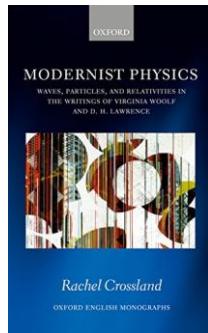


Book Review

Modernist Physics

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Modernist Physics: Waves, Particles, and Relativities in the Writings of Virginia Woolf and D.H. Lawrence by Rachel Crossland, DPhil at St. John College, University of Oxford and Senior Lecturer in English, University of Chichester. The book was published by Oxford University Press in 2018.

Modernist Physics sets off its ideas from Gillian Beer's suggestion that literature and science "share the moment's discourse" and, centers on Albert Einstein's three important papers published in 1905. The book invites us to deliberately explore and consider those ideas in both the scientific field, and in the literary texts of Virginia Woolf and D.H. Lawrence, printed before and after the presentation of Einstein's seminal papers. Crossland seeks to bridge the widening gap between these two polemic epistemologies by employing the approach of complementarity and proposing that they complement, instead of hierarchically influencing and dominating, each other.

The book is divided into three parts. *Part One* studies Woolf's writing in relation to Einstein's paper on the wave/particle model, as well as

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those of Max Planck and Niels Bohr. Crossland examines the development of the writer's works on the idea of self and individuality, and argues that her dualistic model has gradually changed into a more fluid mode along with the emergence of modern physics. She linguistically scrutinizes the use of "either/or" and "both/and" in Woolf's works, and asserts that the writer regards self to be simultaneously both "solid" and "shifting" in a manner similar to the relationship between the particle and 'wave-like continuity'. **Part Two** explores the association between Einstein's theory of relativity and D.H. Lawrence's theory of human relativity in his *Fantasia of the Unconscious* (1922). Crossland argues that reading at least one of Einstein's books on his theory of relativity, the modernist writer formulates his own idea on human relationships. He suggests that 'each individual living creature is absolute' in itself as its own being and at the same time individual living creatures are also 'relative to each other'. **Part Three** focuses on Einstein's work on Brownian motion to investigate the 'shared discourse' between molecular physics, crowd psychology and urban life in the modernist works, both Woolf's and Lawrence's. Crossland considers Le Bon's characteristics of crowd and its potential for destruction, as well as the ability to transmit 'potent impulse' in the work of Wilfred Trotter. She suggests that these concepts are relatable to the effects of molecular collisions in modern physics. She also argues that Woolf and Lawrence depict the idea of crowd psychology to portray images of urban life and modern society in the twentieth-century.

Modernist Physics provides us with a provocative way of thinking about literature and science. Crossland's exploration of various studies, approaches and issues proposed by modern physics and literary modernism demonstrates their complementarity relationship in the enthralling way that the title of the book suggests.

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