Insights into D.H. Lawrence's Sardinia

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Edited by

Nick Ceramella and Daniele Marzeddu

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FOREWORD

Insights into D.H. Lawrence's Sardinia consists of 15 essays, mostly resulting from an International Symposium held at the University of Cagliari in Sardinia on 29-30 October 2021. The event received the high patronage of the D.H. Lawrence Society of Great Britain and celebrated the 100th Anniversary of the publication of Lawrence's *Sea and Sardinia*.

The essays have been written by geographically diverse scholars from the Universities of Bath, Malta, Maçeió (Brazil), Cagliari, and Trento. However, I would also like to emphasise the contribution of local Sardinian experts in a variety of areas, such as psychology (involving the relationship and role of women and men), experts in food, travelling, and in the importance of traditional costumes as a sign of the Sardinians' attachment to their land. It will also be most interesting to learn for the first time the invaluable testimony of Barbara, the great grand-daughter of the Sicilian host, whom Lawrence met in person, in Mandas. Indeed, the aim of this collection of essays is to bring forth a fresh and original approach to *Sea and Sardinia* by focusing on these key aspects, which have been hardly touched in previous books dedicated to Lawrence's most renowned travel book.

Finally, and as important as all the above, is the exploration in this publication of Lawrence's search for his own ego through the search of the spirit of place. In fact, we may say that this collection is needed, in as far as it can help to observe and try to react accordingly to the damage human beings have caused to the environment. The methodology applied in this project of examination may be referred to as fieldwork, starting from the reality described by Lawrence in his *Sea and Sardinia* and compared to the reality that emerged from Daniele Marzeddu's photographic approach and the interviews he had with local people in his documentary film, and the observation of their habits.

Nick Ceramella

The book is divided into four parts (see below), including a preparatory short piece, in which Nick Ceramella, who is the literary editor of the volume, discusses the link between literature and photography; thus, paving the way to Lawrence's decision to have *Sea and Sardinia* illustrated with photographs. Ceramella also explains why the photo editor of the volume, Daniele Marzeddu opted for using black and white pictures in carrying out his fieldwork.

Nick Ceramella is an especially fitting literary editor for this volume, having done so much to support Lawrence's legacy throughout his career. In his early days, he contributed to the Lawrence canon in an editorial capacity, in editions such as *The Fox*, *The Virgin and the Gipsy, Sun,* and other short stories, with the late Peter Preston, Director of the D.H. Lawrence Studies Centre at the University of Nottingham.

He has also given talks and presented papers at Lawrence conferences. He chaired and co-organised the following conferences: along with Simonetta de Filippis, the VIII D.H. Lawrence Society Conference, '*D. H. Lawrence and Literary Genres*', Naples 2001; with Serena Cenni, the international Symposium, *Body, Flame, and Desire – D.H. Lawrence and Lady Chatterley's Challenge*, Florence 2008. In 2012, he chaired and co-organised with the "Comitato Gargnano Storica" the First International Symposium, *Lake Garda: Gateway to D H. Lawrence's Voyage to the Sun*, Gargnano, 2007. Then, in 2021, he chaired the International Conference *Return to Sea and Sardinia*, University of Cagliari.

Ceramella is deeply embedded in the Lawrentian community internationally, presenting from Kyoto to Ottawa. He is also though, highly regarded in Lawrence's hometown of Eastwood, and has been Vice President of the D.H. Lawrence Society since 2017. He has a strong connection with the town, having first stayed in the area in 1974, when he began a friendship with Enid Goodband (the D.H. Lawrence Birthplace Museum's first Curator), and met such local legends as Margaret 'Peggy' Needham (Lawrence's niece), Agatha Bircumshaw (friend of Lawrence's sister Ada's) and Olive Slack (the widow of Lawrence's friend and mentor Willie Hopkin'). He was there at the museum's genesis and he has felt the significance of being in the landscape, Lawrence's 'Country of my heart.'

Ceramella's career has seen him teach and write on a variety of topics: Shakespeare, the Renaissance, English theatre, the relationship between literature and music, Italian writers and immigration, Theory and practice of translation studies, and English for the media. Despite this, and by his own admission, he has "hardly ever put Lawrence aside. With all due respect, he has always been on my shoulders like a little monkey".

To celebrate the 100th anniversary of the publication of *Sea and Sardinia*, the Fondazione Sardegna Film Commission supported Daniele Marzeddu to create the film *Return to Sea and Sardinia*. *Sea and Sardinia* is a beautiful book; alive with the people Lawrence saw and flickering with his thought processes as he encounters them. For a film to be able to do this justice is no mean feat, but I would say that Marzeddu's film does it admirably. The combination of contemporary film with archival footage, set against a musical backdrop by Glåsbird, is an aesthetic experience. As the film follows Lawrence's original journey, speaking to local inhabitants of the island, we find impressions of the writer's visit still lingering. The result is a hauntingly beautiful film, which immerses the viewer in a magical Sardinian landscape.

In April 2022 the D.H. Lawrence Birthplace Museum held an event which included a screening of the film and the launch of an exhibition of the 100 photographs presented here. Indeed, the photographs stand on their own merit and are worthy of publication, as well as the online and physical exhibitions of them. Marzeddu is an award-winning photographer and filmmaker and viewing the photographs published here, it is easy to see why. Individually they stand as little works of art but displayed together and sequentially they convey the story of Marzeddu's journey through Sardinia as he created the film, making you feel like a fellow traveller.

Carolyn Melbourne

Here follows a detailed presentation of the book:

Part One: Catching the spirit of place through words and pictures

The first essay here 'Transmuting the spirit of place into literary and photographic art' by **Nick Ceramella** aims at putting the readers in the picture. It is the keynote to the volume, focusing on the importance that the spirit of place had to Lawrence, and how he managed to catch it through his outstanding ability as a writer, with his sharp observation of people and the environment. First, Nick associates that with certain photographs, taken during a trip around Sardinia, which he took with his own q. b. many years ago, holding in his hand Lawrence's *Sea and Sardinia* as some sort of guidebook. Yet, at the same time, he refers to Daniele Marzeddu's pictures, presented here in the next essay.

