a useful nest-egg for Frieda.

Morsia reads in the way described elsewhere as offering an experience of "endless richness in ... the 'avant-texte': a critical gathering of a writer's notes, sketches, drafts, manuscripts, typescripts, proofs, and correspondence". Indeed, endless richness; there is always more to consider, to compare, once one starts to consider the ways in which a text is revised. But a novel moves to an end, and drafts are the kinds of passage which prefigure that end; we read dramatically and not just passively in many texts at once.

I confess myself constantly disappointed by Morsia's actual procedures. Take the ending of 'Odour of Chrysanthemums'. What Morsia says about the drafts does not, to me, use the kind of genetic textual examination he prioritises. He sees a constant "tension and interplay between absence and presence" in the story – so that the bringing back of the body of Walter Bates "provides an emotional culmination to the drama" (55). Is that *all*? The story's ending, in every single version, concentrates on Elizabeth Bates's agonised reflections on her marriage and how she will now live. Morsia's story ends with italicised "*relief*, relieving Elizabeth of her agonizing uncertainty, and this relief extends to the writer as well, who is ultimately relieved of the potentially endless process of writing" (58). I don't recognise this story: it sidesteps what Lawrence wrote.

The book has not been treated well by its publisher. It contains fourteen illustrations of textual materials, but only three are of any use (the others being far too faint): no. 14 allows one (unfortunately) to discover two errors in the book's transcript of it (208).

There is some misreading of social context. Morsia assumes that the railways in 'Odour of Chrysanthemums' exist for "trafficking miners between the neighbourhood towns and pits" (48); he believes that "the last train passes without bringing Walter home" (49). He shows himself a poor reader of text not to understand the use of railways for transporting coal in "waggons", not men.

I don't however feel that I have, probably, done this book justice: I'm not sufficiently in sympathy with the genetic method. Let me make an offer. If anyone who has read this far would be interested in reading the whole book, I would be happy to give them my review copy. If one point of a review is to get people to read a book, I would at least like to guarantee this book another reader, possibly a more sympathetic one.

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Elizabeth Outka, *Viral Modernism: The Influenza Pandemic and Interwar Literature*.

New York and Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press, 2020.

Pp. 326. £28 (paperback). ISBN 978 0 2311 8575 2

Peter Fifield, *Modernism and Physical Illness: Sick Books*.

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Pp. 249. £60 (hardcover). ISBN 978 0 1988 2542 5

Reviewed by Susan Reid

“A man felt the violence of the nightmare released now into the general *air*” (AR 5, my emphasis). Lawrence’s *Aaron’s Rod* begins on a Christmas Eve after “the War was over”, tempting the reader to assume that the airborne violence relates to the war trauma suffered by both veterans and non-combatants in this novel. But the end of the First World War overlapped with the influenza pandemic of 1918–19, which killed between 50 and 100 million people worldwide; dual traumas which were – and still are – difficult to disentangle. As Elizabeth Outka illuminates in her serendipitous study of “viral modernism”, influenza was already known to be airborne and “The knowledge that a deadly presence infected the very atmosphere created widespread fear” (13). Traces of the pandemic are almost everywhere in interwar literature, writes Outka, “If we know what to look for”: “fragmentation and disorder emerge as signs of delirium as well as [of] shrapnel; invasions become ones of microbes and not only men; postwar ennui reveals a brooding fear of an invisible enemy” (2, 3). This raises the question of whether viral traces are evident in *Aaron’s Rod* and other of Lawrence’s writings from the 1920s.

Outka notes at the outset that Lawrence was one of many writers and artists who barely survived the so-called Spanish ‘flu (1), the precise origins of which, as with our contemporary Covid-19 pandemic, may never be known. Although Outka doesn’t select

Lawrence as one of her case studies, the framework she proposes is ripe for Lawrentians to apply to his work. Indeed, given Lawrence's near-death experience in 1919 (highlighted by Judith Ruderman in this number of *JDHLS*), why has the impact of the Spanish 'flu not featured more prominently in studies of his work? Perhaps, as Ruderman suggests, we have been influenced by Lawrence's lifelong tendency to downplay illness; his brush with Spanish 'flu was, after all, only one of at least three near-death experiences for the writer. Or, perhaps, critics have been limited by the lack of vocabulary for writing about illness that Virginia Woolf perceives in her seminal essay 'On Being Ill' (1926) – a key text for both Outka and Peter Fifield in his study of *Modernism and Physical Illness*.

