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**Kumiko Hoshi, *D. H. Lawrence and Pre-Einsteinian Relativity*.
Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018.
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Reviewed by Jeff Wallace

What is “lost” about Alvina Houghton in *The Lost Girl*? Kumiko Hoshi suggests that the word’s polysemy is figured in three different translations of the novel’s title into Japanese: one, by Tetsuhiko Uemura, that is literal; another, by Akiko Yamada, that means “Alvina’s Degeneration”; and another, in a collection of essays edited by the Kyoto Study Circle of D. H. Lawrence, that means “The Fallen Woman”. In her reading of the novel itself, Hoshi traces even more subtle changes in the word’s meaning. When applied, archly by Miss Pinnergar, to Alvina’s cardplaying with men, it means ruined or at least morally questionable. It also describes how in her trajectory Alvina becomes *déclassé* within the middle class, while when she moves to the Italian mountains with Ciccio, Alvina is geographically and culturally displaced, or lost to the world as it were. Yet finally, this being-lost then becomes the necessary basis of a potential for radically-transformative and affirmative self-fulfilment.

The subtle instabilities of “lost” are of a piece, Hoshi persuasively argues, with a concept of relativity at work in Lawrence’s presentation of human identity: Alvina achieves “a new kind of self” that will “keep changing as long as she has bodily relationships with other humans and the world surrounding her” (74). The substance of this lively and interesting book is that, before Lawrence first read Einstein in 1921, his writing was already strongly imbued with a sense of the relative and of the relational.

In this, Hoshi’s book inevitably invites comparison with Rachel Crossland’s *Modernist Physics: Waves, Particles and Relativities in the Writings of Virginia Woolf and D. H. Lawrence*, also published in 2018 (reviewed in *JDHLS* 5.1 [2018], 213–7). Crossland pays detailed attention to Einstein’s writings, and thus compels the

reader to think more strenuously about the relation of Lawrence's thinking to wave-particle dualism or to the co-existence of relativity with the absolute of light's velocity. Hoshi is less concerned than Crossland about what A. S. Eddington identified in *The Nature of the Physical World* (1928) as the common mistake of conflating a precise scientific theory of relativity with forms of philosophical relativism, despite pointing out that Lawrence himself might be guilty of the same in having Lovatt Somers declare in *Kangaroo* the post-Einsteinian cliché that "Everything is relative" (125).

However, Hoshi takes her cue from Lawrence's observation to S. S. Kotliansky, after allegedly reading the 'Special and General Theory of Relativity', that Einstein wasn't so "metaphysically marvellous", interpreting this as an indication that Lawrence was already strongly aware of a "metaphysics" of relativity. Her book demonstrates that it is still a legitimate strategy to refer to a rich and anticipatory pre-Einsteinian context of relativity informing Lawrence's work before 1921, and that the benefits of exploring the relationship between various relativisms and Einsteinian relativity are likely to outweigh the dangers of loose analogy.

While it is certainly not new in itself to highlight a context of relativisms from which Lawrence drew, Hoshi's approach is refreshing due to the subtlety of her close reading, the choice of primary material and, in particular, the alert yet often surprising illustrative conjunctions drawing together materialist philosophy and the modernist visual arts. For example, in *Women in Love*, Hoshi sees the novel's dialectic between light and dark as an expression of discourses on "ether" as a medium of mutual relationship, giving rise to comparisons of Ernst Haeckel's "relative monism" both with the technique of *chiaroscuro* in Rembrandt and the exploration of centripetal and centrifugal force in the sculpture of Italian Futurist Umberto Boccioni.

A similarly enterprising connection is made between the principle of constant, restless movement in *Aaron's Rod* and the representation of four-dimensional space in modernist painting, notably Marcel Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2*

(1912). Hoshi rightly notes that changes in the thinking of time-space co-ordinates necessarily implied a reassessment of assumptions about the nature of vision; hence, Aaron Sisson's mode of seeing things can be brought into relation with the simultaneous multiple perspectives of Paul Cézanne's still-life painting. Glimpsing the development of relativity in Lawrence's fiction post-Einstein, a very fertile analogy is again proposed between the principle of collage in the writing of *Kangaroo* and the photomontage technique of Hannah Hoch's *Cut With The Dada Kitchen Knife* (1919).

Elsewhere, Hoshi is able to reimagine the familiar historical thematics or preoccupations of Lawrence's fictions within new contexts of relativity. The treatment of the New Woman in *The Lost Girl* is seen as subtly relativised by techniques of Bakhtinian parody, while an important critical comparison of the two very different versions of *The Fox* allows Hoshi to take a detour around familiar sexual-political approaches to this abidingly "strange" novella, emphasising instead a relativistic androgyny applicable not only to Jill March but also to the predatory hunter figure of Henry Grenfell.

Given the boldness of this book's deployment of visual modernism in particular, it is a great shame that the publisher was not able to improve upon the very poor reproduction quality of some of the images used. Nevertheless, this is not sufficient to detract significantly from the clarity of Hoshi's writing and the originality of her argument. *D. H. Lawrence and Pre-Einsteinian Relativity* makes a valuable contribution to our developing understanding of the role of relativity in the Lawrentian thought-adventure, and at a time in world history when, it seems, we need a theory of "human relativity" and of mutual relationality more than ever before.