Indeed, **Daniele Marzeddu** follows suit with the second essay 'Making Pictures to illustrate *Sea and Sardinia*,' consisting of a selection of over 100 pictures that he took around Sicily and Sardinia. He literally makes pictures, in the sense that he creates them. In effect, he grasped the spirit of the places visited and people's attitudes as he observed them. There is no doubt that this chapter takes no further comment, mainly because the pictures in it just need to be looked at closely to convey their messages.

The third and final essay in this section is '*Sea and Sardinia*: the beautiful book' by **Jonathan Long**, who says that Lawrence was closely involved in the design of the book and enlisted South African artist Jan Juta to produce some wonderful illustrations. This paper tells the fascinating story of how the book came to be published, and details the editions of the book, with appropriate illustrations, since first publication both in anglophone countries and elsewhere in translation.

Part Two - Ecology, Psychology, Immigration

Terry Gifford opens this section with 'Ecological affect in *Sea and Sardinia*.' He maintains that the first page of *Sea and Sardinia* is a great example of what ecocritics reckon as psychogeography – the effect of place upon the psyche. The entire book is an exploration of otherness, in both the more-than-human and the cultural that is embedded in place, upon the psyche of the narrator. Lawrence even uses the word 'psyche' to account for the effect of moving from island to mainland: 'And in an hour one changes one's psyche' (*SS*, 170). He also says that Sardinia has an amazing effect on him because it gives 'back I know not what of myself, but a very, very great deal' (*SS*, 117).

'Psychological reading of *Sea and Sardinia*' by **Franca Carboni**, a psychiatrist and psychologist approaches Lawrence using the tools of her profession. She begins her essay by saying that 'D.H. Lawrence shows a constant interest in the psyche of the people he meets in *Sea and Sardinia*.' Though he sometimes describes them in an almost grotesque, comical, and ironic way, while on other occasions, he may even sound disparaging.

Then Franca Carboni says that it is clear that Lawrence is trying to get a psychological insight of the inner nature of the people he meets in order to investigate their personalities. He is looking for 'primitive' people living in a primeval world where nature is uncontaminated. But on doing that, Lawrence seems to overlook Sardinia's geographical position, in the heart of the Mediterranean Sea, which has inevitably exposed its population to numerous contaminations, and has somehow come into contact with other civilizations, resulting in a multi-faceted culture with many contradictions.

Izabel Brandão is the author of '*Sea and Sardinia*: A Lawrentean Journey Away from Fiction? Or the nature of a fictional adventurer.' She says that her reading of *Sea and Sardinia* is aimed at the discovery of a fiction writer writing non-fiction. Indeed, Lawrence constructs a narrative line that builds up an argument to favour the link that makes his readers understand the book as both fiction and non-fiction, something that transforms this experience into an amazing stage for learning more about his subjective ways of seeing nature and (mis)understanding humanity. Despite the fact that the industrialization has spread everywhere, including Sardinia, yet the island still holds a primordial authenticity thanks to the untamed spirit of its native population. His idea that people's clothing represents an irrevocable aspect reflecting and preserving their attachment and love for their native land.

Part Three – Trains, Food, & Tourism

'Sardinia and Railways in Nineteenth-century Travelogues in *Sea and Sardinia'* by **Maria Grazia Dongu** is an article that aims to demonstrate the transmission of images across centuries and national literatures, with particular reference to Sardinia. Maria Grazia examines images, words and collocations related to the description of the train, first in 19th-century texts and then in D.H. Lawrence's *Sea and Sardinia*. As you read her work it becomes clear how Lawrence exploits the mythopoetic force already present in past travel reports and novels to construct his reading of the contemporary world.

'If One Travels One Eats' consists of two parts. Part One 'Eating and Drinking in Sardinia' is by **Letitia Clark**, an English expatriate, who describes the simple and humble food and the way it is cooked and eaten which is an approach to ritual. The result is the description of a rural peasant culture heavily reliant on boiled or roasted meat, broth, bread, olives and red wine. She also remarks that the food that the Lawrences had is still what they have in Sardinia today: the prevalence of bread, as in the rest of Italy, is still there.

Part Two ironically titled 'Tea for Two' is by **Alessandra Guigoni**, who is an expert in food and nutrition. She analyses cooking and food consumption practices in the light of food anthropology. She is particularly struck by the many times that the word tea occurs in the book. She notes that tea is prepared and kept warm in the legendary thermos that arouses curiosity in the locals. Lawrence and Frieda travel with their gastronomic fetishes, including the famous 'kitchenino.'

'"The genial Sicilian with pendulous moustaches." The fascinating story of Calogero Lunetta' recounted by his great granddaughter **Barbara Porcedda**. Her essay is particularly fascinating because she reveals for the first time who 'the genial Sicilian with pendulous moustaches' is. She even inserts a photo of this man who was her great grandfather. Eventually, he has a name, Calogero Lunetta, and we now know what he looked like. He was an entrepreneur by instinct. Barbara touches also on the importance that the train has had for the local economy then and now. Indeed, she tells us about the idea that she, together with her husband, decided to continue that splendid family tradition and bought back the premises where Lawrence and Frieda stayed the night and opened a B&B which is doing very well today. Of course, she cannot find words to thank Lawrence for that.

Part Four – Beyond Sardinia

Kathleen Vella in 'Sardinia and Malta suspended out of time' remarks that Lawrence in his initial impressions of Sardinia, compares it to her own country, Malta, and refers to both islands in a similar way. She wonders whether Lawrence feels the same about them. So, she remarks that Sardinia fascinates Lawrence in its 'elemental liberty' against 'the inertia of our terra firma' in a way that Malta does not. Moreover, Kathleen says that Sardinia resonates with its primitive rawness, placed out of time, belonging to nowhere or no one, faithful only to its own indomitable spirit. It is true that islands can have such an effect on people who connect deeply with their 'spirit of place'. In addition, despite experiencing a visceral initial connection to Sardinia, which mesmerises Lawrence just as Sicily and Etna had; he later experiences an unsettling sense of astonishment. Kathleen concludes that as an islander herself, she is happy to try to understand why Lawrence's swinging feelings, ultimately propel him to flee yet again from what had first attracted him and led him to cry out 'Andiamo!' without knowing where.