As Outka observes, the pandemic was a spectral presence that was overshadowed and blocked by the dominant cultural narrative of the war, which by comparison seemed more important and subject to human control (compare the current UK government's rhetoric about waging a "war" against the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic). While a war death could be construed as patriotic and heroic, 'flu deaths seemed indiscriminate and uncontrollable: they "lacked clearly defined and victorious heroes" (28). Doctors and nurses were helpless to treat or even alleviate symptoms, and scientists raced but failed to find a cure. And yet, while illness may be difficult to characterise and plot, Outka perceives how "The plotlessness inherent in so many modernist works ... became ways to impose an understandable structure onto an otherwise unbearable and amorphous story" (31).

Aaron's Rod is not entirely plotless, although it has been criticised for its haziness about why Aaron deserts his wife and family on Christmas Eve, whether he will ultimately "submit" to a "more heroic soul", and what exactly the novel means by "heroic" (*AR* 299). In this light we might think again, then, about how Lawrence's near-death experience with Spanish 'flu may have influenced the texts he wrote in its aftermath. He wrote to Kot during his convalescence in March 1919 that:

I am not going to be left to Frieda's tender mercies until I am well again. She really is a devil – and I feel as if I would part from her for ever ... If this illness hasn't been a lesson to her, it has to me. (3L 337)

Significantly, when Aaron collapses in Covent Garden with a case of the 'flu he is nursed by a man, Rawdon Lilly. This may also draw on Lawrence's experience of tending to his friend John Middleton Murry at Greatham in 1915 (AR 318 n. 86:2), but soon enough Aaron, like victims of the subsequent Spanish 'flu, feels "as if drowning": "'Don't let me lie on my back,' he said, terrified" (AR 94). Outka describes how "The virus often penetrated deeply into the lung tissue, producing its deadly form of pneumonia" (11), "lungs became so full of fluid that the body turned purple or blue" (12). Sufferers also experienced fever dreams, which might provide further context for Aaron's "strange dream" in the final chapter: the "many children, all in white gowns ... busily putting themselves to bed" seem ghostly or orphaned (AR 287), as millions were by a pandemic that decimated young adults of parenting age. Aaron goes on to dream not of drowning but of a lake with fishes, symbolic perhaps of resurrection and of Lawrence's own return from near death.

Outka's study concludes with a chapter on 'The Return of the Dead' (in spiritual and zombie form), but it begins with the 'Pandemic Realism' of a selection of novels from around the 1930s, published after the threat of the pandemic had receded. Temporal distance enables Katherine Anne Porter's *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* (1939) to "reposition the pandemic as a tragedy as devastating and important as the war and reveal[s] the ways it upended expectations for both male and female bodies" (52), while Thomas Wolfe's *Look Homeward, Angel* (1929) and William Maxwell's *They Came Like Swallows* (1937) focus on "domestic trauma", rendering "private atmosphere visible, recording the impact on individual families struck by the virus" (75).

By contrast, iconic works of earlier modernism reveal more subtle ways in which the pandemic weaves its way into the text: “Fragmented symptoms appear without a clear context, the atmosphere of vulnerability is unmoored from particular causes, and the pandemic itself remains largely unnamed” (99). A chapter on Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) reads Clarissa as a pandemic survivor, but also the war veteran Septimus, who is thus a hybrid sufferer of two traumas. Outka shines a pandemic spotlight on T. S. Eliot’s ‘Wasteland of Influenza’ and the pandemic violence embedded in W. B. Yeats’s ‘Second Coming’ (1919), which “From one perspective ... reads as a fever dream or a delirious nightmare seen from within a dangerously ill body” (171) and also an apocalyptic “terrain of illness-based violence that merges when a lethal disease reaches pandemic levels” (182). Surely there are resonances here, too, for Lawrence’s apocalyptic writings of the 1920s?

