

Lawrence's Dust-Jackets: A Selection with Commentary

Keith Cushman

Introduction

The *D.H. Lawrence Review* is proud to present this full-color spread of twelve of Lawrence's dust-jackets. In addition the jacket of the Seltzer *Captain's Doll* (1923) is reproduced in full color on the cover of this number, increasing the total of our featured dust-jackets by one to a baker's dozen. John Martin, publisher of the Black Sparrow Press in Santa Rosa, California, has generously made this spread possible. As readers of the *Review* will know, over the years Black Sparrow has contributed to Lawrence studies by publishing a number of Lawrence first editions, all grounded in original scholarship. *The Escaped Cock* (1973), *D.H. Lawrence: Letters to Thomas and Adele Seltzer* (1976), *The Letters of D.H. Lawrence & Amy Lowell, 1914-1925* (1985), and *Memoir of Maurice Magnus* (1987) are the most important of these Black Sparrow titles.

Most readers of the *Review* will have seen few of these jackets, especially in their original color. The first edition of Warren Roberts's *Bibliography of D.H. Lawrence* (1963)

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doesn't even describe Lawrence's dust-jackets, nor does it include photographs of any among its illustrations. The 1982 second edition includes very brief descriptions of the jackets plus black-and-white photographic spreads featuring ten books in jackets. Black Sparrow's *Letters to Thomas and Adele Seltzer* provides black-and-white photographs of the Seltzer jackets. Black Sparrow's 1992 edition of *Birds, Beasts and Flowers* reproduces the Seltzer jacket in very inaccurate color on its front board. Keith Sagar's *The Life of D.H. Lawrence*, a pictorial biography published in 1980, does include a handsome full-color illustration of the jacket of the Methuen *Rainbow* with its painting by Frank Wright.

The absence of any reference to the Lawrence's dust-jackets in the first edition of Roberts seems surprising almost forty years later. This omission reflects the earlier notion that the dust-jacket did not matter to collectors and bibliographers because it was not an integral part of the book. As G. Thomas Tanselle wrote in 1971, "many bibliographers have simply dismissed jackets as not part of their concern, with no feeling that they were shirking any of their responsibility to describe books," while "book collectors before the last few decades . . . often expressed their disdain for the jacket by failing to insist on its presence or by failing to preserve it when present" (Tanselle 91). This attitude changed significantly in the 1960s when high end dealers in modern first editions—like Margarite Cohn and Henry Wenning—began to charge premium prices for fine copies in nicely preserved dust-jackets.

The dust-jacket can be traced back to the 1830s, and "at least by the 1880s the jacket was in common use" (Tanselle 99). It should be remembered that dust-jackets (originally dust-wrappers) began "almost entirely as protective devices" (Tanselle 96), designed to protect the book from dust on the dealer's shelf. At first "the dust wrapper . . . was used exclusively to protect a book's exposed leather, cloth, or silk bindings from the smut and fog that blanketed London" (Heller and Chwast 11). The dust-wrapper would evolve into the dust-jacket—with the sartorial metaphor suggesting a new visual stylishness.

Heller and Chwast observe that the "staid, unpretentious wrapper continued into the early 1900s" (Heller and Chwast 12). But around 1910 with the advent of the blurb, the book-jacket became an important sales tool. "The front of the jacket . . . became an area of graphic design which began to assume its real position as a force of display and advertising" (Heller and Chwast 12). "The illustrated jacket came into its own in the 1920s (Heller and Chwast 18). By 1933 an illustrator and contributor to *Advertis-*

ing Art was writing that “a bookseller’s window is now one of the gayest sights, next to florists’, these sad times afford” (Heller and Chwast 13). Lawrence’s professional career took place during this dust-jacket revolution.

At the end of the twentieth century, dust-jackets have long since assumed a place of critical importance to collectors and bibliographers, and scholars are also beginning to recognize their value. The dust-jacket may be detachable, but it plays a significant role in the presentation of a text to the public. Sometimes the jacket may include a blurb by the author, as is, I think, perhaps true, for example, of the substantial blurb on the jacket spine of the Methuen *Rainbow*. Often the author has been involved in the selection—or even creation—of the jacket art. Thus he or she figures directly in how the book is to be constructed for the book-buying public. Although Lawrence did not always participate in the process of selecting and designing jacket art, often he was very much involved, either as advocate or artist.

Meanwhile a new school of literary scholarship analyzes the book as material object as part of the book’s overall rhetoric and implied audience. How the book looks—its dust-jacket, its format, its typeface, its paper—figures in a reader’s response. And today no serious collector would deny the importance of a dust-jacket, fail to preserve a jacket in his or her collection, or be unwilling to pay a premium for a book in a nice jacket. The collector’s goal is to own a copy of the book that is as close as possible to the way that book looked the day it was published (and it’s nice to own advance copies as well). The collecting world has changed immensely since Charles Beecher Hogan commented in the preface to his 1936 bibliography of Edwin Arlington Robinson “that the relation of a first edition to its dust-wrapper is so negligible that the awe in which dust-wrappers have of late years been held is a serious and unworthy stigma on genuine book-collecting” (Hogan iii). A fine copy of the first edition of the Methuen *Rainbow* might sell for as much as \$2,000. But a copy of the Methuen *Rainbow* in dust-jacket (and a slightly soiled, slightly restored jacket at that) recently sold in London for over \$16,000.

I have selected the thirteen dust-jackets on the basis of visual interest. Given this aesthetic basis for selection, it is not surprising that nine of the thirteen jackets are from among the twenty Lawrence titles (a few of them reprints) published by Thomas Seltzer in New York City from *Touch and Go* in June 1920 through *Little Novels of Sicily* in March 1925. Lawrence’s second Seltzer publication was *Women in Love* (November 1920), which

had unsuccessfully gone the rounds of the London publishing houses while Lawrence was still in England. Bruised by his experiences during World War I—including the banning of *The Rainbow* and the rejection of *Women in Love*—Lawrence longed for a fresh start in America, where he believed he would find a new audience.