'Immigration and Aftermath of WW1 seen through *Sea and Sardinia'* is a piece by **Daniele Marzeddu,** who this time let himself be personally and emotionally involved, by contributing an essay on an aspect which is self-evident he had a lot to write about.

Daniele remarks that in the immediate period before the outbreak of the conflict, Lawrence, who was at the time living in Northern Italy, had already realised how immigration was one of the most affecting aspects of the Italian society. During the journey around Sardinia, he and Frieda have the opportunity to see how immigration was there, too, a very serious problem. Moreover, they come across individuals of all walks of life, including many veterans of WW One. This essay touches on some important historical events that the traveller Lawrence learnt thanks to his genuine and "ethnographical" approach to people. Most importantly, Daniele deals with the overall issue by filtering it through his own family experiences.

The book is masterly closed with a short article - ‘D.H. Lawrence’s Voyage from Nottingham, a City with a Global Reach’- by **Matt Turpin** (Communications manager with Nottingham UNESCO City of Literature) & the poet / writer **Eleanor Flowerday**.

Eastwood May 2022

Carolyn Melbourne
Curator of the D.H. Lawrence Birthplace Museum

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Fig. 1: A British yacht moored at the Marina of Cagliari (June 2021) © Vicki Baker

There are so many people that I need to thank. So, let's start with a rounding hug to all those who have believed in this international project by championing it both with financial and in-kind donations. Yet a special appreciation goes to Malcolm Gray, former chairman of the D. H. Lawrence Society of Great Britain for granting the unanimous Society's patronage to the project, and for getting me in touch with the Vice President of the Society, Nick Ceramella.

I will never cease to send my heartfelt thanks to Nick who kept encouraging me to accomplish this overwhelming "cultural mission" over the last couple of years. He has always been very supportive and enthusiastic in his role as scientific consultant from the shooting of the documentary film and the photographs. But, above all, I am grateful to Nick for accepting to mastermind this book by generously placing at our disposal his invaluable expertise in translation and for scrutinizing the manuscript with painstaking care. It is also thanks to him that we have enjoyed the contribution of some renowned Lawrenteans as Terry Gifford, Izabel Brandão, and Jonathan Long. It goes without saying that we are grateful to all the other contributors, including Maria Grazia Dongu, who have opened up new insights into *Sea and Sardinia* such as the identity of the Sicilian host, who now has a name and a face. Incidentally, let me tell you that Nick and I shared and cheered some inevitable bleak moments, too.

I wish to express a special thanks to Rita Carta Manias for being an active member of the crew and for her sublime art project "Island 2 Island", conceived to connect islands and islanders. To my 'chum' Rob Mulholland for his genuine friendship and for designing the official website https://seaandsardinia.org/

To Andrea Mameli for his kindness and his unique capability of organising the International Conference at the University of Cagliari in October 2021: all of us have been magnificently welcomed in the premises of "Sa Duchessa" by Prof. Duilio Caocci and his assistants. An immense gratitude to Daniela and Michele from "Ca' del Sol" - B&B in Cagliari - for their genuine sense of hospitality.

A professional acknowledgement goes to Mr Jiří Chrtek from Foma Film in Czech Republic for donating their marvellous B&W film rolls; to the adept staff from Foto Classic Lab in Cagliari for their flair at developing them.

A sincere sense of gratitude goes also to Giovanni Russo, President of Associazione Ferrovie Siciliane of Messina, and to my good old pal Pietro Saglimbeni for his reliable friendship. To my aunt Daniela for having given me a copy of *Sea and Sardinia* as a present for my birthday many years ago. To Marcus Gilmore, a talented Nottingham-based illustrator, for conceiving such a stylish cover for this book. To my Venetian-Spanish friend Silvio Saura for his precious tips on the book's layout. Ivan Tedeschi from Bologna for his fast support on technical issues. To Ettore Salviato for sharing his passion for travelling and literature. To Barbara Porcedda from the "Antica Locanda Lunetta" and the chef Antonella Mura from the Osteria "La Forchetta" for hosting and feeding the crew in Mandas. To Vanna Fois for hosting the crew at the "Spazio Ilisso" art gallery, in the heart of Nuoro. To Silvia Flore for her passion about her own town, Orosei,

where the local "Cooperativa Pescatori di Orosei" took us on a boat trip across the National Park. To Mara Cossu for her flawless consultancy on Sardinian culture and iconography. To David Sullivan for his proficiency in proof-reading. *Return to Sea and Sardinia* obtained the High Patronage of: the D. H. Lawrence Society of Great Britain, the University of Cagliari, the Regione Autonoma della Sardegna, the Regione Siciliana, the Cineteca Sarda-Società Umanitaria (Cagliari), the Metropolitan City of Cagliari, the Metropolitan City of Palermo, The Metropolitan City of Messina, the Comune di Taormina council, the Comune di Tonara council, the Comune di Orosei council, the Associazione Ferrovie Siciliane (Messina), ARST Trasporti Sardegna - "Trenino Verde" della Sardegna , The Nottingham UNESCO City of Literature to celebrate the centenary of the publication of *Sea and Sardinia.*

On a personal note, I would like to express my profound love to my partner Vicki, who has always stood by my side. After making the 'insane' decision of being part of the film crew, she travelled from the North Sea all the way down to the Mediterranean shores, and we then followed in the Lawrences' steps. Last but not least, a special thanks goes to my parents, Mario and Francesca, for their captivating joy and for giving me useful recommendations along my life's journey.

