Alan Garner, and Robert Westall, and looks at how these works, together with their publishing history and criticism and reception, reflect the class situation in Britain at that time, and how they influenced and changed the representation of class in children’s literature. Takiuchi’s focus on ‘scholarship boy’ writers is itself interesting and offers fresh insight into this topic, though one cannot help feeling that he could, perhaps, set a little more distance, as it were, between the works of each writer and the writer himself. One gets the sense that the works of such ‘scholarship boy’ writers are necessarily an extension of the writers’ experiences, as the ‘creative’ aspects of these works do not seem to be discussed at much length. The plot of each novel, also, could be explained in a little more detail at the beginning of each chapter to help the reader with less well-known — at least to non-specialists of children’s literature — works. Having said that, there is no doubt that British Working-Class Writing for Children: Scholarship Boys in the Mid-Twentieth Century is an informative and stimulating work, and provides much food for thought on diverse matters related to British culture and class.

Works Cited

Neil Roberts, Sons and Lovers: The Biography of a Novel
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The process of creativity is usually mysterious, but when a writer revises his/her written text, glimpses of that process can come fleetingly into view. D. H. Lawrence frequently avoided detailed structural revisions, and regularly re-started a work from the beginning, rewriting it until he was satisfied. His working practice of producing
draft after draft often left behind, as a result, differently composed versions of a story or a novel, and produced varieties of material for following and studying his creative process. As is evident from its title, this book gives us Neil Roberts’s analytical account of such a creative process in the composition of *Sons and Lovers* during its successive writing periods; he examines closely the changes made by Lawrence himself, and provides scholarly scrutiny of many parts of the novel. The availability of the Cambridge University Press edition of *Paul Morel* has made it possible for Roberts to analyse the complicated process from its inception to its culmination, *Sons and Lovers*, and to reveal a great deal about the workings of the creative mind.

In the first volume of the three-volume Cambridge Biography of D. H. Lawrence, *D. H. Lawrence: The Early Years 1885-1912*, we can find how much richer Lawrence’s writing is than we generally think, and how he made his writing his life, and his life his writing, to a remarkable degree. The 620-page Cambridge biography chronicles Lawrence’s upbringing in Eastwood, Nottinghamshire, until the blossoming of his writing career; it provides the most authoritative account available, and offers a deeply-insightful portrait of Lawrence in his adolescence.

Roberts, on the other hand, focuses especially on Lawrence’s early literary career with *Sons and Lovers*, and reveals the process of the writing of the novel and Lawrence’s life in the period in which the novel was based, offering new and fresh insights into Lawrence’s relationships with Jessie Chambers, Helen Corke, Louis Burrows, Alice Dax, Frieda Weekley, and Lydia Lawrence, Lawrence’s mother. Roberts insists that Lawrence ‘always believed that, as a writer, he needed a woman behind him. With *The White Peacock* he had had Jessie, and for “The Saga of Siegmund” Helen. For his later drafts of *Sons and Lovers* he would have Jessie again and finally Frieda’ (72). Roberts also stresses in his third chapter how deeply Lydia Lawrence and her death were related to Lawrence’s writing:

There is strong evidence that his mother’s illness made him conscious of, or at least avow, the unusual and damaging nature of their bond…. All this evidence suggests that his conception of ‘Paul Morel’ changed as he suffered his mother’s dying…. It is likely, therefore, that as his anguish over his mother’s death intensified Lawrence realised that the version of ‘Paul Morel’ he had begun that summer would not do. (62-3)

That quotation does not however suggest what a revelation of his own state of profound sadness the process of Lawrence’s writing had brought to him. Roberts
wonders indeed whether Lawrence was ‘conscious of’ or only *avowing* the damage done to him by his bond with his mother. The fact that Lawrence ended up writing a novel almost as tragic as *The Trespasser*, with a haunting last chapter entitled ‘Derelict’, surely goes a great deal further, and confirms Lawrence’s later ironical comment that geniuses with ‘great mothers’ ‘mostly have sad fates’ (*PFU* 149). That surely was a discovery made in the course of writing the novel.

