

CALL FOR SHORT PAPERS BY 15 APRIL 2021

D. H. LAWRENCE, DISTANCE AND PROXIMITY AN INTERNATIONAL VIRTUAL SYMPOSIUM 10–14 JULY 2021 (SYMPOSIUM DATES NOW EXTENDED)

"What a pity that distance remains distance, so absolutely"



In our time of pandemic that necessitates social distancing and raises concerns about our proximity to others, we propose a series of online roundtables and workshops of *short* papers (500-1000 words) to consider D. H. Lawrence on or from a distance and in or on proximity. To accommodate as many sessions as possible, across international time zones, we have extended the dates: please note that the virtual symposium will begin on 10 July 2021.

We now invite abstract proposals for *short* position papers that will further discussion of any of the following workshop themes (abstracts are given on the pages below, workshop leaders in parenthesis):

- A Lawrence and the business of medicine** (*Judith Ruderman, Duke University NC*)
- B Lawrence and the dis-ease of disabilities** (*Chloe Leung, University of Edinburgh*)
- C Lawrence and the problem of demos** (*David Game, Australian National University*)
- D Distance and proximity in *The Poems*** (*Holly A. Laird, University of Tulsa OK*)
- E Lawrence's distance from or proximity to nature** (*Terry Gifford, Bath Spa University*)
- F Modernity as attraction and repulsion for Lawrence** (*Lara Feigl, King's College London*)
- G Universal Lawrence: a creative non-fiction workshop** (*Naveed Rehan, Pakistan*)
- H Home and displacement in *The Lost Girl*** (*Margrét Gunnarsdóttir Champion, Gothenburg*)
- I Lawrence as a master of the short story** (*Marina Ragachewskaya, Minsk University, Belarus*)
- J Lawrence's art of fiction and its proximity to fact** (*Fiona Fleming, Paris Nanterre University*)
- K New work by postgraduates and 3 minute thesis showcase** (*Sean Matthews, Nottingham*)
- L Twenty-first-century approaches** (*Nanette Norris, Royal Military College Saint-Jean, Quebec*)

Please submit abstract proposals of 200 words, together with a concise bio that includes your *geographical location during the symposium*, for short papers of 500-1000 words, by email, and with the workshop title in your header, to dhlsymposium2021@gmail.com. **The deadline is 15 April 2021, but we advise early submission as this event is likely to be oversubscribed.**

Acceptance of abstracts will be notified by 30 April and workshop participants should prepare to share their position paper (**500-1000 words**) by 10 June. ***Please note that the aim of these online workshops is to stimulate research and share work in progress among a small group (c. 6 people) rather than present finished work or conclusions.*** Participants will also be invited to publish their position papers on *JDHLS Online* (and are welcome to submit their finished work for consideration by any of the peer-reviewed D. H. Lawrence journals).

The symposium will be hosted on Zoom by the D. H. Lawrence Society of Great Britain with **no fee for registration** and everyone is invited to attend any or all of the events, regardless of whether you are scheduled to present. The symposium will be scheduled to accommodate international time zones as far as possible, usually between 1300–2200 GMT.

Please refer to our website for further announcements www.dhlawrencesociety.com/symposium and reach out to the organisers with queries or expressions of interest: dhlsymposium2021@gmail.com.

We look forward to bringing Lawrence scholars and enthusiasts from around the world back into proximity with Lawrence and each other, so please do join us.

Susan Reid (Organiser)

On behalf of the International Symposium Committee:

Kate Foster (D. H. Lawrence Society)

David Game (Australia)

Andrew Harrison (UK)

Holly A. Laird (USA)

Stefania Michelucci (Italy)

Nanette Norris (Canada)

Doo-Sun Ryu (Korea)

Joseph R. Shafer (*JDHLS Online*)

WORKSHOP ABSTRACTS

A Lawrence and the business of medicine (*Judith Ruderman, Duke University*)

In a time of pandemic, a workshop on this topic has particular resonance. The word “business” in the title is to be understood both narrowly and broadly. In its narrow sense – as occupation, trade, commercial enterprise, or commercial site – it can be discussed, for one example, with regard to the various medical potions and treatments sought by Lawrence in his life of illness. What were the costs, literal and figurative, of Lawrence’s employment (again, in both senses) of doctors, spas, sanatoria, and the like? In its broad sense, “business” can mean a subject with which one is seriously or rightfully concerned. Lawrence wrote about the business of medicine in both senses, narrow and broad. Medical practices and procedures, not to mention illness itself, are to be found throughout his works in all genres, including the letters.