Viral Modernism ends, as I hinted, with a reconsideration of the spiritualism that boomed after the war and takes an interesting turn to the fears of contagion that haunt zombie literature, from the 1920s stories of H. P. Lovecraft to contemporary television series such as *The Walking Dead*. But I will finish with Outka’s reading of Woolf’s ‘On Being Ill’ as a text that hides the pandemic in plain sight, entangled with the war. While Woolf cites influenza as a universal experience that is absent from literature, she does not refer to the pandemic so that “Even as she writes about the hidden qualities of illness in literature ..., Woolf deftly hides and reveals the biggest outbreak of illness since the plague” (106). Woolf also draws many parallels between war and disease, writing of the neglect of “Those great wars which [the body] wages by itself, with the mind a slave to it, in the solitude of the bedroom against the assault of fever or the oncome of melancholia” (qtd. 108). At stake here is a new way of understanding the body, which Outka’s tour de force of a book excavates as the pandemic body.

Peter Fifield’s ambitious study takes up the entire gamut of physical sickness that has been subordinated to studies of

“schizophrenia, shell shock, melancholia and neurosis” (5). As Woolf puts it in ‘On Being Ill’:

People write always about the doings of the mind; the thoughts that come to it; its noble plans; how it has civilised the universe. They show it ignoring the body in the philosopher’s turret; or kicking the body, like an old leather football, across leagues of snow and desert in the pursuit of conquest or discovery. (qtd. 6)

Critics don’t always think of Woolf when it comes to writing the body – or, indeed, of Fifield’s other case studies of the intellectual Eliot or the stream-of-consciousness pioneer Dorothy Richardson – so Fifield bookends these with chapters on Lawrence and Winifred Holtby, the latter offering a middlebrow riposte to the elitism of Woolf’s experience of being ill: “Birth, death, sickness and the care of small children permit little leisure for that exacting occupation” (qtd. 192). Fifield notes that Lawrence may be “unfashionable” (30) but finds him useful because his “strongest claim to enduring literary value is, of course, the unprecedented prominence and rich description he gives in his writing to the body and its sensations” (34). Indeed, Fifield adapts his subtitle ‘Sick Books’ from Lawrence’s oft-quoted letter about shedding one’s sicknesses in books, in order to extrapolate how “modernism’s habits of experimentation and abstraction might be usefully characterized ... as a sickness in its own right” (3).

What most interests Fifield is how “illness is not quarantined to the more secure discourses of medical, testimonial, or biographical forms, but acknowledged within the literary texts themselves” (18). Nonetheless, he orientates each chapter within the biographical context of a specific author, most of whom had a history of illness (Richardson is an exception) and each of whom has written copiously about various manifestations of illness – physical and/or psychological, personal and/or social. The scope of physical illness in modernist texts is vast and largely untapped, so Fifield, like Outka, introduces us to another topic that has been hidden in plain

sight. The choice of texts also overlaps to the extent of *Mrs Dalloway* and *The Waste Land*, but, overall, Outka's deeper engagement with single texts rather than a broader discussion across authors' oeuvres results, at least for me, in a more coherent and thought-provoking read. I will focus on Fifield's chapter on Lawrence, but the others similarly attempt to corral diverse material from a single author. In the case of Lawrence, Fifield convinces me that the subject of illness is too complex and too big for a single chapter – an entire book might be required.

Like Ruderman in her recent birthday lecture (printed above), Fifield begins with Lawrence's letters and notes Lawrence's "refusal of both the Romantic and the invalid roles" (32). He then moves, in a section on 'Non-Fiction of the 1920s: Illness in Theory', to discuss Lawrence's deep engagement with illness as metaphor, as Ruderman has before him (in 'D. H. Lawrence's Disease: Examining the Symptoms of "Illness as Metaphor"', *D. H. Lawrence Review* 36.2 [Autumn 2011], 72–91). Lawrence's concern with "the virus of European culture and ethic" (*IR* 5) is then explored through *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, which Fifield considers "his most comprehensive physiological and cultural theory" (43) and "Lawrentian physiology at its most lyrical and strange" (45). Lawrence's text states that "ideas are the most dangerous germs mankind has ever been injected with" (*PFU* 115–16), which has prompted Frances Wilson to speculate about Lawrence as an "anti-vaxxer" in the publicity for her new biography (also reviewed in this number).