Though born in Russia, Thomas Seltzer had been in the United States since boyhood. He began working for Boni and Liveright in 1917 and started his own firm, Thomas Seltzer, Inc., in 1920 (*Letters to Thomas and Adele Seltzer*, 173-74). Seltzer was particularly interested in experimental—even controversial—European literature, and Lawrence would become the star of his list. Seltzer presented Lawrence as a groundbreaking, avant garde writer to a new, youthful, post-War reading public.

Typically (though not exclusively) Lawrence's Seltzer dust-jackets are boldly pictorial. These eye-catching jackets figured prominently in Seltzer's presentation of Lawrence to this new American audience. Lawrence played an active role in the creation of most of the ten Seltzer jackets I have selected. He himself designed the *Birds, Beasts and Flowers* jacket. Artist friends of Lawrence designed five of these Seltzer jackets: Jan Juta (*Sea and Sardinia*), Knud Merrild (*The Captain's Doll*), Kai Götzsche (*Mastro-don Gesualdo*), and Dorothy Brett (*The Boy in the Bush* and *The Plumed Serpent*). The unusual design of the front board of *Tortoises* features a Japanese print which itself includes a color woodcut by the 19th-century Japanese artist Hiroshige. The artists who contributed the dust-jackets of *Aaron's Rod*, *Kangaroo*, and *Studies in Classic American Literature* remain unaccounted for—though some believe that Lawrence designed the jacket of *Studies*.

I have also chosen four non-Seltzer jackets. Frank Wright's jarringly old-fashioned jacket for the Methuen *Rainbow* (1915) is surely Lawrence's first pictorial dust-jacket. E. McKnight Kauffer's quasi-cubist jacket for the Chatto & Windus *Look! We Have Come Through!* (1917) is the most interesting of all Lawrence's English jackets. Lawrence's artist-friend Dorothy Brett designed the dust-jacket of the American first edition of *The Plumed Serpent* (1926). And finally, Martin Secker, Lawrence's longtime English publisher (from *New Poems*, published in October 1918 through a number of posthumous Lawrence publications), is represented by the 1927 first edition of *Mornings in Mexico*, featuring one of the versions of Lawrence's drawing of "The Corn Dance."

Lawrence published a number of other books presented in striking pictorial dust-jackets (or front board decoration), but his eye-pleasing jackets

tell only a partial story. One can imagine bold, vivid designs for the jackets of the Seltzer *Psychoanalysis of the Unconscious* (1921) and *Fantasia of the Unconscious* (1922), but both books play it safe: both jackets, gray paper printed in black, feature extensive blurbs but no pictures whatsoever. The Seltzer first edition of *Women in Love*, privately printed for subscribers in an edition of 1200, plays it even safer by having no dust-jacket at all.

And as bland as Secker's *Mornings in Mexico* jacket—with its stiffly drawn native American dancers—is, this jacket nevertheless represents an adventurous departure for the publisher. Thomas Seltzer presented Lawrence as an exciting new writer, but from the beginning Martin Secker was obviously nervous about publishing a writer with a well-deserved reputation for pushing back the boundaries of sexual explicitness. Methuen had bravely published *The Rainbow*, and Methuen, along with Lawrence, suffered the consequences of the book's banning. Secker issued almost all his Lawrence titles in a staid standard format: chocolate brown boards and dust-jackets of cream paper printed in red, usually with a brief descriptive blurb at the bottom. Secker did follow Seltzer in using a Jan Juta painting on the cover of his *Sea and Sardinia*, but *Mornings in Mexico* features his only other pictorial dust-jacket. Secker's nearly uniform format attempts to neutralize Lawrence and transform him into a *safe* standard author. Secker's dust-jackets try to remove the sting that most of Seltzer's dust-jackets emphasize.

Commentary

***The Captain's Doll*. New York: Thomas Seltzer, 1923 (on front cover of this number of the *DHLR*). Artist: Knud Merrild.**

“The cover looks very gay and lively. . . .” (Lawrence to Merrild, 4 June 1923, *L* iv. 453)

Lawrence and Frieda met the Danish artists Knud Merrild and Kai Gótzsche in Taos sometime in the autumn of 1922. They became good friends in the winter of 1922-23 when the Lawrences lived in a log cabin seventeen miles above Taos and “the Danes,” at Lawrence's invitation, shared a smaller cabin nearby. That winter above Taos is well-documented in Lawrence's letters and in Merrild's *A Poet and Two Painters*, the memoir of Lawrence he published in 1938.

Merrild had decided to become a modernist artist when he saw an

exhibition of Cubist painting in 1913. He studied for six years in Copenhagen at the Arts and Crafts School and the Royal Academy of Art. Merrild and Gótzsche had met in New York City, where both were employed for a time making posters for a movie company. Lawrence was more impressed with Merrild's work as a designer than with his paintings. He found him a "very clever decorator" (L iv. 344) and immediately decided that he wanted to ask Thomas Seltzer to let Merrild design some of his book-jackets. Initially he also wanted Merrild to "do some wood-cuts for *Birds Beasts*" (L iv. 345). Lawrence, well aware that the Danes "have no money, hardly" (L iv. 344), wanted "them to have a few dollars to be able to go on their way with" (L iv. 383). But he also believed that jackets by Merrild would help sell his books to his American audience.

Early in 1923 Merrild submitted jacket designs for *The Captain's Doll*, *Studies in Classic American Literature*, and *Kangaroo* to Seltzer. Seltzer liked the *Captain's Doll* and *Studies* jackets "very much," though ultimately he used only Merrild's *Captain's Doll* design. "'Kangaroo' I am afraid will not do," Seltzer wrote Merrild. "It is not merely a question of art, but of advertisement. The book cover has to stand out among hundreds of other books" (*Letters to Thomas and Adele Seltzer* 259). However, Seltzer kept all three designs and sent Merrild a check for \$120. Subsequently Merrild also attempted some jacket designs for *Birds, Beasts and Flowers*.