This flexibility of term permits a wide variety of approaches, all having to do with the business of medicine. In addition to the biographical slant suggested above, one might focus on a particular Lawrence work; or relate the subject to Lawrence’s views on science; or compare Lawrence’s approaches to the topic to those of other authors. These are merely some possibilities among many.

All workshop leader bios are available at: www.dhlawrencesociety.com/symposium

B Lawrence and the dis-ease of disabilities (*Chloe Leung, University of Edinburgh*)

Peter Fifield's *Modernism and Physical Illness* (2020) contends that Lawrence's writings "see a delicate interplay between the use of disease in a metaphorical and a literal sense". Building on Fifield's recent work, this workshop aims to investigate how Lawrence's metaphors of disease infect its literal embodiment in the *dis-eased* or disabled body. Notorious for his valorisation of a phallocentric physicality empowered by his infamous loins of darkness, Lawrence is often susceptible to an ableism that apotheosises physical prowess. In this sense, Lawrence appears to be an odd candidate to advocate for disability studies. At the same time, however, Lawrence's ostensible complicity with able-bodiedness seems to be complicated by his attraction to strange moods and oblique forms of mental disabilities: Lawrence seems to say that mental *disabilities* are required in order to instigate a physically *abled* body. This workshop welcomes research questions that consider questions of "illness" and "disease" in Lawrence's work (and in comparison with his contemporaries) and go beyond the following: How might we understand Lawrence's narrative indulgence in uneasy emotional upheavals? Is there a tension between Lawrence's valorisation of the body and his (dis)interest in mental pathologies? What is the nature of (dis)ease in Lawrence's work? Could (dis)ease give rise to therapeutic or cathartic euphoria?

C Lawrence and the problem of demos (*David Game, Australian National University*)

In recent years, several Anglophone democracies, notably the United Kingdom, the United States and the Commonwealth of Australia, have produced highly polarising leaders, whose policies and practices have variously harnessed or promoted existing divisions in society as a means to gaining or retaining power. In handling issues such as Brexit in the UK, Black Lives Matter and Immigration in the US, and the science of climate change in Australia, leaders and interest groups have utilised a range of non-inclusive, non-democratic tactics such as the vilification of opponents, selective use of the coercive powers of the state, and blatant distortions of facts and information. Many observers feel that in these countries, seen historically as flag carriers of democracy, democracy itself is at stake.

In Lawrence's *Kangaroo*, his most obviously political novel, Lawrence depicts an Australia in which the protagonist Somers, "for the first time felt himself immersed in real democracy" (K 21), a situation he "could not stand" (K 22). The novel critiques the battle for supremacy between sharply divided forces of the right and the left, of labour and capital, which dominated Anglophone politics in the wake of the Russian Revolution and First World War, and continue to do so today.

Workshop papers could consider Lawrence's engagement with democracy in *Kangaroo* in light of his non-fictional writings, such as "Democracy", and *Movements in European History*, his notions of leadership, authority and aristocracy, comparisons with other writers or artists, and the extent which Lawrence's critique of democracy anticipates or speaks to recent political history in the UK, the US and Australia. These are only some possibilities and other approaches to or reframing of the problem of the demos in Lawrence's work are welcome.

D Distance and proximity in *The Poems* (*Holly A. Laird, University of Tulsa*)

Scholars are invited to embark on the further study and reassessment of the poetry of D. H. Lawrence made possible by the Cambridge University Press Edition of *The Poems*, edited by Christopher Pollnitz, through (1) the development of new 'Readings' (up to 1000 words) of a poem or a few poems and their versions, and (2) focusing on the symposium theme of distance and proximity. Scholars with access to the most recent 2020 issue of *JDHLS* on the poetry may consult the fifteen short pieces featured there for examples or they may request a sample via dhlsymposium2021@gmail.com.