Women in Love is a recurrent point of reference for Fifield, which would almost certainly repay more extended analysis, but instead he offers readings of a triptych of 'Sun', *Sons and Lovers* and *The Rainbow*, followed by consideration of 'The Blind Man' and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. There is much of interest here, although the opening case of 'Sun' is salutary in that Fifield concludes that we don't know whether "Juliet's ill health is the cause or symptom of the decay in interpersonal relations. Her social, emotional, psychological, and physical illness remains an

indivisible, experiential whole, rather than an illness and its symptoms" (54). This productive ambiguity abounds in Lawrence's oeuvre, not least in *Sons and Lovers*, where Fifield focuses on Walter Morel, who becomes infantilised by his pit injuries and whose "malingering would seem to place Walter closer to the erotic cripple Paul" (57). Fifield leaves much to unpack here, and likewise in his reading of the horses' scene in *The Rainbow*, which is similarly suggestive and again merits fuller treatment. Fifield sketches how "Ursula's profound pain" is at once "revealing", as illness can be for Woolf, and "confusing", when it "obliterates thought" (Elaine Scarry is invoked in this regard although no reference or explanation is offered). Fifield's argument is that Lawrence thereby communicates "a strong sense of the changeableness of illness", and the diversity of Fifield's condensed readings do add weight to his thesis.

Finally, as regards Lawrence, Fifield turns to 'Postwar Invalids in "The Blind Man" and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*', since, as he points out, "Some of the most well-known invalids of Lawrence's fiction do not have an infectious disease but an injury or a disability" (51). Maurice Pervin's experience "shows injury and its attendant loss to be an ambivalent intensifier of sensation, emotion, and interaction", while Clifford Chatterley is recognised as the "most prominent physically afflicted character in Lawrence's oeuvre" (66). However, Fifield highlights how, too, "Mellors is vividly not well" (70), in a chapter that seeks overall to "complicate the image of Lawrence as a sufferer rather than a thinker and author of illness" (71). Indeed, although Lawrence himself did much to downplay his own suffering (as Ruderman shows in her lecture), Fifield begins to reveal that illness is everywhere in his work and will repay careful attention.

By contrast with Lawrence and Woolf, then, there follows an analysis of Eliot's poetry in which "illness is not lingered over but used as a luminous detail and grim sign" (122) and of Richardson's *Pilgrimage* as a "dental novel" that relocates illness away from solitude and creativity "in a complex and highly specific social

setting” (148). Holtby, finally, delivers a “revaluation of sickness parallel to ‘On Being Ill’ but with a distinctively middlebrow complexion” (185), notably in her feisty exchange with Woolf. Fifield thus traverses the fractious terrain between literary modernists who could agree on little – not even on being ill.

Adam Lecznar, *Dionysus after Nietzsche: The Birth of Tragedy in Twentieth-Century Literature and Thought*.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.

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Reviewed by Stewart Smith

Adam Lecznar’s book is impressive in scope. While numerous works, including John Burt Foster’s *Heirs to Dionysus: A Nietzschean Current in Literary Modernism* (1981) and Keith M. May’s *Nietzsche and Modern Literature: Themes in Yeats, Rilke, Mann and Lawrence* (1988), are mainly concerned with Nietzsche’s impact on early twentieth-century literary culture, Lecznar’s wide-ranging study pays particular attention to the influence of Nietzsche’s early seminal book, *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), on twentieth-century classical studies, anthropology, philosophy, literature, theatre, and postcolonial writing. Providing illuminating accounts of the reception of Nietzsche’s text, Lecznar makes a cogent and compelling case for acknowledging a cultural and intellectual tradition gravitating around Nietzsche’s Dionysus, the deity at the centre of his representation of ancient Greek tragedy.