Northampton, September 2022 Daniele Marzeddu

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Part 1

Making Pictures to Illustrate *Sea and Sardinia*

AS FAR AS PALERMO

TAORMINA

MESSINA

PALERMO

THE SEA

CAGLIARI

MANDAS

TO SORGONO

TO NUORO

TONARA

GAVOI

NUORO

ABBREVIATIONS

SS: *Sea and Sardinia*. Ed. Mara Kalnins. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
TI: *Twilight in Italy.* Ed. Paul Eggert. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
L3: *The Letters of D.H. Lawrence: Vo*lume III. Eds. James Boulton & Andrew Robertson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
L4: *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*: Volume IV. Eds. Warren Roberts, James T. Boulton & Elizabeth Mansfield. Cambridge: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
L7: *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*: Volume VII. Eds. Keith Sagar James T. Boulton. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
SCAL: *Studies in Classic American Literature*, Eds. Ezra Greenspan, Lindeth Vasey & John Worthen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
CP *The Complete Poems*, Eds.Vivian de Sola Pinto & Warren Roberts. New York: Viking Publications, 1964.
IR: *Introductions and Reviews, The Cambridge Edition of the Letters and Works of D. H. Lawrence*, Eds. N. H. Reeve & John Worthen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
MLI 'The Man Who Loved Islands'. In *The Woman Who Rode Away & Other Stories*. Eds. D. Mehl and Christa Jansohn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

ENCOUNTER BETWEEN LITERATURE AND PHOTOGRAPHY

NICK CERAMELLA

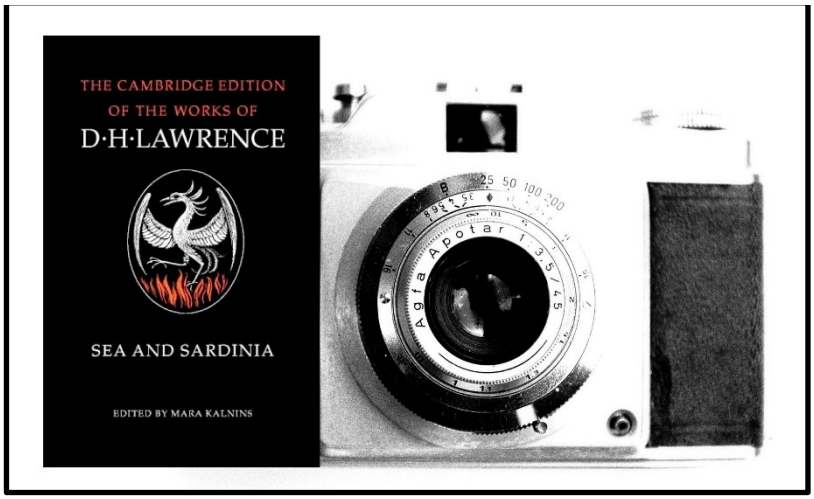

Fig. 2: *The embrace* © DM

Black & white vs colour

This brief introductory essay is just meant to focus on two key features concerning this book: the reason for choosing black and white as opposed to colour photos, and the encounter of literature with photography. The photos that Daniele Marzeddu took during his trip around Sicily and Sardinia are all in black and white. He took this decision in advance when there was no idea of even publishing a book. He told me that that was a 'stylistic choice' which I will try to explain below.

As we know, photography was originally monochromatic. So, when colour was first introduced, two factions arose: the innovators, in favour of colour photography, and the traditionalists, who preferred the black and white images. There are pros and cons in either choice. Traditionalists think that colour distracts viewers who tend to concentrate more on the colour than on the content of the photo itself. Moreover, they say that expert viewers find that colour moves the attention from other important graphic features of a photo, such as light, texture of the objects, three-dimensionality, shape and outline, which are all elements that gain a lot in a black and white picture. Most interestingly, while the parts full of light become white, those in deep shadow become black, and soft light takes a very delicate tone and nuances characterised by a grayscale which fades in relation to light.

However, a black and white picture is considered more abstract by definition, whereas a colour photograph is usually perceived as a faithful representation of reality. Indeed, the former allows to get rid of any connotation, be it chronological or seasonal; thus, helping to create timeless images. As Daniele's artwork shows, even if a monochromatic photograph may have something less than one in colour, this results in a practical advantage by favouring the photographer's creativity. Yet, this does not mean that colour photography does not allow it, too.

Literature and photography in France

That said, I will move from, what are to me, the 'rough waters' of photographic technicalities, which, although they are a field far from my professional interests, I have touched on them mainly to introduce a key aspect of this book: the relationship between literature and photography. It may sound surprising to most readers, but there was a link between

the two of them going from the invention of photography – attributed to the French Joseph Nicéphore in 1826)[1] – to the contemporary graphic novel, after passing through the influence that photography had on fiction and autobiographies.

Roland Barthes, a master of what is known as 'photo-text,' in *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (1980) coins the expression "literary discovery of photography" that refers to the early interest in photography of authors, such as Charles Baudelaire (1821-67) and Paul Valéry (1871-1945) in France, and Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) in the United States. From those early days, photography was praised and despised. Poe believed authors should follow the example of photographers who managed to get rid of their unreliable selves, and, in fact, could offer, with their skill, a perfect reproduction of nature. By contrast, Baudelaire, coherently with his negative attitude towards the modern industrial world, considered photography just a "humble servant to the sciences and art." In his review of the 1859 Salon (official art exhibition of the Académie des Beaux-Arts in Paris), he attacked photography as a vulgar mechanical means lacking any sense of the world's natural poetry.