E Distance from or proximity to nature: ecocritical readings of Lawrence (Terry Gifford, Bath Spa)

“A turn to an environment-centred conception of politics will transform what is at present a male-dominated discourse on Lawrence and the political”, writes Howard J. Booth in *The Edinburgh Companion to D. H. Lawrence and the Arts* (2020: 132). However, to suggest that Lawrence “can be seen as anticipating a progressive green politics” (*ibid.*) is problematic. Just what are the social and political implications of Lawrence’s presentations of individual characters’ distance or proximity to nature in his novels? How does the reader of his poetry distinguish between what Lawrence characterises as “our petty little love of nature” and his call for “living with the cosmos, and being honoured by the cosmos” (A 76)? How to distinguish between the “blood-consciousness” of trees and people in this context, or between plants and animals more generally? What is Lawrence’s sense of the “feminine” in nature and the nature of its potential for a better human inhabitation of the planet? From tree-worship in *Fantasia and the Unconscious* to apprehensions of the circumambient universe and the lost knowledge of the Etruscan race, how can our environment shape ways of being and knowing? This workshop invites reassessments of Lawrence’s engagements with nature and the environment from a wide range of possible approaches.

F “The moment, the quick of all change and haste in opposition”: modernity as attraction and repulsion for Lawrence (Lara Feigl, King’s College London)

D. H. Lawrence, as we all know, was a man of extremes. He liked to contradict other people and he liked to contradict himself: often within the same sentence. He hated the “modern” woman, but lovingly brought Ursula and Gudrun Brangwen – the most alluring and most determined of modern women – into the world. He loathed modernity, believing it was destroying nature and destroying all that was natural in humanity, while celebrating change and progress and finding ways to portray all the teeming energy of a world in constant flux. In short, he hated the modern world, but also brought the modern world into being.

This workshop will discuss Lawrence’s attitude to modernity, as manifested in his work across genres, and in the light of recent critical developments. Position papers might consider this in relation to sexuality, nature, religious experience, psychoanalysis, the modern city, or might consider the question in a more abstract and general light. Modernity has always been caught up with and pledged to the endless construction of discursive extremes. The experience of being a writer in modernity is one of being drenched in passionate arguments; Lawrence typified this aspect of modern sensibility and he also exemplified the desire to escape it that lies at its heart. This raises profound questions at the level of the cultural interpretation of history, our understanding of Lawrence’s personal biography and perhaps above all the experience of literary style itself.

G Universal Lawrence: a creative non-fiction workshop (Naveed Rehan, Pakistan)

The power of Lawrence’s writing reaches far beyond his homeland, and even the many countries that he visited, as witnessed by my own situation as a scholar based in Pakistan who has never visited the UK. Although several scholars – notably Geoff Dyer, Pico Iyer and Betsy Sargent – have taken a personal approach to Lawrence in some of their books and essays, this approach is largely missing in the contributions of the many Lawrentian scholars around the world who do not hail from North America or Europe.

This workshop aims to look beyond the established Anglo-American and colonial contexts of Lawrence's reception to consider the universality of his writing. We invite abstracts from Lawrentians around the world that explore his reach beyond his usual geographical and cultural contexts and that embrace both personal and theoretical perspectives on universality (such as those outlined by writers and theorists of creative nonfiction like Phillip Lopate, Robert Root, Bill Roorbach, and others). Contributors could share how, why, and when they became interested in Lawrence, and what attracted them about his writing, since in most instances the writing was all they had to go on, without a first-hand familiarity with Lawrence's surroundings. In essence, we would like to invite you to write a creative nonfiction essay (around 1000 words or 4 double-spaced pages) detailing the reasons why Lawrence is of personal interest to you.

H Home and displacement in D. H. Lawrence's *The Lost Girl* (Margrét Gunnarsdóttir Champion, University of Gothenburg)

At the time of the publication of *The Lost Girl* (1920), Lawrence wrote to the author Compton Mackenzie that he considered the novel "different from all my other work: not immediate, not intimate [but] all set across a distance". The statement seems to imply Lawrence's dismissal of his latest production, avowing its aesthetic inferiority to works such as *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*. However, from the viewpoint of modernist art, "distance" is an enabling condition, precipitating disinterested explorations and, in the words of T. S. Eliot, "an escape from emotion". In that context, the word "lost" in the title can be understood as restorative, not condescending, and Alvina Houghton's novelistic quest as toward a discovery of self-division and difference, not subjective wholeness. This workshop, then, proposes to examine the tension or dialectic of connotations of home and displacement as they resonate throughout the narrative, interfacing with (but not limited to) topics such as self and other; the familiar and the uncanny; Englishness and the foreign; departure and return; nostalgia and the modern. Further questions can be raised in relation to the socio-political realities and cultural forms of early European modernity, and to the status of the novel itself as traditional home or a vehicle for dismantling and renewal. Comparisons with ideas of home and displacement elsewhere in Lawrence's work and that of his contemporaries will also be considered.