Lawrence's collection of three novellas is his only book with different English and American titles. Secker published *The Ladybird: The Fox: The Captain's Doll* in March 1923. Seltzer brought out *The Captain's Doll: Three Novelettes* in New York City the next month. No doubt Merrild's design, dominated by the large central figure of Hannele's doll version of Captain Hepburn, reflects Seltzer's ordering of the novellas. The small images of the fox and Count Psanek—both also rendered as toys—are almost incidental.

The colorful, Deco-ish jacket design displays Merrild's decorative art at its best. The doll, arms and legs akimbo, seems (unlike the Captain himself) limp and powerless. The hand dangling between the doll's legs seems to put a sexual spin on that powerlessness. At the same time the doll's erect head seems quite potently phallic. Part of the design's strength comes from the way Merrild uses the doll's black shirt as a vertical against the broad black horizontal bar behind the doll.

Interestingly "*Captains*" lacks an apostrophe here and also on the spine of the jacket (though nowhere else in the book). This detail is revealing, for Danish, like German and the other Scandinavian languages, does

not have the apostrophe. (For example, the Danish translation of *Aaron's Rod* is *Arons Stav*.)

***The Rainbow*. London: Methuen, 1915. Artist: Frank Wright.**

“The cover-wrapper is vile beyond words. I think Methuen is a swine to have put it on. But then he is a swine.” (Lawrence to his sister Emily King, 27 September 1915, *L* ii. 402)

Lawrence obviously had no input into the choice of this Frank Wright painting for the jacket of *The Rainbow*. Wright, who lived from 1868 to 1924, was the younger brother of Walter Wright, who “became a landscape painter of very considerable repute in New Zealand” (Hall 63). Indeed these painting Wright Brothers both made their careers in New Zealand. The fact that Frank and Walter Wright were both born in Nottingham is agreeable but no doubt accidental.

Frank Wright’s picture vaguely though inaccurately suggests the fowl-loft scene between Will and Anna in “Girlhood of Anna Brangwen.” In this scene they embrace one another and Anna passionately declares her love. But Frank Wright “spent nearly all his life in New Zealand” (Hall 62), which suggests that the painting has no real connection with the novel. Someone in Methuen’s office must have known about and had access to Wright’s “love in the barn” picture.

Lawrence must have been appalled by the late Victorian sentimentality of this image. The blushing maiden in red (her dress neatly color-coordinated with her sweetheart’s vest) could not be Lawrence’s Anna Brangwen. The man is too old to be Will, and the crude anatomical rendering of his legs is sufficient reason in itself for Lawrence’s to have declared the image “vile.” But despite the dubiousness of the Frank Wright design, a Methuen *Rainbow* in dust-jacket would be the high point of even the finest collection of Lawrence first editions.

The spine of the dust-jacket features an interesting two-sentence synopsis of the novel: “This story, by one of the most remarkable of the younger school of novelists, contains a history of the Brangwen character through its developing crises of love, religion, and social passion. It ends with Ursula, the leading-shoot of the restless, fearless family, waiting at the advance-post of our time to blaze a path into the future.” Several phrases with a Lawrentian ring—“social passion, leading-shoot,” “advance-past”—

convince me that Lawrence wrote this blurb.

***Look! We Have Come Through!* London: Chatto & Windus, 1917.
Artist: E. McKnight Kauffer.**

“. . . the wrapper isn't so bad, really - though a bit *criant*.” (Lawrence to his agent J.B. Pinker, [30 November 1917], *L* iii. 187)

E. McKnight Kauffer (1890-1954) was a contemporary of Lawrence's and one of the most distinguished designers and illustrators of his generation. Kauffer was an American who worked in England until returning to the States in 1942. As a young artist in England Kauffer was part of the Cumberland Market Group, and in 1920 he was a founder-member of the short-lived Group X along with Wyndham Lewis. His designs included many posters, illustrations for T.S. Eliot's *Ariel Poems* and various publications by the Nonesuch Press and the Cresset Press, and theater and ballet sets and costumes. He was also a leading figure in the great flowering of book-jacket design from the 1920s onwards.

Kauffer's most famous jacket is his elegant design for the 1947 Random House edition of *Ulysses*, the standard edition of that novel for many years. He also designed many books in the Random House Modern Library series. For Kauffer “the book jacket vitually replaced the poster” (Heller and Chwast 114). He typically uses large, strong poster-like images with bold typography against dark backgrounds. Even his early design for Lawrence's *Look! We Have Come Through!* is somewhat reminiscent of a poster.

Kauffer brought a thorough knowledge of modern art movements to his design work. A famous poster for the *Daily Herald* draws on Vorticism as well as Japanese prints, and his work also shows the impact of both Constructivism and surrealism. Kauffer assimilated new developments in European art from the beginning of his career. In 1913 while he was a student at the Art Institute of Chicago, the great, controversial Armory Show came to Chicago. “The 643 works of this exhibition introduced America at one blow to almost everything of major importance in European painting from Delacroix to Marcel Duchamp, whose *Nude Descending a Staircase* was only one of many masterpieces shown” (Haworth-Booth 14). This notorious painting is the obvious inspiration for Kauffer's jacket design for *Look! We Have Come Through!*, which he produced four years later.

The Kauffer *Look! We Have Come Through!* is the most avant garde of Lawrence's jacket designs. It seems an odd choice for *Look!*, the highly elaborated poetic diary of Lawrence and Frieda's first months together in Europe. Lawrence said that the poems were "intended as an essential story, or history, or confession, unfolding one from the other in organic development" (*Look!* 5): Kauffer's design could not be less "organic." One would also not expect this design for a book of quasi-honeymoon poems in the year of Paschendaele and the mutinies in the French Army—although perhaps one might argue that Kauffer has indeed produced an image of love at the time of Paschendaele. The tension in Kauffer's design suggests that he had read the poems and realized that conflict is one of their main ingredients.

