

cerned with lost homelands of the past, but instead use memory and language to re-angle old stories and create “fictional homes within the text itself” (10). As Hussein’s short stories demonstrate, rather than having at their centre issues of “place” or “location” (Hussein recognizes that the lost homeland can never be regained), their subject is the mode of telling itself, or the fictional strategies involved in the process of “making” memory. By creating “deliberately invented constructs of home” (244), both Gupta and Gunesekra expound the belief that writing is “an act of political and personal independence” that fundamentally depends on the ability of writers to “map the interiority of an imaginative territory of desire” (227).

A major strength of *Home Truths* is that alongside well-known literary giants Naipaul, Rushdie, and Kureishi, Nasta discusses lesser-known diaspora writers, recognizing them for their contributions to South Asian literature in Britain. The important definitional and historical work that accompanies her close textual analyses is also to be commended—most notable is her charting of the terms “Black-British writing” and “hybridity,” as well as historical research on the East Asian presence in the Caribbean. Literary scholars, however, will find *Home Truths* most valuable for situating British South Asian fictions as a significant part of the long-established tradition of Western modernism. In the end, Nasta holds the varied literary strategies that make up the diasporic imagination responsible for both “extending our readings of the narrative of modernity” and “making visible the *home truths* of history” (245).

Summer Pervez

Sarah Cole. *Modernism, Male Friendship, and the First World War*.
 Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003. Pp. vii, 297. \$60.00 U.S.

The three stated concerns in the title of Sarah Cole’s engaging study immediately made me think of Wyndham Lewis’s discussion of the “men of 1914” (252) in *Blasting and Bombardiering*, his 1937 memoir. He too connected reshaping the world of—and through—art with male bonds (himself, Pound, Joyce, and Eliot being the principal figures), and he too linked the war to the enterprise’s outcome. Thankfully, however, Cole presents her argument with all of his commitment but none of his posturing. One could perhaps quibble with the apparent equivalence of her title’s three terms. Although Cole certainly offers perceptive comments about modernism and war in service of her declared goals of opening up still further current discussions of both, the ar-

guments about modernism are often delivered in passing, and war, whether specifically about the First World War, or in more abstract terms, gets little examination. The book's real strength is the title's central term, for Cole has delivered a thoroughly enjoyable and thought-provoking study of the social organization of male bonds, as seen in selected writers of the focal period associated with both literary modernism and the First World War.

In an introduction succinctly packed with theoretical mapping, Coles situates her study at a remove from related ones focussing on homoerotic/homosexual/homosocial tensions or gender theorizing. She cogently argues her conviction that *friendship* as a social institution is worthy of the critical attention given to other relationships, outlining a persuasive case that new light can be shed upon important issues of the period by seeing the failures of male friendship in the larger context of "such major cultural narratives as imperialism and war" (3). The next four chapters demonstrate Cole's argument by devoting roughly half their contents to establishing the relevant social, historical, and literary background, then weaving that information into a close analysis of male bonds in selected texts.

The structural principle of looking at a writer's work through the lens of socially organized male friendship produces some intriguing commentary. For instance, Cole challenges common assumptions that dismissively position Forster as "a marginal voice in both modernism and twentieth-century homosexual discourse" (23); her examination stresses the disruptive technical and social implications of his emphasis on failed, foreboding, or deferred male friendships. Similarly, Cole tackles the limitations of the contemporary tendency to read Conrad's work through the binary which sets his imperialism against his modernism; instead, she proposes, critics should look at the doomed nature of "the masculine relations that take shape" in *Empire's* "troubled spaces" (92). This new approach, she argues, will show how Conrad's "modernism grows directly out of his conflicted relation to imperialism and its formal tropes" (93).

World War I is, of course, understandably central to Cole's project, given that it produced a historical moment when "the fantasy of organizing sociality around male bonds became the reality of lived existence, and hence its status, legitimacy, and resolution acquired an unprecedented importance" (138). Playing off a made-to-order conversation from Frederic Manning's *Her Privates We*, where the protagonist muses about the distinction between the war's comradeship and ordinary peacetime friendship, Cole develops a convincing discussion about the tensions between the two. Friendship, she stresses, is an example of individual choice and true intimacy, while war's comradeship, though powerful, is a flawed model, a product of circumstances

and official rhetoric; thus comradeship is doomed to fail its participants emotionally, becoming a source of alienation rather than consolation.

Finally, the book's last chapter makes even more explicit Cole's insistence throughout that the failure of male friendship needs to be viewed as both a product of and an influence on the surrounding culture, not merely as a personal matter. Once again her project offers a fresh approach to an author. Lawrence's "preoccupation with male bonds" now moves beyond being "part of his personal story of misogyny and unresolved homosexual desire" to demonstrating his cultural engagement with "a civilian society profoundly conflicted on the subject of post-war masculine relations." Lawrence, Cole asserts, "took on and rescripted the post-war reckoning with male community and male love" (186).

In this closing chapter Cole vividly captures the period's social unrest in Britain by incorporating background material on the problem of the returned soldier, the functions of official "old soldiers" organizations, and the lobbying efforts of social reformers like William Paine, who felt that the war's comradeship model might provide the key to reconstructing post-war society. However, as this section moves into its specific examination of Lawrence's work, some unsettling tendencies noticed earlier in the study grow more evident. Although Cole makes frequent efforts to clarify her terms and issues, there is still a sometimes startling glossing over of important differences and questions in pursuit of the core argument. For instance, World War I literary figures and their work are over-simplified to support points. A reference to "Even as upright and soldierly a character as Robert Graves" (210) bolsters comments on the widespread mood of demobilization unrest but is at odds with Graves's description of himself in *Goodbye to All That*. Similarly, an emphasis on Vera Brittain's *Testament of Youth* as a representative voice of a disillusioned generation should mention the serious reservations raised by critics such as Claire Tylee and Sharon Ouditt about Brittain's representativeness. More importantly, crucial terms like "comradeship," although carefully defined in one section, are used more broadly in other areas of the study; the inherently unsatisfying nature of war comradeship is thus elaborated upon, but without linkage to how the term figures in her Conrad discussion or in Edward Carpenter's "soaringly optimistic model of comradeship" (26). Finally, since the book has no separate conclusion, the closing comments on D. H. Lawrence become one. After discussing male bonds in selected Lawrence novels, Cole describes his move away from those possibilities towards a strident note of heterosexual domination in work like *The Plumed Serpent*. Then, having earlier specifically excluded attitudes towards women from her discussion, she announces without any supporting argument that

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Lawrence's later work shows that "The organization of intimacy has always been a project for and about western men, and its premises are fatally tied to an ethos of indifference or hostility to women" (249).

However, while these and similar leaps in the argument may occasionally be disconcerting, the fluency of Cole's writing and the intelligence of her vision should make this study a must-read for anyone working in related areas.

Diana Austin

Work Cited

Lewis, Wyndham. *Blasting & Bombardiering*. 1937. Rev. ed. Berkeley: U California P, 1967.