

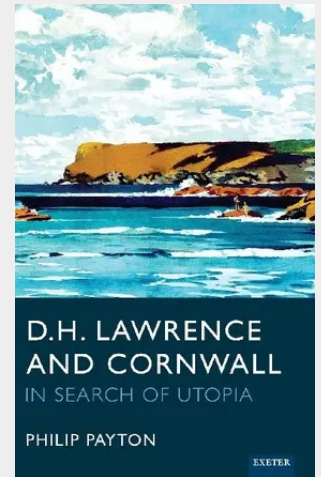
Payton

D.H. Lawrence and Cornwall

In Search of Utopia

Winner of the Holyer an Gof Award 2025 (Social, Cultural and Political History) This book examines D.H. Lawrence's attempt to create a utopian community of likeminded idealists in Cornwall, a quest that was given greater urgency by the outbreak of the First World War, an event Lawrence viewed with horror. He saw Cornwall as a 'Celtic other', beyond England's reach. But he was ultimately disillusioned by the gradual intrusion of England's 'war spirit' and was expelled from Cornwall by the authorities, ending up in Australia where he wrote about his Cornish sojourn in the semi-autobiographical novel Kangaroo. The Cornish adventure was a key event in Lawrence's life and this book alights upon several significant features that have not been fully described or understood before, notably the impact of 'Celtic revivalism' upon his imagining of Cornwall and the changing nature of the maritime war in and around Cornwall—not least its effect on Lawrence himself. Discussing the genesis and development of his ill-fated (invitation-only) community, the text follows Lawrence as he moves to Cornwall, first to Porthcothan, then to Zennor, and considers his evolving (and often contradictory) estimation of the Cornish people. Increasingly under suspicion as a possible German spy responsible for the upsurge in U-boat activity along the Cornish coast, he nonetheless formed close relationships with the local community at Zennor. Considering D.H. Lawrence through a new prism, or rather a series of new prisms, this volume offers a fresh perspective on his life, writing and thinking. It also furnishes new insights into Cornwall's ambiguous place in the English imagination and the complexity of Cornish identity, including its international dimension. As well as scholars and students, this book will be of great interest to both Cornish and D.H. Lawrence enthusiasts, along with the general reading public.

This book examines D.H. Lawrence's attempts to establish a utopian community in Cornwall during WWI. Lawrence was drawn to the idea of a 'Celtic Cornwall' beyond England's reach and thus remote from the war. But it caught up with Cornwall and Lawrence, resulting in disillusion and eventual expulsion. He described his Cornish sojourn in Kangaroo.



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