Chatto & Windus explained to Lawrence that they believed "that the cover will create some interest, and we hope that you will like this rather curious and artistic design. The artist, Mr. Kauffer, says that it is based on the idea of two figures walking briskly; and it struck us as likely to attract the eye to the book, which is the main purpose of a cover of this kind" (*L* iii. 184). Presumably the "two figures walking briskly" (and not very harmoniously) are Lawrence and Frieda.

Surprisingly, Lawrence did like the look of the book. On 30 November 1917 Chatto & Windus acknowledged a (now missing) letter from him: "We are very glad indeed that you are so pleased with the appearance of your book" (*L* iii. 186). Lawrence echoed his praise to J.B. Pinker: "My poems have come - on the whole I like them very much - the get-up. I *love* the red, now I see it plainly - and the wrapper isn't so bad, really - though a bit *criant* [loud]" (*L* iii. 187).

***Birds, Beasts and Flowers.* New York: Thomas Seltzer, 1923. Artist: D.H. Lawrence.**

"Today I have got *Mastro-don* and *Birds-Beasts*. Both look very nice indeed, especially *BirdsBeasts*. Isn't my jacket nice too?" (Lawrence to Seltzer, 3 November 1923, *L* iv. 526)

As noted above, when Lawrence met Knud Merrild and Kai Gótzsche in Taos in the autumn of 1922, he immediately asked Merrild to "make some designs for his books and also to illustrate his 'Birds, Beasts and Flowers'" (Merrild 18). Lawrence wanted to include illustrations for each of

the subsections of *Birds, Beasts*, but Seltzer didn't like the idea—no doubt at least partly because of the expense. On 19 January 1923, Lawrence wrote Seltzer conciliatorily, “. . . Mountsier says you really don't want *Birds Beasts* decorated or illustrated. If you really dislike it, we will just make a title-page and a rather exceptionally beautiful jacket, with animals on it. Would you like that?” (*L* iv. 369). The “we” must refer to Lawrence and the two Danes. A month later Lawrence announced that “Merrild will do the jacket for *Birds Beasts*, in bright, tangled colour” and hopefully added, “I take it you want *no* interior decoration” (*L* iv. 394). On 9 March Lawrence conceded the issue of interior illustrations and argued for Merrild's jacket:

I think, really, you are right not to make interior decorations for *BirdsBeasts*. But poor Merrild was so set on it. He has done a design for each section-cover. I told him that you would *not* use them for the ordinary edition, but if you liked them, and if ever you wanted to print a decorated edition, you might use them for that. I think the book-jacket has a nice free feeling: hope you'll like it. (*L* iv. 406)

Thomas Seltzer and his wife Adele visited the Lawrences in Taos the last week of 1922. During this visit Lawrence and Seltzer met with the Danes to talk about their designs and illustrations. It was essentially at this meeting that Seltzer decided to use only *The Captain's Doll*. “The books were to have jackets and [Lawrence] much preferred ours to the ordinary commercial, conventional ones” (Merrild 295), but there was no convincing Seltzer. A plan for Kai Gótzsche to do the jacket also failed to materialize.

No evidence survives as to when and how the decision was made for Lawrence to design the jacket himself. Lawrence's design is at once energetic, playful, and marvelously balanced. In the relationship between title and iconic figures, in lettering style, and in overall design the jacket is strikingly reminiscent of the title pages of some of Blake's prophetic books, notably that of *The Book of Thel*. As the work of Lawrence himself, the jacket design of *Birds, Beasts and Flowers* has special interpretive authority.

The exuberant exclamation point after *Flowers*, which appears nowhere else on or in the book, emphasizes the mood of many of the poems. The fruits in the panel immediately beneath the title are appropriately sexualized—with a comic touch: note how the split-open pomegranate in the center seems to reveal someone's chubby rear end and legs. The oddly

upright phallus-shaped fish against a backdrop of Southwestern pines on the left is balanced on the right by a very naked woman whom I take to be Eve (complete with cleft) against a tree that evokes the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. After all, humanity's fall from Edenic innocence into self-consciousness is a major theme of the collection — including the tortoise poems. The male-female polarity of these two figures is important (though it must be said that the phallic fish seems to display a split of its own). Lawrence's decision to balance the naked woman against a fish doesn't seem altogether friendly toward women.

The dog on the left, definitely not Bibles, is probably an English bulldog. The bull on the right evokes St. Jude of the evangelistic beasts. Lawrence has paired these two animals for the sake of a sort of pun: bulldog/bull. Flowers and leaves form a border at the bottom of the book.

The striking, stylized eagle grasping a snake (with tongue sticking out) at the top of the jacket is the most unusual design element. This is not the American eagle of the shrilly polemical poem that closes the volume, nor is it the famous snake that came to Lawrence's water-trough in Taormina. Instead the image of eagle with snake in its claws is the central icon of Mexican post-colonial national identity. It derives from the Aztec origins legend in which Huitzilopochtli, the god of war, tells the wandering tribe that it should found its settlement at the place where they encounter an eagle on a cactus clutching a snake. That settlement would eventually become Mexico City.

I believe that this image, which has no real connection with *Birds, Beasts and Flowers*, is a more personal reference. Lawrence and Frieda were in Mexico City from 24 March to 27 April 1923. He may well have designed the jacket during this period. At the least I think that the eagle/snake image celebrates his first visit to Mexico.

This image also points to a secret structure of *Birds, Beasts and Flowers*. Yes, it's a collection of poems about fruits, trees, flowers, creatures, reptiles, birds, and animals with the evangelistic beasts, ghosts, and the American eagle thrown in. But beneath its surface *Birds, Beasts* is also a record of Lawrence's personal journeys—with poems written in various places in Italy, in Sicily, in Ceylon, in Australia, in the American Southwest. The eagle/snake image on the Seltzer *Birds, Beasts* jacket signals the next stop in his "savage pilgrimage."

Incidentally Lawrence never abandoned his desire to produce an illustrated edition of *Birds, Beasts and Flowers*. In the summer of 1929 the Cresset Press expressed interest in publishing a deluxe edition of the book

featuring wood-engravings by Blair Hughes-Stanton. Lawrence wrote prefatory notes for each of the book's nine sections, but it wasn't published until June 1930, three months after his death.