Nonetheless, he thought that its presence in the cultural landscape was inevitable and would irreversibly change people's perception of the world. In addition, he even posed many times for portraits for his friend, the photographer Félix Nadar, and also tried to convince his mother to do the same. Baudelaire represents one of the numerous intellectuals showing a privileged relationship between photographers and writers, whose public image was more and more in their hands. Another boost to the growth of photography came in 1849 from Gustave Flaubert (1821-80), who undertook, with the photographer and writer Maxime Du Camp (1822-94), a two-year photographic tour around Egypt and the Middle East. He was fascinated by the new visual medium, but he was also irked. Another supporter of photography was the writer Prosper Mérimée (1803-70), who, in his capacity as "Inspecteur général des Monuments historiques," commissioned the 'Mission héliographique' in 1851. He was so enthusiastic about the usefulness of photographic images that sent five of the greatest photographers of the time, including Gustave Le Gray and Henri Le Secq, to register historic buildings around France. Incidentally, in this way, he established a standard for photographic surveys into the late twentieth century.

Apart from Barthes' book, mentioned above, another milestone publication, about the growing interaction between photography and literature, is Jane M. Rabb's *Literature and Photography*: *Interactions 1940-1990: A Critical Anthology*. She refers mainly to French writers, including André Breton, Victor Hugo, Marcel Proust, George Sande, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Emile Zola, for their great interest in the new medium. Noteworthy is the fact that in Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu* (1913-1927), photographs and photography played a crucial role. Though it is not equally famous as Proust's masterpiece, it is conventional to indicate that the first fully illustrated novel was published in the francophone area: *Bruges-la-Morte* (1892) by the Belgian poet and novelist Georges Rodenbach (1855-1898). This novel is special because text and photographs were conceived simultaneously. Thus, showing that the author considered the latter as an integral part of the whole.

Literature and photography in England

Even if France is widely considered the cradle of photography, it should be reminded here that the English inventor William Henry Fox Talbot (1800-1877) produced the first photographic image in 1834, without using a camera development. Thus, establishing the basic principles of photography as a negative/positive process, his calotypes used a photographic negative from which multiple prints could be made. This is an improvement over Daguerre's daguerreotype, who seems to have gained the primacy as the inventor of photography just because his method was announced a few weeks earlier than Talbot's.

Be as it may, the way people saw the world and described it changed dramatically as early as the Victorian Age. In addition, the invention of photography transformed the concept of memory for generations to come and had a strong impact on the formation of Modernism and also on the movements that followed it.

Note that, in the meantime, in England and in the United States, they had already published novels together with photographs, such as *Romola* (1863), a historic novella by George Eliot (1819-80), while three years earlier *The Marble Faun* by Nathaniel Hawthorn (1804-64) had appeared in America. In 1908, the English novelist H. G. Wells (1866-1946) invited the American Alvin Langdon Coburn, considered by George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) 'the greatest photographer in the world,' to illustrate a selection of eight short stories from his collection *The Door in the Wall and Other Stories* (1911), which he thought suitable to be complemented by ten of Coburn's photographic engravings.

Amongst the modernist authors, Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) distinguished herself for being a firm believer in the interaction between image and words in general. She used to discuss and analyse with her sister Vanessa Bell, who was a painter: 'the relationship between painting and fiction and their specificity as art, in an attempt to translate and convey the peculiar effects of one art form into the other' (Vita Fortunati, 2001, 39). Their first collaboration occurred when

1 * Equally important is Nicéphpore's partnership with Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre (1787-1851), the inventor of daguerreotype, as Daguerre dubbed his invention, one-of-a-kind image on a highly polished, silver-plated sheet of copper.

Virginia asked Vanessa to illustrate with a set of drawings, 'Kew Gardens' (1919) and several other short stories. This not only strengthened and enriched their deep and complex relationship but made them aware of the specificity of their respective mediums of expression: literature and painting, traditionally seen as the 'sister arts.' In practice, Woolf believed that words had a limited coverage and needed the visual support to express in full what they actually meant. Particularly remarkable is her essay *Three Guineas*, published just before the war broke out in 1938, which was complemented by five photographs, representing the formal yet empty power symbolised by men wearing uniforms, etc.

Meanwhile, photographers realised they could free themselves from the traditional link with painting, representing a fundamental step that was going to lead to the current hybrid state between the written and the visual. In reality, writers use techniques for capturing the feeling of the moment to form images in our minds; thus, making us focus our attention on what they want us to see. Adept photographers use similar techniques: they zoom-in or zoom-out depending on what they intend to highlight.

Needless to say, photography has charmed people worldwide, while having a strong impact on the cultural setting. As time passed, photography and literature in the twentieth century have increasingly become the object of interdisciplinary research focused on many key literary figures and photographic practitioners. Of course, works in each area can be viewed in isolation, but if they are combined they create a new and unique form of art on its own. Though there are still doubts about the value of photography as art, the answer to that does not depend only on experts but also on how society and culture receive it.

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PART ONE:

CATCHING THE SPIRIT OF PLACE THROUGH WORDS AND PICTURES

TRANSMUTING THE SPIRIT OF PLACE INTO LITERARY AND PHOTOGRAPHIC ART

NICK CERAMELLA

The spirit of the place is a strange thing. Our mechanical age tries to override it.
But it does not succeed.
(Lawrence, *SS*, 1997, 57)

Fig. 3: D. H. Lawrence's Map of Sardinia

D. H. Lawrence and the illustration of *Sea and Sardinia*

D. H. Lawrence responded to the advent of photography like many other writers of his time. It is no wonder, then, that he stubbornly considered the possibility of using photographs to illustrate *Sea and Sardinia.* On his return from his ten-day trip with Frieda around Sardinia (4–13 January 1921), he wrote to Mountsier, his American agent: 'I am still doing *Sardinia*. It will make a little book. Have written to Cagliari for photographs' (*L3*, 662). About three weeks later, on 22 February, he returned to Mountsier saying: 'I have finished the "Diary of a Trip to Sardinia." […] I hope to send you the MS. With photographs complete within a month's time' (*L3*, 667). After a week, he complained that he was 'awaiting typescript of "A Trip to Sardinia": also, most anxiously, a reply from Cagliari about photographs for the same' (*L3*, 375). Although he received part of the MS in a few days, he was still very nervous because there was no sign of the photos. On 22 March, a determined Lawrence wrote to Mountsier: 'I still haven't managed to get Sardinia photographs; only Sicily. But I don't give up' (*L3*, 688). Another week passed and he confirmed: 'am still struggling to get photographs, and I hope to succeed' (*L3*, 695-6). After two days, at the end of March, on suggesting some alternative titles to the provisional 'Diary of a Trip to Sardinia,' Lawrence included some pictures of Sicily. Then, he informed Mountsier that he was thinking of some new possible titles for the book: '[…] Sardinia Films or Films of Sicily and Sardinia […]' (*L3*, 696). Indeed, this idea is confirmed in a letter to Curtis Brown, Lawrence's agent for England:

> I am still struggling for photographs of Sardinia itself. – and a friend of mine, Jan Juta, is just going to Sardinia to paint suitable illustrations for the book, in flat colour. […] The title for Sardinia book Mountsier objected to. I suggested others: Sardinia Films for example –' (*L3*, 705)

Since there was no reply, Lawrence realised that there was no chance either of getting photographs of Sardinia; so, he took into serious consideration using the paintings that Jan Juta, a South-African-born English painter, offered to do in Sardinia for the book. Lawrence thought they would be suitable to appear in his book without even seeing them. Nonetheless, due to the cost of colour illustrations, he could not find an agreement with the English publisher Martin Secker. He wrote about that to Mountsier,[1] using his typical ironic and outspoken tone:

> I don't want Secker to have the *Sardinia* book. It would fall dead flat. […] I want a publisher who will make a color book – John Lane or Heinemann or Blackie – and not funk it. I am willing to have very small royalty if cost of production is so alarming to the poor souls. Juta will make any little agreement he likes with me: nothing official. (*L4*, 27)

Afterwards, separate negotiations followed with Secker and Juta himself. On 1 September 1921, the contract that Lawrence signed stated that Thomas Seltzer, a Russian American, would pay the costs for the publication, including Juta's paintings, while Lawrence, as the author of the book, would pay the artist Jan Juta. That is settled in a letter, reading: 'I promised to give Jan Juta one-third of my profits on *Sea and Sardinia.* Have not heard from him if he accepts' (*L4*, 169). For some reason, the painter never answered, which perhaps implied that he accepted the deal, while Lawrence never saw the American proofs of the book. Therefore, we can assume that he could not even imagine the book without illustrations. After all, Lawrence was a painter, too, and he likely believed that having images could support, if not even enhance, his descriptions of people and places. (For further information on the deal with Juta, see Long's essay, p. 79). Most importantly, as the book first came out, the American literary critic and writer Carl Van Doren (1885-1950) highlighted Lawrence's photographic qualities in terms of colour, harmony and contrast, characterising his writing narrative style, which he compared to 'a vivid film, flickering yet flooded with light' (*The Nation*, 1922).

Actually, from the first page of *Sea and Sardinia*, we can see that Lawrence concentrates his visual attention on the Sicilian environment. He is enthralled by Etna, seen as the very symbol of *sicilianità* (i. e., Sicilian character/nature), soaked in a millenary culture making the Sicilians 'much too ancient and rusés' (*Sea and Sardinia*; henceforth *SS*, 79) as he writes in the essay 'Mandas.' It takes Lawrence's extraordinary descriptive power to depict the scene. He says something exceptional about the volcano by addressing it as a female:

> She seems rather low, under heaven, under heaven. However, as one knows her better, oh awe and wizardry! Remote under heaven, aloof, so near, yet never with us. The painters try to paint her, and the photographers to photograph her, in vain.' (*SS*, 1. See also Daniele Marzeddu's pic. 3, p. 24; henceforth DM).

It is not surprising that when *Sea and Sardinia* appeared in the United States on 12 December 1921, most reviewers acknowledged Lawrence's incredible ability to describe the landscape and people by focusing on details inherent to them which caught the very **spirit of place,** so endeared to the writer as a vital part of the whole.

Nevertheless, what is this idea of the spirit of place which has echoed through the ages? It was an essential aspect of ancient Roman religion. In Latin, they used to call it "genius / spiritus loci," which referred to the presiding guardian or deity of a given place. As suggested by the title of this essay, my aim is to highlight the juxtaposition between Lawrence's text and DM's photographs. Yet both contributing to the transformation of the spirit of place into literary and photographic art. Hence, starting from the quotation below, I will carry out a juxtaposition of Lawrence's *Sea and Sardinia* with DM's photos which illustrate certain themes and convey various aspects of the spirit of place. (See also the next essay).

I was impressed from the opening pages of the book by Lawrence's ability to catch the aura of mystery coming from Etna, showing that not everything has been discovered. (Cf. DM's ability in catching that in his picture below).
Lawrence felt that he could not resist the mesmerising effect that the volcano had on him. Consequently, he thought that the best thing one could do was to go

> away from abhorred Etna, and the Ionian Sea, and these great stars in the water, […] and these maddening, exasperating, impossible Sicilians, who never knew what truth was and have lost all notion of what a human being is. A sort of sulphureous demons. *Andiamo!*'[2] (*SS*, 9)

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[1] Brown was D. H. L's agent for England, but also for the States when he cut his connection with Mountsier in 1923.

[2] By contrast, that made me think of the episode in Book XII of Homer's *Odyssey* in which Ulysses, unlike Lawrence, takes the challenge and resists the bewitching song of the mermaids. Circe (an enchantress and a minor goddess in Greek mythology), whom Lawrence identifies with Etna, advices Ulysses to have his ship's crew lash him to the mast, ordering them not to untie him and plug their ears with wax to avoid being enthralled by the singing until they were safely out of range of Scylla, a sea monster with six heads that eats men, and Charybdis, a whirlpool that sucks in and vomits out the sea three times a day. According to classical literary sources, they should be on each side of the Strait of Messina (i. e. Calabria and Sicily). Hence, only about 50 km from Taormina, where the Lawrences lived during their Sicilian stay.