Chapter One charts shifts in the approaches to the ancient Greeks and Nietzsche’s Dionysus in the work of the classical scholar Jane Harrison. Lecznar begins by pointing out that Harrison drew early inspiration from Nietzsche’s subversive text with her notion of chthonic or earth deities standing in opposition to the idealised, anthropomorphic Olympian gods conventionally celebrated by classical scholars. He then shows how Harrison in

Themis: A Study of the Social Origins of Greek Religion (1927) comes to identify Dionysus with collective emotional experiences, the “substratum” of all religious forms (486) as against the comparatively narrow characterisation of the deity in her earlier work. Finally, by drawing our attention to Harrison’s introduction to *Themis* and “rejection of the primacy of Dionysus” (66), Lecznar demonstrates that Harrison ultimately commends Apollo’s structuring and ordering principle as a counterbalance to the Dionysian chaos of the contemporary world.

Notably, in Chapter One, Lecznar implicitly perpetuates a misreading of Nietzsche’s *The Birth of Tragedy* (this version trans. Shaun Whiteside, Penguin, 1993), which resurfaces in later chapters, by neglecting to comment on Nietzsche’s insistence on the need for Apollonian illusion to check the Dionysian “horror and absurdity” (40), or to point to the text’s hypothesis that the achievement of tragic Greek culture rested on a delicate synthesis of Apollo’s form-giving capacity and Dionysus’ instinctive, irrational energy. Hence the reader is led to incorrectly infer that Harrison’s later championing of the Apollonian marks a departure from Nietzsche’s text.

Lecznar’s interpretation of Richard Schechner’s 1968 play, *Dionysus in 69*, in Chapter Four, reinforces this error. While not noted by Lecznar, this Chapter somewhat parallels his account of Harrison’s initial enthusiasm followed by later equivocation towards Dionysus. Schechner’s book, *Public Domain: Essays on the Theatre* (1969) is shown to question whether ritualised or performative Dionysian experiences, such as those offered by *Dionysus in 69* with its fusion of audience and performer (which included sexual acts), can exist “without the built-in control of a strong social system” (228). Importantly, while Lecznar’s Chapter acknowledges Nietzsche’s awareness of the destructive dimension of Dionysian experience in *Birth*, it still needs to clarify that Schechner, like Harrison, is echoing, rather than departing from, the central thesis of Nietzsche’s text: namely that any form of cultural

flourishing depends on the co-existence of Dionysian and Apollonian forms.

Of primary interest to readers of Lawrence, Chapter Two, “‘A Great Kick at Misery’: D. H. Lawrence”, sets out to articulate and develop the “anti-tragic sensibility” (87), apparent in Lawrence’s well-known comments on Arnold Bennett in a letter from 1912 (*IL* 459). Yet while Lecznar asserts that “Lawrence argues forcefully that tragedy is a genre and a concept that must be left behind so that human beings can flourish in the world” (70), he understates the point that it “could represent something more affirmative” for Lawrence (81). Consequently, the alignment of Lawrence’s *Study of Thomas Hardy* with what Lecznar refers to as Nietzsche’s “mounting critique of its [tragedy’s] moral implications” in *The Gay Science* (1882) may neatly foreground Lawrence’s criticism of what he held to be Hardy’s narrow, moral vision of the tragic (71). However, by privileging Nietzsche’s later text in this Chapter, Lecznar ignores that Lawrence’s “savage satisfaction” (*STH* 25) at imagining the perishing of Hardy’s individual characters against the backdrop of Egdon Heath strikingly resembles Nietzsche’s evocative descriptions in *Birth* of the pleasure experienced by the spectator-participant of ancient Greek tragedy. Furthermore, Lecznar notes that in *Sketches of Etruscan Places and Other Italian Essays* Lawrence posits a binary between, on one hand, his denigration of an alienated, northern European sensibility gripped by regret at the transient character of existence – “the root of the feeling of tragedy” (*SEP* 237) – and on the other hand, Lawrence’s praise for the vital, southern/Etruscan attitude, whose acceptance of ephemerality derives from a rich connection to cosmic rhythms and forces. Lecznar refers to Lawrence’s account of this Etruscan approach as evincing the “innocence of tragedy” (86). However, I take this dichotomy to support the suggestion that Lawrence is not rejecting tragedy and the tragic per se; rather, he is particularly hostile towards a certain pessimistic attitude, one of hopelessness and resignation, which may be induced by the tragic.