I Lawrence as a master of the short story (Marina Ragachewskaya, Minsk State Linguistic University)

Lawrence Studies in recent decades have been focusing more strongly on the writer's biography, drawing parallels between the author's life and his art. This workshop aims to address the subtle imbalance between biography and text through discussion and deeper analysis of the stylistic and, in general terms, "technical" richness of Lawrence's short stories – the genre he modified and perfected all his life.

A variety of subjects are welcome. What evolution did Lawrence's short stories undergo? In what way is he different from / similar to other world-famous masters of the short story (Chekhov, Maupassant, O'Henry, Maugham, Mansfield, and others)? How does the narrative voice shift and the forms vary in his short stories? What artistic devices provide for reader-involvement? Are his stories centred in "a moment" in time or in character? This list of topics is by no means exhaustive; any insights, unconventional or original, and provocative approaches will enliven our discourse and contribute to the critical revival of Lawrence and his short stories. Short papers discussing specific short stories will supply solid ground and substance to this workshop. Different approaches to analysis and interpretation may include, but are not limited to, philosophical and gender-related readings, psychoanalytic and formalist, historical and biographical interpretations.

J Lawrence's connections: the art of fiction and its proximity to fact (Fiona Fleming, Paris Nanterre)

This workshop will consider the many ways that Lawrence's art – and critical receptions of it – are shaped by his connections and blend fact with fiction. From his notorious fictionalisations of family and friends, and his conflicts with them, to his personal positioning in relation to other writers and their work, where is the boundary between fact and fiction in Lawrence's work and to what extent can we separate his work and our reception of it from his biography? We invite short papers that address new findings as regards characters and other aspects of his fiction that are drawn from life or that reassess his artistic proximity to his contemporaries (as a critic or as a subject of criticism). *Please note that we can only accept one or two more participants for this workshop, so please send expressions of interest as soon as possible.*

K New work in Lawrence Studies: a postgraduate workshop and 3 minute thesis showcase

(Sean Matthews, University of Nottingham)

We invite abstracts for short papers (c. 500-1000 words) from postgraduate students and early career researchers on **any** topic in D. H. Lawrence studies, including any aspect of his work, life, literary contacts and relationship to modernism. We especially welcome papers relating to the virtual symposium's overarching theme of distance and proximity.

We would also like to showcase short (3 minute) videos introducing new projects in Lawrence Studies being developed by the emerging generation of postgraduate researchers and early career researchers. With so many opportunities for networking and disseminating new work currently unavailable, we're keen to hear about and promote new work!

The workshop session will be led by Sean Matthews, who will facilitate the sharing and constructive discussion of papers among a group of up to 8 participants (in keeping with the "virtual" ethos of the symposium, we might explore the possibility of pre-recording papers – a way to mitigate the challenges of time zones and unstable technology and some of the anxieties of performing "live"). Please email an abstract to the symposium organisers at dhlsymposium@gmail.com or reach out to sean.matthews@nottingham.ac.uk with any questions.

L Twenty-first-century approaches to Lawrence and his world (Nanette Norris, Royal Military College Saint-Jean, Quebec, Canada)

This workshop will develop the discussion of how we read and teach Lawrence in the twenty-first century, given the populist rise of recent years, the politics of gender and race, the heightened sense of visible and invisible borders, visions of utopia versus dystopia in a post-Covid-19 world, amongst other ideas that make our world more – or less – akin to the world Lawrence inhabited. *Please note that we can only accept one or two more participants for this workshop, so please send expressions of interest as soon as possible.*

Further information

Workshop leader bios are available on the symposium website, where further updates and announcements will also be posted: www.dhlawrencesociety.com/symposium

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