***The Plumed Serpent*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1926. Artist: Dorothy Brett.**

"I like the jacket of the *Plumed Serpent* so much." (Lawrence to Dorothy Brett, [16 February 1926, *L* v. 392])

The Honorable Dorothy Brett (1883-1977), the daughter of the 2nd Viscount Esher, studied art at the Slade School. She first met the Lawrences in 1915. The most devoted of Lawrence's followers, she traveled with him and Frieda to Taos in 1924. The Lawrences settled in at Kiowa Ranch from May to October 1924 with Brett living nearby in a one-room cabin. The Lawrences and Brett traveled to Mexico together in October 1924. Under pressure from Frieda and with Lawrence's acquiescence, Brett returned to the States early the next year.

In the spring and summer of 1925 the Lawrences were back at Kiowa. Frieda banished Brett, who moved down to Del Monte, and insisted that she visit no more than three times a week. Lawrence finished writing *David* on 7 May 1925, and Brett must have finished typing it shortly afterwards. In *Lawrence and Brett* the detailed scene in which Lawrence reads the play to Frieda, Brett, and Ida Rauh is followed immediately by a scene that finds Lawrence and Brett painting together, which suggests that Brett's jacket for the Knopf *Plumed Serpent* dates from about this time:

You have painted a very good design for the back of the "Plumed Serpent" while I have painted a most excellent cover. You are really surprised when you see it. I watch the look of startled wonder that I could do anything so good, flit over your face. (Brett 221)

In late November of that year Lawrence reported that he'd "heard from Barmby that Knopf is using your cover design for *The Plumed Serpent*, and has already paid \$50" (*L* v. 342).

The Plumed Serpent is the finer of Dorothy Brett's two Lawrence jackets, even though the draughtsmanship is suspect, especially in the curiously truncated figure in the lower-left. The design is notable for its strong triangular shape combined with a swirling circular pattern, elegantly high-

lighted by the four wonderful sombreros. The vertical lettering in the upper-left-hand corner effectively plays off the horizontal lettering in the lower-right-hand corner.

The most important element in the composition is the large, curious, arresting figure on the serape of the dominant central Mexican. Not surprisingly, this is Quetzalcoatl, an image of the god that Brett must have taken from a book about the Aztecs with illustrations from the extant Aztec codices. (A similar image—from the Codex Magliabecchiano—can be found on page 171 of *Quetzalcoatl and the Irony of Empire* by David Carrasco.) The god on the serape demonstrates that the four men in the design are not random Mexicans but rather men of Quetzalcoatl. The fact that the central figure's serape partially conceals his face also suggests that these men are dangerous.

***Tortoises*. New York: Thomas Seltzer, 1921. Artist: Color print by unknown Japanese artist that incorporates woodcut by Hiroshige.**

“I have the *Tortoises* books: very handsome, but I am surprised to see them so expensively got up.” (Lawrence to his agent Robert Mountsier, 9 January 1922, *L* iv. 156)

The six poems of *Tortoises* date from the second half of 1920. From the beginning Lawrence conceived of publishing the poems as a little book. These are the poems he was referring to on 3 October 1920 when he told Amy Lowell that he had “done a new little volume of *Vers Libre* - so queer” (*L* iii. 607).

The tortoise poems are in Lawrence's *Birds, Beasts and Flowers* mode except for the fact that they form a sequence. Seltzer published the book in New York City in December 1921. He omitted the tortoise poems from his edition of *Birds, Beasts and Flowers*, published in October 1923, but Secker included them (in the Reptiles section along with “Snake”) in the first English edition, published the following month.

Seltzer issued *Tortoises* in only a protective glassine wrapper, but that's because the front board is so highly decorated. None of the Lawrence dust-jackets is quite as unlikely as this design. A large, rather stylized tortoise, suspended (from who knows what?) with a rope around its middle seems to gaze through a window at a view of Mount Fujiyama complete with antique boats of several sorts. The view of Fujiyama is actually a

color print by the great 19th-century Japanese artist Hiroshige (1797-1858). The design is a sort of visual game, for (1) the Hiroshige print also reads as actual landscape and (2) it's impossible to decipher what's going on with the tortoise.

What we're actually looking at is a *later* Japanese print that incorporates Hiroshige's print. Seltzer must have liked and had access to this print. It unmistakably features a tortoise, and thus Seltzer must have found it appropriate to a book called *Tortoises*. He needed only to "frame" the print in green and superimpose title and author in pseudo-Oriental lettering, and he had an eye-catching, almost ready-made design. So what if Lawrence wrote his tortoise poems in Italy and they have nothing to do with Japan.?

Seltzer wrote Mountsier on 20 August 1920 that he believed that "the cover design . . . will be entirely to your liking. I am taking great pains with the book to make it good looking" (*Letters to Thomas and Adele Seltzer* 213). Perhaps he said this because he was worried about Mountsier's and Lawrence's responses. But Lawrence did find the book "very handsome" (*L* iv. 156).

***Sea and Sardinia*. New York: Thomas Seltzer, 1921. Artist: Jan Juta.**

"The wrapper makes me scream with agony - but you can't prevent the Americans." (Lawrence to Jan Juta, 9 January 1922, *L* iv. 158)

Lawrence and Frieda knew the handsome young painter and craftsman Jan Juta (1897-1991) in Italy (especially Sicily) at the beginning of the 1920s. Juta, from a distinguished South African family, was "an unknown student studying in Rome" (Nehls ii. 81). He is best-known for his portraits of Lawrence: first two charcoal sketches and then the oil that now hangs in the National Portrait Gallery in London. The oil is based on the first sketch in which Juta tries to capture Lawrence "looking with his penetrating eyes into the troubled future" (Nehls ii. 85-6). Lawrence thought that he looked like "the Wild Man of Borneo" (*L* iii. 550) in this sketch.