A further concern regarding Lecznar's treatment of Lawrence centres on the interpretation of Gerald Crich in *Women in Love*. Lecznar alludes to Ursula's recognition of Gerald's resemblance to Dionysus (WL 101) to claim that Gerald is an "avatar of the God Dionysus" (83), and that "Lawrence makes Gerald into a form of Nietzsche's archetypal tragic hero and anticipates his destruction" (82). Lecznar's discussion is rather brief, however, and fails to consider the complexities of either Lawrence's characterisation or his presentation of the tragic in this novel. For Gerald, the technocratic industrialist who leads the ruthless organisation of natural forces, is also "the God of the machine" (WL 223) who can be identified with Nietzsche's notion of the Alexandrian in *Birth*, an extreme form of Apollonian rationality. This resonance pervades Lawrence's novel, as Birkin considers Gerald as "one of these strange white wonderful demons from the north" who is emblematic of "ice-destructive knowledge, snow-abstract annihilation" in contrast to the more Dionysian "African process" of dissolution (WL 254). I would also add that Lawrence's comment in *Twilight of Italy and Other Essays* on Northern Europe's "practicing on itself the Dionysic ecstasy" (TI 200) may be invoked to offer a more nuanced investigation of Gerald's complex relation to the Dionysian.

Turning in Chapter Three to Martin Heidegger's philosophical engagements with Nietzsche and tragedy to reflect on Heidegger's involvement with National Socialism, Lecznar's approach is intriguing. Firstly, he shows the absence of Dionysus in Heidegger's lectures, seminars and writings on Nietzsche to be incongruent with Heidegger's interest in irrational, ecstatic modes of being, his allusions to the god in other writings, and his sustained engagement with the Greeks and Nietzsche. Lecznar construes this absence, or avoidance, as suggestive of Heidegger's awareness of the association between Dionysus's violent destructiveness and the National Socialism he sought to distance himself from. This interesting Chapter then traces how Heidegger's later post-war writings similarly signal his detachment from Nazism. According to

Leczna, Heidegger foregrounds Anaximander's (Dionysian) stress on human ephemerality to suggest that revolutionary movements can offer no enduring impact or significance.

The pessimistic nature of tragedy also comes to the fore in the study's fifth and final Chapter which explores racial and postcolonial concerns through an examination of the role of Dionysus in Wole Soyinka's work. Focussing particularly on the play, *The Bacchae of Euripides: A Communion Rite* (1973), Lecznar shows how Soyinka represents Dionysus as both a figure of emancipation and potential tyranny. Although Lecznar links Soyinka to Lawrence in terms of their shared opposition to tragedy's pessimism, it seems that the implications of Soyinka's emergent ambivalence towards Nietzsche's Dionysus suggest stronger continuities with Harrison and Schechner.

It is noteworthy that in the study's final chapter on Soyinka, Lecznar invokes an aphorism from Nietzsche's *Twilight of the Idols* (first edition 1888, this version *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols and Other Writings*, eds J. Norman and A. Ridley, trans. J. Norman, Cambridge UP, 2005) to register Nietzsche's departure from the Dionysian vision in the earlier *Birth*. In contrast to any picture of ecstatic, communal licentiousness, Nietzsche's aphorism defines freedom in terms of "Having the will to be responsible for yourself. Maintaining the distance that divides us" (213). While unacknowledged by Lecznar, it is evident that this insistence on the self's boundaries and his emphasis on self-constitution in this late work resonates with the Apollonian form-giving principle described in *Birth*. At the same time, the suggestion that Nietzsche has distanced himself from the Dionysian can be questioned by noting that Nietzsche proclaimed himself to be "the last disciple of the philosopher Dionysus" in *Ecce Homo: How One Becomes What One Is* (first edition 1888, this version reprint 1992, trans. R. J. Hollingdale, Penguin, 121). My point is that a rich tension animates Nietzsche's entire corpus, it is central to the interpretative difficulties facing his readers, and it can be construed in terms of and traced to the Apollonian-Dionysian