Fig. 4: Mount Etna as seen from Taormina © DM

Fig. 5: Detail of a painting depicting Etna and battles between Christians and Turks displayed at the Museo Internazionale delle Marionette "Antonio Pasqualino" of Palermo © DM

Indeed, closely related to Etna is the frightening effect that Lawrence says the volcano has on people which makes him wonder 'how many men, how many races, has Etna put to flight?' (*SS*, 8). He certainly saw himself and Frieda as two more people increasing that number. So, he is happy to think that they are very soon going to sail from Palermo to Cagliari. After three days, as planned, they 'jolt[ed] down the old road that winds on the cliff face' (*SS*, 10) on a cold early morning of 4 January 1921.

Before recounting what happens at Taormina station, it will be interesting to concentrate on the 'great stars in the water' whose glare illuminates the Bay. The intriguing thing about that is that today that effect is created by the strong reflection of electric lights which, however suggestive and romantic they may appear, are sadly a source of pollution, a clear sign of the difference between now and then. Again, see below how DM manages to catch that light effect.

Fig. 6: Taormina Bay at night © DM

In order to highlight the difference between night and day, DM took a picture of the Bay, focusing on the "Isola Bella" (Beautiful Island), which is as fascinating and dreamy as ever in its daylight natural beauty. (See pic. 4, p. 24)

Fig. 7: Isola Bella, Taormina © DM

When Lawrence and Frieda reach the 'station down below, by the sea' (*SS*, 11), he sits down and watches the people

> like a line of caricatures between oneself and the naked sea and the uneasy, clouding dawn. You would look in vain this morning for the swarthy feline southerner of romance. It might, as far as features are concerned, be an early morning crowd for the train on a north London suburb station. As far as features go. For some are fair and some are colourless, and none racially typical. […] (*SS*, 12)

Then, he says how surprised and 'disapproving' they are on seeing him carry a knapsack on his shoulders, 'as unseemly as if I had arrived riding on a pig' (*SS*, 12). He comments that he knows it, but he is 'inflexible.' He does not care. The he goes on describing the people:

> They pour themselves one over the other like so much melted butter and parsnips. They catch each other under the chin, with a tender caress of hand, and they smile with sunny melting tenderness into each other's face. Never in the world have I seen such melting tenderness as between casual Sicilians on railway platforms. (*SS*, 13)

Compare this scene with these photos taken by DM at Taormina station and you will immediately notice how 'civilised' the people have become. (Compare this scene with pictures 5-6 taken by DM at Taormina station in 2021)

Turning back to Lawrence's narration, as soon as the train for Messina arrives everybody gets on. It is so slow that Lawrence comments: 'It is only thirty miles to Messina, but the train takes two hours, it winds and hurries and stops beside the lavender grey morning sea' (*SS*, 13).

On a personal note, allow me to say that this quote recalls the photo placed below, which I took in 1995 when, like D M today, I followed in Lawrence's steps, using *Sea and Sardinia* as our 'guidebook.' I was travelling with my q-b and our son. I also need to say that, following DM's decision, all my pictures in this essay are kept in colour as to create a contrast between his recent trip and mine. Incidentally, I had already followed Lawrence to the Kiowa Ranch in New Mexico in 1980.)

Fig. 8: 'Mediterranean vegetation by the grey morning sea'
(© Nick Ceramella; henceforth NC)

But after digressing, let's resume the journey with the Lawrences. In a couple of hours, they arrive at Messina station which Lawrence describes as a 'dreary, dreary hole' (*SS*, 16). He notices, in particular, the many 'elegant tubby little officials railway officials,' who are enjoying a '*conversazione*'[3] that seems to be 'the affair of the affairs' (*SS*, 16). Curiously enough, DM, while visiting the station, is attracted by an old steam locomotive parked there (see DM pics 8 and 9, p. 27) and engages in a conversation with some railway officials who are happy to tell him that that wonderful piece of machinery came from Sardinia. (It is undoubtedly intriguing to think that Lawrence might have travelled on it both in Sicily and Sardinia).

Then the Palermo train gets into the station and starts its 200-km trip. It stops at every station and is more and more packed with passengers. Funnily enough everyone joins the conversation or begins a new one. Although so many people go on and off the train, Lawrence, thanks to his careful perception, notices that

> An enormously large woman with an extraordinarily handsome face: […] it is she who takes my breath away. She is quite young, in her thirties still. She has that queenly stupid beauty of a classic Hera. […] She sends one's heart straight back to pagan days. […] She expects me to pay homage to her beauty: just to that: not homage to herself, but to her as a *bel pezzo*.[4] She casts little aloof glances at me under her eyelids (*SS*, 19).

This quote is intriguing because it shows how important the spirit of place is, and how it affects the people living there. This explains why Lawrence says that 'The Sicilian is […] much too ancient and rusé not to be sophisticated about any and every belief. […] But in daily life it is unbearable' (*SS*, 79). To put it simply, they are imbued into their ancient and refined Greek culture. unbearable' (*SS*, 79). To put it simply, they are imbued into their ancient and refined Greek culture.

Be as it may, it is half-past six when they arrive in Palermo, and Lawrence says that he and Frieda 'disappear' into Via Maqueda, one of the main streets in the centre of town, which 'is chocked solid with strollers and carriages' (*SS*, 23). But at least they are delighted to see that there are mostly vegetable shops towards the end of the long street:

> Abundance of vegetables – piles of white and green fennel, like celery, and great sheaves of young purplish, sea-dust-coloured artichokes, nodding their buds, piles of big radishes, scarlet and bluey purple, carrots, long strings of dried figs, mountains of big oranges, scarlet large peppers, a last slice of pumpkin, a great mass of colours and vegetables freshness.' (*SS*, 22)

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[3] This Italian peculiarity recalls the poem 'Talk' from Lawrence's *Pansies* (1929), reading: *I wish people, when you sit near them, / wouldn't think it necessary to make conversation / and send thin draughts of words / blowing down your neck and your ears / and giving you a cold in your inside* (CP, 506). It is self-evident in this short poem that Lawrence did not particularly like people having a conversation. Therefore, considering that *Sea and Sardinia* was written in 1921, we may wonder, what did he really think of people indulging everywhere in their *conversazione*?