Lawrence and Frieda took a brief tour of Sardinia in January 1921, the trip that became the basis for *Sea and Sardinia*. He and Juta had talked about collaborating on this book with Juta contributing paintings to be used as illustrations and also for the dust-jacket. Originally Juta and Lawrence were to travel to Sardinia together, but "as events turned out, I went to Sardinia alone in April; Lawrence had abandoned the plan to go with me,

thinking it best I should gather my own impressions of the island alone” (Nehls ii. 86). Juta’s “illustrations would be mostly people-scenes: like the eggs in Cagliari - not landscape: and in flat color wash easy to reproduce” (*L* iv. 34). As late as March 1921 Lawrence was trying to obtain photographs to illustrate the travel book, but on 7 June he wrote Juta that he was “very keen to see the pictures. - London publishers jumping for fright at the thought of color: expense! But to hell with them - They just *must*” (*L* iv 24). Lawrence was ready to fully back the collaboration even before he saw Juta’s pictures, which arrived later that month: “I like them *very* much, and Frieda is enraptured” (*L* iv. 42). Seltzer was able to accept the extra expense of the illustrations, defining *Sea and Sardinia* as “a gift book in general and a Christmas gift book in particular” (and insisting that the book “must be absolutely unobjectionable” (*Letters to Thomas and Adele Seltzer* 216).

Juta’s paintings, now owned by the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center of the University of Texas, are indeed “mostly people-scenes” and “flat.” They are elegant stylized scenes from his own Sardinian travels rather than an attempt to illustrate specific scenes in *Sea and Sardinia*. The cover reproduces “Fonni,” which is also found after page 204 in the first edition. Six peasant women—all identically dressed in black, red, and white—come down a flight of stairs after a church service. Two more women emerge from the church, which stands out against the deep blue sky. The image at once conveys grace and starkness, beauty and remoteness—as well as the separate spheres of males and females.

Lawrence scrutinized the color reproductions quite keenly. He wrote Juta that “the *reds* are disappointing - and there is a certain juiciness about the colours that I don’t like - but otherwise they are not bad.” It’s impossible to know why the dust-jacket made him “scream with agony” (*L* iv. 158).

As every reader of this journal knows, “the Cambridge edition aims to provide texts which are as close as can now be determined to those he would have wished to see printed.” It’s a shame that because of economic considerations, Cambridge could not include Juta’s illustrations in its edition 1997 edition of *Sea and Sardinia*. After all, Lawrence had argued vigorously for including Juta’s paintings as an integral part of the book.

***Aaron's Rod*. New York: Thomas Seltzer, 1922. Artist: Unknown.**

“. . . today came the copies of *Aaron* - Many thanks - book looks so nice. . . .” (Lawrence to Seltzer, 11 June 1922, *L* iv. 260)

I have been unable to locate any information about the stylish Seltzer dust-jacket for *Aaron's Rod*. The fact that it is unsigned dooms the artist to anonymity.

The poster-like design in black, white, and a bold red is crisp and clear. The leaves aren't actually growing out of Aaron Sisson's flute, but they definitely place the character and his musical instrument on the side of "life." The unknown artist seems to make the same point visually that Katherine Mansfield made in a letter about the book to S.S. Koteliansky on 17 July 1922: "There are certain things in this new book of L.'s that I do not like. . . . They are trivial, encrusted, they cling to it as snails to the underside of a leaf. But apart from them there is the leaf, is the tree, firmly planted, deep thrusting, out-spreading, growing grandly, alive in every twig. It is a living book. . . (Nehls ii. 160).

***Studies in Classic American Literature*. New York: Thomas Seltzer, 1923. Artist: Unknown.**

"Then we set out to do 'Studies in Classic American Literature,' and did we have fun! Lawrence just loved to draw, he was like a child about it." (Knud Merrild, *A Poet and Two Painters*, p. 97)

The Seltzer *Studies in Classic American Literature* is another Lawrence first edition whose designer cannot be identified. Near the end of 1922 Lawrence and Knud Merrild worked on possible jacket designs for the book together. Merrild has left us a record of the "fun" they had in this collaborative experience:

He made the first design to show me what he wanted, and as he drew the many different figures, he talked about them and to them. He had quite a talk with Walt Whitman about his "Leaves of Grass." Lawrence wanted the design to be a conglomeration of things bursting in all directions, with some sort of a centrum. Each figure had its symbolic meaning and the design was a story in itself. (Merrild 97)

In Merrild's design "the capital letter 'A' appearing several times stands for Alpha, Adam, Adama, Adultery, Adulteress, Admirable, American, Americans, etc. (Merrild 99). The rough sketch of a *Studies* jacket owned by the Humanities Research Center at Texas seems to be this Merrild design. It is reproduced on page 59 of *Letters to Thomas and Adele Seltzer*, where it is falsely attributed to Lawrence.

But Seltzer decided not to use these drawings for the *Studies* jacket. Instead he chose a simple but deceptively witty jacket. The design is barely pictorial: in the lower-left-hand corner what seems to be trying to become part of a boldly red rectangle to hold the author's name somehow instead becomes an ink-well—with the suggestion of a quill-pen immediately to the right. Ink-well and quill-pen point to the 18th- and 19th-century writers who are the book's subjects.

The jacket design otherwise consists mostly of the book title and the name of the author, written casually in three different scripts (with the title partly in red and partly in black). Even more casual (and whimsical) is the fact that the designer runs out of space for the final "E" in "LITERATURE" and must therefore move it down to the next line (breaking the rectangle). The rough-and-ready design suggests that the book's approach to the American literary classics (and to literature itself) will be less than reverential. The design's spontaneous, work-in-progress feel also may be intended to reflect Lawrence's essays.

It's possible that Lawrence designed the *Studies* jacket himself. But it seems likely that if he had, he would have mentioned it—with characteristic delight—in a surviving letter. The book was published on 27 August 1923. Lawrence read proofs for *Birds, Beasts* while he and Frieda were in New York City between 19 July and 22 August. He also must have seen an advance copy. Thus he had no occasion to comment on the book's appearance in a letter to Seltzer. Like the *Aaron's Rod* jacket, the *Studies in Classic American Literature* design is shrouded in silence.