dynamic presented in *Birth*. As suggested above, this strain also appears in Lawrence's characterisation of Gerald Crich in *Women in Love*. While Lecznar's impressively wide-ranging study is particularly illuminating when discussing the broad contexts in which Nietzsche's *Birth* was received, this tension must come to the forefront of its analyses of Nietzsche's Greeks and those works influenced by this seminal text.

Rebecca Beasley, *Russomania: Russian Culture and the Creation of British Modernism, 1881–1922*.

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Reviewed by Galya Diment

When I first got a copy of Rebecca Beasley's new book from the publisher, I opened it with a pronounced sense of excitement and anticipation. Quite a few similar studies have already appeared in the last decade, including *A People Passing Rude: British Responses to Russian Culture*, edited by Anthony Cross (Open Book, 2012), *Russia in Britain, 1880–1940: From Melodrama to Modernism*, edited by Beasley and Philip Ross Bullock (Oxford UP, 2013), Caroline Maclean's *The Vogue for Russia: Modernism and the Unseen in Britain 1900–1930* (Edinburgh UP, 2015), and Olga Soboleva and Angus Wrenn's *From Orientalism to Cultural Capital: The Myth of Russia in British Literature of the 1920s* (Peter Lang, 2017). Yet, by its sheer size, this one promised to be the most comprehensive and multipronged of them all. What I discovered was that in some ways it is, and yet in some rather important ways, it is not. The study is indeed very ambitious in its scope but, unfortunately, often at the expense of a more enlightening and original analysis. It is likewise painstakingly researched but not sufficiently conceptualised as to how all the parts of the British Russomania, discussed in such detail, flow

together to result in a fuller and more nuanced understanding of Russian literature and culture.

As to details, the sheer amount of information, while obviously welcome to specialists in the field, often feels overwhelming. Also overwhelming is the very structure of the main part of the book, which in addition to four chapters, each containing three to five subchapters, also has three so-called “interchapters”. To the best of my discernment, the interchapters are reserved for areas that are somewhat peripheral to the main narrative in *Russomania*, like Interchapter 3 (“Modern Languages”) which discusses, at some considerable, and probably unnecessary, length (25 pages), who taught Russian literature in British universities, precisely where, and precisely what. Much of this information could have been significantly briefer or even relegated to footnotes instead of further crowding the already rather overcrowded volume.

As a reader, I would have gladly traded this part of the book for more attention and analysis given to the challenges of the Russians – and other former citizens of the Russian Empire, among them, Joseph Conrad – who were living in London at the time. They frequently found themselves in an unenviable position vis-à-vis their native country and their English friends. On the one hand, many of them were very much the enablers of this very *Russomania* discussed in the book, both through their influence and, in some cases, translations. On the other, due to their past personal experiences in the Russian Empire (which had made them leave it, to begin with) they could not embrace, and often even resented, the *Russophilia* breaking out all around them. One of them was Samuel Kotliansky, featured in the book in relation to his translations with the help of Lawrence, Mansfield and Murry (265–91), but not really as a personality in his own right who had to deal with his often crippling conflicting feelings about the country and the culture he was helping people to fall in love with.

Lawrence is mentioned fairly regularly in *Russomania*. The biggest chunk of the discussion related to him is of two parts: Lawrence collaborating with Kotliansky on translations, as

mentioned above, and how reading Dostoevsky affected his own novels and, in particular, *Women in Love* (284–301). Much of this critical territory is well trodden by, among others, George Zytaruk, Peter Kaye, and, most thoroughly, Olga Soboleva and Angus Wrenn in *Orientalism and Cultural Capital*, so there is very little here that is really new. A less explored area in Lawrence Studies is his attitude not just towards Russian literature and philosophy but to Russian history in the making. Sobolev and Wrenn give an excellent reading of it in a chapter appropriately called “D. H. Lawrence: ‘Russia Will Certainly Inherit the Future’”, and one would expect further meaningful analysis in Beasley’s book that is entirely devoted to Russomania.