Roberts reveals how *Sons and Lovers* changed in direction while being written and became a different kind of novel in the process. Lawrence took two years to complete it, during which time he produced four versions. These four different periods incorporated the most significant changes ever to happen in Lawrence’s life as a man and a writer; Roberts summarises his way of thinking in his Introduction:

Imagine these four writing scenarios. A young elementary school teacher, living in lodgings in a London suburb, guilty about having seduced and abandoned the love of his life, now burdened also with the knowledge that his beloved mother is dying, struggles in the evenings, after correcting his pupils’ work, to write a novel that is of deep personal importance to him. The following year, grieving for his mother’s death and engaged to another woman whom he increasingly feels to be unsuited to him, he begins the task again, and again fails to complete it. The same young man, having survived a near-fatal illness, left his job and ended his engagement, is back with his family in the Midlands town where his novel is set, locked, through his writing and her response to it, in a final struggle with his first lover about the meaning of their relationship, and beginning a new love affair that will transform his life. Finally, with his new lover, a woman from a background utterly foreign to him and the world of his novel, he rewrites the book again in a little lakeside town in Italy. (1)

Lawrence made four attempts, and took two tumultuous years, from October 1910 to November 1912, to complete *Sons and Lovers*. During these two years he had an affair with a married woman, became engaged to another woman, his mother died, he broke for the last time with the girlfriend who was the model of Miriam, he nearly died of pneumonia, and he travelled to Germany together with a thirty-three-year-old married woman, the mother of three children. The first draft (‘Paul Morel I’) was written between October and November 1910, while Lawrence was a schoolteacher in South London. He wrote the second draft (‘Paul Morel II’) between March and July 1911 (this unfinished version, edited by Helen Baron, was published as *Paul Morel* in 2003), and
the third draft (‘Paul Morel III’) between November 1911 and June 1912. Furthermore, in August 1912, he decided to rewrite the novel for the fourth time in a small town on the Lago di Garda; on 15 October he changed its title from ‘Paul Morel’ to *Sons and Lovers*. Then in November 1912, Lawrence finally sent the fourth and completed manuscript version of the novel to its London publisher, Duckworth, from northern Italy. Roberts states that the change of title from ‘Paul Morel’ to *Sons and Lovers* may have been Lawrence’s gesture towards Sigmund Freud, as mediated by Frieda, under whose early influence the final version of the novel was written. According to Roberts, she ‘had an unusual if rudimentary awareness of psychoanalysis, gained from one of her previous lovers, Otto Gross, a maverick Freudian’, and he quotes Frieda’s statement that Gross ‘revolutionised my life with Freud. Through him and then through me Lawrence knew about Freud…’ (133). It is in fact arguable that Gross was far more influential on Lawrence than this however suggests.

*Sons and Lovers* has been widely thought of as a simple and directly autobiographical novel by Lawrence, who repeatedly included his own experiences in his fiction. Now that the complete version of *Sons and Lovers* is available, appreciation of the novel becomes an impressive experience; it is difficult to realise if we are reading an autobiographical novel rather than a novelistic autobiography. Roberts also successfully shows that *Sons and Lovers* is a fictional version of Lawrence’s childhood and adolescence, but that the novel follows the reality so tightly that it almost seems to be an autobiography.