The back of Seltzer's *Studies* jacket includes four brief excerpts from the book—including Lawrence's famous advice to "never trust the artist" and instead to "trust the tale." It also includes a one-sentence blurb, probably written by the admiring Seltzer: "Through the works of these American writers the great poet-interpreter of modern life traces the spiritual history of America."

***Kangaroo*. New York: Thomas Seltzer, 1923. Artist: Unknown.**

“. . . ‘Kangaroo’ was, in my estimation, a terrible commercial thing to put on a Lawrence book.” (Knud Merrild, *A Poet and Two Painters*, p. 124)

On 1 February 1923 Thomas Seltzer wrote Lawrence about the three jacket designs Knud Merrild had sent him: “I like THE CAPTAIN’S DOLL and STUDIES jackets. Don’t care for the KANGAROO one” (see letter number 2 in “New Letters from Thomas Seltzer and Robert Mountsier to D.H. Lawrence” in this issue). Merrild was sorely disappointed that Seltzer would not use any of his designs for the *Kangaroo* jacket. The three *Kangaroo* sketches at the HRC are reproduced on page 49 of *Letters to Thomas and Adele Seltzer*. All three are attributed to Merrild here, but one actually seems to be Lawrence’s “drawing of a kangaroo” that Merrild mentions in *A Poet and Two Painters* (97). A number of Merrild’s finished jacket designs for *Kangaroo* have survived and are currently to be found with a West Coast art dealer and in a private collection.

Merrild’s characterization of the design Seltzer used as a “terrible commercial thing” has the ring of sour grapes. A great steamer that is about to leave port dominates the design. Streamers are flying, and people in the crowd are cheering and waving hats and handkerchiefs. The gray mass of the ship is offset by all the yellows and oranges the artist has used quite arbitrarily throughout his picture, as well as the yellow lettering at the bottom of the jacket. The mood is bright. The scene emphasizes the novel’s journey motif.

The only trouble is that the scene depicts Somers and Harriett’s *departure from Australia*. The unknown artist must not have read the entire novel; he has chosen to illustrate the last two pages of the novel. The sky is “all sun, the boat reared her . . . funnel to the glow,” and meanwhile “a whole crowd of people down on the wharf with white uplifted faces.” “Everybody had brought streamers, rolls of coloured paper ribbon, and now the passengers leaning over the rail of the lower and middle decks tossed the unwinding rolls to their friends below” (Seltzer *Kangaroo* 420). No other dust-jacket design for a Lawrence book depicts an actual scene in the book as precisely as this one does. Only the boldly stylized yellows and oranges depart from the text. Still, it’s unusual to represent this Australian novel with the scene in which the main characters leave Australia.

The back of the *Kangaroo* jacket features a three-paragraph blurb about Lawrence and *Kangaroo*, probably written by Seltzer. The first para-

graph reads:

D.H. Lawrence has again written a great book, a novel which reveals an entirely new and—to the public—unexpected side of his genius. It is a book rich with the verbal magic which illuminates all his work, but whose content will be a new revelation of Mr. Lawrence's powerful personality. Perhaps this is the beginning of the novel of the future, about which Mr. Lawrence recently spoke to a few of New York's best-known men of letters.

Seltzer makes a distinction between the reading public and himself: he did not find this “new side” of Lawrence's genius “unexpected.” More interesting is Lawrence's talk on the “novel of the future.” As David Ellis reports, Seltzer had “arranged a number of literary luncheons or dinners” while Lawrence was in New York City (*DG* 123). Does any record of this talk survive?

Lawrence read proofs for *Kangaroo* while he was in New York and no doubt saw the jacket design. But he never commented on it in surviving letters.

***Mastro-don Gesualdo*. New York: Thomas Seltzer, 1923. Artist: Kai Gótzsche.**

“Gótzsche has done a jacket for *Mastro-don Gesualdo*, which I like. But I don't want you to feel pestered. . . .” (Lawrence to Seltzer, 9 March 1923, *L* iv. 406)

Kai Gótzsche is by far the more shadowy of the two Danish painters whom Lawrence met in Taos late in 1922. Gótzsche actually spent more time with Lawrence than Merrild did, for Lawrence and Gótzsche traveled together in Mexico from late September to late November, and the two of them sailed together from Mexico to England. (Merrild had decided not to join Lawrence and Gótzsche on their Mexican trip.) Some of Gótzsche's letters to Merrild survive, but Gótzsche lost his letters from Lawrence. Furthermore, Gótzsche seems to have disappeared from sight in Denmark, whereas Merrild developed a solid reputation as a West Coast painter. Gótzsche may have equal billing in Merrild's *A Poet and Two Painters*, but even there he seems rather elusive.

In January 1922 Gótzsche painted a portrait of Lawrence, seated in a chair looking pensive and vulnerable, “a real forcible portrait of me in my leather shirt and blue overalls” (*L* iv. 370). And when Lawrence received his copies of *Mastro-don Gesualdo* and *Birds, Beasts and Flowers* in Guadalajara early in November 1923, he told Seltzer that both books “look very nice indeed” (*L* iv. 526).

Merrild doesn’t mention Gótzsche’s design for *Mastro-don* in *A Poet and Two Painters*. Merrild, who believed with justice that he was working within the context of modern art, must have felt that Gótzsche’s colorful jacket for *Mastro-don*—all oranges, greens, and yellows—was more like commercial book illustration. The two peasants are brightly dressed, the cheerful peasant woman carries a bright orange jug on her head, even the patient, friendly-looking donkey is brightly dressed. The male peasant has a glint in his eye as he looks over his shoulder at the peasant woman. The long white tail of his peasant cap reinforces the sexual subtext of the scene. The cactus invokes New Mexico as well as Sicily.