Beasley does quote an enthusiastic letter Lawrence sent to Kotliansky in 1917, following the triumphant – for Russian democratic and pro-Western forces – February Revolution: “I feel that our chiefest hope for the future is Russia. When I think of the young new country there, I love it inordinately. It is the place of hope. We must go, sooner or a little later” (3L 121). As perceived by him, Russia now had a potential of becoming a promising version of his Rananim, and he was even determined at this point to learn Russian. Kotliansky was likewise excited and started making plans to translate *Women in Love* and publish it in Russia since Lawrence was having difficulties with finding a willing publisher in England. Then yet another revolution changed their plans. Beasley notes that fairly soon after the October Revolution, when the initial excitement over the Bolsheviks was calming down, Russian expatriates, among them Kotliansky and John Cournos, as well as the more recent political refugees fleeing the Bolsheviks (like Peter Struve, a prominent historian, philosopher, and the father of Gleb Struve), tried hard to convince their British acquaintances and the wider public not to trust the Soviets (388–93). What is hardly addressed in the book, though, is the confusion and, in some cases, even trauma inflicted by it all on former true believers in Russia’s significant potential, whose fervent hopes for Russia were largely

dashed by the Bolsheviks beginning to exercise their often ruthless power.

The consequences of the October Revolution definitely changed the flavour of Russomania among the English intelligentsia, and they employed different mechanisms to cope with it. Among the prominent writers, H. G. Wells chose to go to the new Russia right away, to see for himself (and to meet with Lenin), while Virginia Woolf assumed a wait-and-see approach, opting at that point not to accept as inevitable Russian émigrés' fearful predictions. Lawrence, after his initial support of the Bolsheviks, appears to have been gradually absorbing the collective foreboding coming from the Russian diaspora. One can even go as far as to say that, in the long run, he never fully recovered from his disappointment about what could have been.

By the end of 1922, now let down by the potential of Taos, another Ranim that was not to be, Lawrence, again, started telling his friends back in England that he may, after all, go to Russia. There were, however, no longer any declarations of love for Russia or of belief in its future. It was much more practical: the economically depressed country – “No money there (they say)” (4L 362) – was a cheap place to live, as well as a welcome counterpoint to the overly materialistic America. By then he and Frieda could also stay with Ivy Litvinov, who was already in Moscow. That trip did not take place either and two years later Lawrence was already strongly professing no intention of going to Russia (which ceased being a “no money there” country with the implementation of the materialistic New Economic Policy). He also declared that Bolsheviks and their agenda simply bored him. All these ups and downs in his attitude towards Soviet Russia made Lawrence's personal Russomania, where Russophilia always competed with Russophobia, even more convoluted. And while *Russomania* does not explore it in much detail, Lawrence was definitely not unique in his heavily ambivalent response to the October Revolution, which added so many subtle and not-so-subtle hues to England's overall perception of Russian culture.

It should also be noted that, immediately after the Revolution, at least for some English literati, the main focus of Russomania probably shifted from Russian literature to Russian art, since Malevich's Suprematism and Tatlin's Constructivism were modernistically breathtaking, needed no translation, and were still flourishing under the new regime before being strangled by the subsequent dogma of Socialist Realism. But even though *Russomania* is ostensibly about the influence of Russian culture, not just Russian literature, visual arts are, regrettably, not paid much attention. That is surprising because, as we know, writing and painting were very much intertwined in English literary communities (famously in Bloomsbury) where some, like Lawrence, practiced both. The only exception is Léon Bakst, but he finds his way into the book through the back door, solely because he was the artistic director for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, which was of course instrumental in having created Russomania in all of Europe in the first place.

So I end up being very thankful to Rebecca Beasley for her laborious research and rich factual information, which no doubt will help me greatly in my own scholarly pursuits, but, like Lawrence with Russia, am genuinely wistful about what could have been.