[4] A Japanese colleague once asked me what *bel pezzo* means. I did not know how to make the explanation not sound vulgar as it often is. So, I just said a 'very beautiful female.' Lawrence also by catching such nuances of the everyday language managed to get a strong grip of the spirit of place.

Fig. 9: Fruit and vegetables © NC & Mario Marzeddu

On looking at the pictures above, I should say that it is not by mere chance that Carl Van Doren, in his review of *Sea and Sardinia*, remarked that Lawrence's photographic qualities and narrative style, recalled the Imagists:

> His eyes linger passionately along the texture of the scenes, the costumes, the dingy interiors, the rich displays of streets and markets. He describes heaps of vegetables as other men describe mountains of diamonds, sapphires, opals, chalcedony. He is an imagist, writing nervous, luminous prose that for once has movement to it, avoiding the concentration upon merely visual images that so often causes eye-strain on the part of those who read him and his fellow-poets (Draper, 1970, 173-174).

Only such great writers as Lawrence can manage to create a colourful and joyful sight and a magic atmosphere that goes beyond the seasonal background changes full of pathos. It is a pity we cannot hear the shouting of the sellers advertising their products. Yet I am pleased to say that DM gives us that, too, through his photos but, above all, through his documentary film.

Sadly, on arrival in Palermo, Lawrence and Frieda came across 'three giggling young hussies' (*SS*, 23) whom they found particularly annoying because they followed them and kept repeating, '*parlano inglese*' and '*you spik Ingleesh!*' (*SS*, 24) They made Lawrence even burst into a "Beastly Palermo bad-manners. […] Ignoranti' (ibid.) But the couple knew the girls' curiosity and laughter were, once again, caused by seeing him carry a knapsack and Frieda a kitchenino. Nonetheless, it is surprising to see that people of their cultural standards reacted unreasonably to the girls. After all, was not that the other side of the spirit of place (if you like the 'dark side') that they should have expected?

The next evening, they walked to the port to catch the steamer to Cagliari. Aboard, Lawrence is excited by the view of Monte Pellegrino, the mountain above Palermo, towering above in all its beauty.

> The dawn is wanly blueing. The sky is a curdle of cloud; there is a bit of pale gold eastwards, beyond Monte Pellegrino. The wind blows across the harbour. The hills behind Palermo prick up their ears on the skyline. The city lies unseen, near us and level (*SS*, 27). (See DM pic. 32, p. 39)

Fig. 10: View of Palermo and Monte Pellegrino © NC

Off to Sardinia

After spending the 4th and 5th of January in Palermo, Lawrence and Frieda take the night steamer to Cagliari. During the overnight trip, they share the company of their fellow passengers, and Lawrence continues to describe the Italians' idiosyncrasies. He gives a detailed chronology of moods and emotions: love for *conversazione*, men embracing each other, parents being amiably patient with their children ('young monkeys') (*SS*, 43), women who like to be treated as '*un bel pezzo.*' He also remarks the self-indulgent attitude of Italians, who often love feeling sorry for themselves and keep saying: 'Why, we Italians are so good-natured. Noi Italiani siamo così buoni. Siamo così buoni' (*SS*, 183). Such an attentive sharp observation of people and their habitual environment helps Lawrence to catch the very spirit of place, while allowing the readers to get directly involved and be free to interpret for themselves.

The night passed, and on approaching Cagliari, Lawrence surprisingly remarks a close resemblance with Jerusalem, so far and so similar, but delimiting the East and the West of the Mediterranean. Note how that is clearly reflected in DM's picture 38 (p. 42), but is also described by the Maltese scholar Kathleen Vella in her essay (see p. 152).

> And suddenly there is Cagliari: […] The city piles up lofty and almost miniature, and makes me think of Jerusalem, without trees, without cover, rising there bare and proud, remote as if back in history, like in a monkish, illuminated missal (*SS*, 52) (See DM pics 33-6, p. 39-41)

On landing in Cagliari, the first impression Lawrence has of the city is positive. He is particularly pleased to see that the people lingering at the port 'are not like the tourist-parasites of these post war days, […] Thank goodness no one wants to carry my knapsack' (*SS*, 55), adding that Sardinia, '[But it] is so different from Sicily: none of the suave Greek-Italian charms, none of the airs and graces, none of the glamour' (ibid.). Most important, nobody bothers them, as it had happened in Sicily. The atmosphere at the port is different from that in Palermo. Lawrence is happy to say:

> Thank goodness no one wants to carry my knapsack. Thank goodness no one has a fit at the sight of it. Thank heaven no one takes any notice. They stand cold and aloof, and don't move (*SS*, 55).

That makes the English couple feel relieved. They walk through the cold windy streets in search of their hotel. When they have almost found it, Lawrence says: 'We climb a broad flight of steps, always upwards, up the wide, precipitous, dreary boulevard with sprouts of streets. Looking for the hotel and dying with anger. — At last, we find it, the Scala di Ferro'[5] (ibid.). (See DM pic. 44, p. 46)

Then Lawrence adds, 'After a really good meal [they] we went out to see the town' (*SS*, 56). The first people they meet are some children who are different from those 'giggling young hussies' they had met in via Maqueda.

> Curious the children in Cagliari. The poor seem thoroughly poor–bare-footed urchins, gay and wild in the narrow dark streets. But the more well-to-do children are so fine: so extraordinarily elegantly dressed. […] All the 'chic,' all the fashion, all the originality is expended on the children. And with a great deal of success. Better than Kensington Gardens very often. […] Who would have expected it? (*SS*, 58).

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[5] Note that the once prestigious hotel, which boasted among its clientele great personalities like D'Annunzio, Lawrence, and Quasimodo, has in the early 2000s been converted into the headquarters of the prefecture (a central government institution at the province level).