Roberts investigates, for example, the extent to which Jessie Chambers got involved in Lawrence’s writing of the novel. She was the person with whom Lawrence shared his passion for reading, and they bonded through their imaginative engagement with literature. Although only two of Roberts’s chapters out of eight contain the name ‘Jessie’ in their titles (‘Bert and Jessie, 1901-1909’ and ‘Re-enter Jessie, 1911-1912’), she actually appears throughout the book. Roberts writes: ‘For years Jessie was the most important, initially the only, reader of his work’, and ‘She was an audience that accepted his writing as the natural expression of his being’ (17, 19). Moreover, in the last chapter of the book Chambers appears yet again, as Roberts asks why she ‘finally broke with Lawrence after reading the proofs, whereas she had not done so after reading “Paul Morel III”’ (176). In so doing, Roberts seems to be reminding us how important the existence of Chambers was to Lawrence’s writing. It is true that she felt betrayed by her portrait as Miriam in *Sons and Lovers*, and John Worthen argued that Lawrence’s changes in the final manuscripts cast Miriam in an especially unfavourable light. Roberts, however, disagrees, saying that in those last changes ‘Lawrence was
constantly rethinking and reinterpreting the relationship of Paul and Miriam, that there is no final interpretation, and it is this that makes the novel both dialogic and true to life’ (140). Although he states at the beginning of his book that *Sons and Lovers* was shaped by literal dialogues, first with Jessie Chambers and later with Frieda Lawrence’ (3), Roberts surprisingly finishes his book with Chambers’s remarks. He believes that the composition of *Sons and Lovers* between the spring and the autumn of 1912 was still heavily indebted to Chambers.

An example of the sort of illumination Roberts brings to our understanding of *Sons and Lovers* is his analysis and discussion of the episode of the trip to Wingfield Manor appearing both in ‘Paul Morel III’ and *Sons and Lovers*. This episode, he believes, is ‘memorable for the way a tiny incident conveys the innocence, intimacy, sensitivity and unselfconsciousness of Paul and Miriam’s relationship at its most harmonious’ (103-4). Roberts’s analytic account here is intellectually exciting; it combines the description of the private, subjective consciousness of an individual self and the shifting of point of view in the narrative. He adopts a comparative textual approach, and helps us glimpse some particular features of a narrative method:

A high wind blowing through the loop-holes, filled the girl's skirts like a balloon, so that she was ashamed, until Paul laid hold of the hem of her dress, and held it down for her, chatting naturally all the time. (*PM* 238)

A high wind blowing through the loopholes went rushing up the shaft and filled the girl's skirts like a balloon, so that she was ashamed, until he took the hem of her dress, and held it down for her. He did it perfectly simply, as he would have picked up her glove. (*SL* 205)

Through his shrewd comparison of the texts, Roberts speculates about Lawrence’s revision in this episode that

almost no reader would think the phrase ‘chatting naturally all the time’ in any way degrades the action. But to her [Jessie] it introduces an element of self-consciousness, as if Paul were chatting, however ‘naturally’, in order to cover the action…. The comparison with picking up a glove achieves what I assume Lawrence had intended with ‘chatting naturally’, while removing the hint of self-consciousness. (104)
The episode demonstrates a direct and spontaneous emergence of the unselfconscious self within the character, and a temporary loss of selfconsciousness. The language of the episode attempts to reveal unselfconscious and instinctive and spontaneous individual experiences. Such an episode is designed to offer a creative portrayal of the intimate impulse.

Lawrence’s revision of the episode brings selfconscious and unselfconscious experiences into the realm of language, as it carefully and effectively elaborates the shifting from ‘chatting naturally all the time’ to ‘He did it perfectly simply, as he would have picked up her glove.’ This revision is the narrative’s way of giving a direct and intuitive apprehension of the unselfconscious. It constitutes an experiment in articulating what is not verbal, and in showing how responsive the unselfconscious can become.

Roberts goes on to compare ‘Paul Morel III’ and *Sons and Lovers* in the seventh chapter of his book, writing how ‘The degree of identification between narrator and central character is one of the major critical problems in this novel’ (131). He then observes the ‘uncertain relationship between the narrator and the central character’ (141). I wished at that point that Roberts had enhanced our understanding of the textual evolution of the novel through analysing more carefully the problems associated with the presentation of multiple narrative points of view. Lawrence is a writer who bridges the transition from nineteenth-century literature to modernist literature; his particular presentation of viewpoints can be set alongside the modernist, experimental, handling of technique by writers such as James Joyce and Virginia Woolf. Roberts’s scrupulous ‘biography’ handles its archival materials superbly, but I sometimes found it a little peculiar not to be shown the textual, and linguistic, progression of the novel whose life he is writing.