***The Boy in the Bush*. New York: Thomas Seltzer, 1927. Artist: Dorothy Brett—probably also worked on by Lawrence.**

“Brett sent you a jacket design today. I hope you like it - I do -.” (Lawrence to Seltzer, 10 April 1924, *L* v. 32)

The Knopf *Plumed Serpent* was the second Lawrence jacket that Dorothy Brett designed. She had previously designed the jacket for Seltzer’s American first edition of *The Boy in the Bush*, issued on 30 September 1924. *The Boy in the Bush* is Lawrence’s collaboration with the Australian nurse Mollie Skinner. Brett appears both on the book (as dust-jacket designer) and in the book, for the character Hilda Blessington, added by Lawrence, is unmistakably based on Brett.

Lawrence and Frieda were back in Taos with Brett in tow. They were staying in a two-story house across the field behind Mabel Luhan’s house; Brett was put up in what was called the “studio.” The three of them didn’t move up to Lobo Ranch, a gift from Mabel to Frieda, until May 1924 (where Brett would live alone in a tiny one-room shed near the Lawrences’ cabin).

The memoir literature—including *Lawrence and Brett*—amply documents the great pleasure Lawrence took drawing and painting with his artist friends. Brett must have created her design for *The Boy in the Bush* (which she doesn’t mention in her memoir) in a session in Taos during

which she and Lawrence were working on designs for the book. Brett sent her design to Seltzer on 10 April—Lawrence hoped “that it comes well in time” to be used (*L* v. 32-33). On the same day he wrote Secker, enclosing his own “jacket-design for the *Boy in the Bush*, if it’s not too late, and if you want it. I made it, and I think it’s rather nice” (*L* v. 34). These two letters make it sound as if the two jacket-designs were newly created.

Three weeks later Lawrence sent Seltzer “the duplicate of Secker’s proofs for *The Boy in the Bush*” along with “the design for the book-jacket. I took Brett’s design and worked it out in the two colours myself - think it is very effective, don’t you?” (*L* v. 37). Presumably Seltzer used this two-color (blue and black) version. Secker did not use the drawing Lawrence sent him, which shows a man, presumably Jack Grant, bowing to a kangaroo. (That design is now owned by Indiana University.)

The bold Brett design for the Seltzer *Boy in the Bush* is much more awkward, much less striking than her *Plumed Serpent* design. A pensive, scrunched-up Jack (the perspective is askew) leans against a large Australian plant with a lizard, tin cup, and Australian hat before him. An immense, indeed significantly out-of-scale kangaroo stands behind the plant and looks quizzically at Jack. It’s difficult to understand where the kangaroo’s two dangling arms actually attach to its body. The design almost seems like naive art.

The back of the jacket features a two-paragraph blurb, probably by Seltzer. The second paragraph tells the reader that the Australian “subject suited the wizard pen of Lawrence, and his collaboration with Miss Skinner, a talented Australian novelist, has produced a work glamorous with the mystery of the Australian brush, yet starkly real and true. . . .”

***Mornings in Mexico*. London: Martin Secker, 1927. Artist: D.H. Lawrence—with some assistance by Dorothy Brett.**

“I suppose you won’t put pictures in. But I should like you to put just that drawing of the corn dance figures which I made.” (Lawrence to Secker, 13 April 1927, *L* vi. 31)

In early November 1926 Martin Secker suggested the collection that would become *Mornings in Mexico*. Lawrence candidly expressed his doubts to Secker: “Do you really think those essays are good enough? It seems to me they are rather half baked, some of ‘em” (*L* v. 575). But by 26

November he had warmed to the idea and sent Secker a copy of the November issue of *Travel*, which contained “Walk to Huayapa,” illustrated with six photographs: “it would be a good idea to put photograph illustrations in the book” (L v. 587). Most of Lawrence’s references to *Mornings in Mexico* in surviving letters concern these photographs. He directed most of these letters to Secker, trying to convince him to use photographs that had accompanied serial publication of some of the essays in *Theatre Arts Monthly* and *Travel*: “You do want to put a few pictures in, nowadays, for the wishy-washy public” (L v. 638). Apparently at one point Secker agreed to include photographs, which would after all “fatten the book out a bit” (L v. 596).

Lawrence was “a bit vexed” (L vi. 70) when it turned out that at the last minute Secker decided against photographs. But Secker did at least honor Lawrence’s request “to put just that drawing of the corn dance figures” (L vi. 31). I suspect it was Secker’s idea to use it on the dust-jacket. This is the only time Secker created his own pictorial jacket. And at that, as pictorial jackets go, this one is rather staid and bland.

“The Corn Dance” exists in two different versions. The more finished version of the drawing accompanied the publication of “The Dance of the Sprouting Corn” in the July 1924 issue of *Theatre Arts*. Secker’s *Mornings in Mexico* jacket uses the simpler version of the image that appeared in April 1926 in the special Lawrence issue of Spud Johnson’s *Laughing Horse*. The figures are stiff and blocky. Perhaps this happened when Brett prepared Lawrence’s drawing for publication in *Laughing Horse*: “Brett didn’t do the drawing - she only traced out my drawing with tracing paper, to save time” (L v. 27).

“The Corn Dance,” which features a dancing man followed by a dancing woman, presents a detail from the dance as Lawrence depicts it in the essay. Lawrence describes the “long lines” of “the leaping, gleaming-seeming men between the solid, subtle, submissive blackness of the women who are crowned with emerald-green tiaras.” Each of the men has a “dark crowned woman attending him like a shadow” (MM 129). Lawrence’s drawing doesn’t come close to capturing the ecstatic rhythms of his prose.

As with the Juta picture chosen for the jacket of *Sea and Sardinia*, this drawing calls attention to the separate roles of men and women. The visual distinction between “gleaming-seeming men” and the “dark crowned wom[e]n” in their “submissive blackness” is sharp.

When Lawrence received his copies of the Secker *Mornings in Mexico*

in June 1927, he commented that they “look very fine - almost a respectable book” (L vi. 77).

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