One significant influence came into play in the final version: Frieda Weekley. Her presence arguably had a significant influence on the novel’s transformation from ‘Paul Morel’ into *Sons and Lovers*. As Roberts points out, Frieda’s ‘assertive character, and the intimate connection between the novel’s themes and their developing relationship, would make it certain that she took an active interest in it’. Roberts then quotes Frieda’s words: ‘I lived and suffered that book, and wrote bits of it when he would ask me: “What do you think my mother felt like then?” I had to go deeply into the character of Miriam and all the others’ (132). That, of course, goes a good deal further than ‘active interest’. Did she really write ‘bits of it’? Only in memory: the manuscript evidence is clear.

Lawrence, however, came to obtain a new suspicion of self-sacrifice through his
understanding of the effect of Frieda’s sacrifice on her children; Roberts writes that Lawrence ‘was increasingly suspicious of self-sacrifice …’

Perhaps most significantly of all, as regards *Sons and Lovers*, Lawrence believed—or persuaded himself—that if Frieda sacrificed herself for her children they ‘would not be free to live of themselves—they would first have to live for her, to pay back’ (*L1* 486). He had become unrecognisable from the man who wrote, little more than a year earlier, in ‘Paul Morel III’, ‘the final lesson of life is honorable self-sacrifice’ (*PM* 74). (135)

Roberts makes it clear that Lawrence’s experience with Frieda constituted a new and very different influence coming into play in the writing of *Sons and Lovers*. This new development in Lawrence’s attitude to relationships, which became crucial to his philosophy, according to Roberts,

had a profound bearing on the two most important female characters in the novel. The idea that Miriam’s love for Paul is self-sacrificial is a major motive for his rejection of her; and Lawrence’s belief about the effect of Frieda’s sacrifice on her children has an obvious bearing on Paul’s relationship with his mother. (135-6)

Roberts discusses in the last chapter of his book ‘creative uncertainties’; he believes that *Sons and Lovers* has ‘the undecidability of life that can never be packed into a thematic summary’ (157), citing the fact that Lawrence worked on the galley proofs for at least a month, and showing how we can see Lawrence ‘reinterpreting details of key relationships across the whole novel, in both galley and page proofs’ (164). Roberts minutely discusses the final stage of finishing the novel. It was not until after Lawrence completed *Sons and Lovers* that he developed a new self-confidence: something

partly no doubt deriving from his relationship with Frieda, but also from the knowledge of having completed a major work. It is to the period December 1912 to February 1913 that some of his most iconic statements belong: ‘my motto is “Art for my sake”’, ‘I shall always be a priest of love’, ‘My great religion is a belief in the blood…’ and ‘One has to be so terribly religious, to be an artist’ (*L1* 491, 493, 503, 519). One cannot imagine Lawrence writing like this a year earlier. (168)

Roberts’s ‘biography’ might usefully have been equipped with the sort of chronology
found in all the volumes of the Cambridge edition of Lawrence. A glance at the chronology would have told us exactly where and when Lawrence was writing ‘Paul Morel I, II, III’ or *Sons and Lovers*, as well as who Lawrence was with at that particular moment. Roberts’s discussion could therefore have taken us on a lively journey through the ‘effects of the life-experiences that transformed Lawrence from the frustrated, depressed and ailing schoolteacher of 1911 to the creatively and sexually triumphant artist of the end of the following year’ (4-5). One has to ask, however, whether Lawrence really should be described as ‘sexually triumphant’ in 1913: the poems in *Look! We Have Come Through!* suggest something rather different. Roberts’s book is, nevertheless, intriguing and informative, even instructive, right to the end.

**Abbreviations**


