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D. H. LAWRENCE'S GHOST: REST, (E)MOTION, AND IMAGINED TRANSATLANTIC MODERNISM IN KAY BOYLE'S "REST CURE"

Written in the months following D. H. Lawrence's death, "Rest Cure" narrates a fictional episode in the English writer's final days in Vence, France, in early 1930. Not only the story's main theme (the writer dying and his fear of death) but also its startling imagery and particular texture unmistakably indicate the influence – even fascination – Lawrence exerted on the younger American poet and writer Kay Boyle (1902-1992). Lawrence was among the first modern writers Boyle began to read as a teenager in Saint Paul and Cincinnati, and continued with unabated interest after she moved to New York and then to France in the early 1920s. Around the time she was writing her first novel, *Process*, studying Lawrence's work seems to have helped shape her conception of the creative imagination. In a letter written in Le Havre in December 1923, she expressed her enthusiasm for Evelyn Scott's recent novel *Escapade* in ontological terms by describing its affinities with the emotional intensity and clear-sighted vision of Lawrence: "She has gone deeper than Lawrence [...]. This is the utterness of reality and truth. [...] Her words do not have to be exotic and strange, because the emotion behind them is more expressed than her expression. She does not leave out words or play with adjectives – she is *real*. [...] It makes everything worthwhile" (*Letters* 69). In the following weeks, Boyle also read Lawrence's *Studies in Classic American Literature* which, as she stated years later in her autobiography, encouraged her to pursue a career in writing: "[...] these essays, read and reread, gave me a singular courage as they signaled to me a new and quite ruthless way of thought" (*Geniuses* 144).

It has become almost a critical commonplace that Boyle's fiction has a Lawrentian quality, a distinct filiation with Lawrence's poetry and prose. In the most detailed analysis to date, *D. H. Lawrence and Nine Women Writers* (1996), Leo Hamalian has examined the way Boyle reacted, in her writing, to the dynamic aspects of the English author's creativity, especially his emphasis on "blood-knowing" or "blood consciousness" as an act of connection, and his use of animal imagery to suggest the forces of impulse and resistance that determine interaction between material bodies. Hamalian's study focuses on Boyle's prose fiction of the 1930s, a decade which saw the publication of her finest novels, such as *Year Before Last* (1932) and *Death of a Man* (1936), some of her best short stories, including "The White Horses of Vienna" (1935), and the two critically-acclaimed novellas *The Crazy Hunter* and *The Bridegroom's Body* (1940). However, Lawrence's influence can also be felt in Boyle's experiments in poetry of the end of the 1920s which mark her transition from early imagist verse to lyric, intensely dramatic open-form compositions. As Hamalian has pointedly remarked, the most important thing Boyle learned from Lawrence was that "poetry and fiction came from the same well" (102). The poems she dedicated to her fellow poets Emanuel Carnevali, Eugene Jolas, Robert McAlmon, and Harry Crosby clearly demonstrate how much she relied on the interrelatedness of poetry and prose as an instrument for liberating language.

Lawrence's views of empty consumerism and uncontrolled capitalism must also have confirmed Boyle's resolve to escape the crudity of American life. In protest against a trend described by Waldo Frank as "the clamped dominion of Puritan and Machine" (164) that had separated national cultural identity from imagination and increasingly threatened to render the intellect irrelevant, she chose expatriation for France in June 1923, at the age of twenty-one. However, physical relocation to Europe was not an escape from questions of American identity. Taking her cue from Ezra Pound, Boyle saw expatriation, and most particularly expatriate writing, as a paradoxically privileged space for a dialectical interrogation of "Americanness" whose goal was to provoke literary and social change.

"Rest Cure" provides an intriguing example of the way she managed to channel her emotional response to Lawrence's death into a story which is both a tribute to his poetics and a way to legitimate the search for a new language that would facilitate a more immediate contact with life. The protagonist, a hardly-veiled reference to Lawrence, stands as a figure of authorial energy at the center of a web of personal and intertextual references which construct an imaginary of transatlantic circulation and exchange destabilizing the relationship between local, national, and international identities. The story moves from a binary to a dialectical understanding of the difference between rest and motion, thus introducing a dynamic interplay among other binary opposites, and unsettling temporal and spatial boundaries. This process both emphasizes and complicates the role of emotion in opening up a space necessary for the coming of the Other and the invention of the new. At stake is the grounding of the text in a trans-subjective, collective project whose objectives I will delineate by briefly examining the social context of literary production.

AMERICAN LATE MODERNISM IN TRANSATLANTIC DIALOGUE

"Rest Cure" was first published in April 1931, in the first issue of *Story*, a little magazine edited by Whit Burnett and Martha Foley in Vienna.[1] Burnett was friends with Eugene Jolas, the editor of the Paris-based international magazine *transition*, and with Bill Bird, the founder of Three Mountain Press in Paris in the early 1920s. Bird was also in charge of the European offices of the Consolidated Press Association and it is in this capacity that he sent Burnett to Vienna to take charge of the CPA office there. Boyle was friends with Jolas, Bird, and Burnett whom she had met or worked with when she lived in Paris in 1927-29. From the start, "Rest Cure" was therefore part of a modernist transatlantic print culture characterized, as Eric White has convincingly argued, by its reliance on an imaginary of place resulting in textual spaces which "served as self-consciously fabricated focal points, multimedia nodes which carried transnational aesthetic debates into and from specific communities, circulating internationally over vast distances, in relatively short periods of time" (210). While Paris, London, or Vienna were the constructed geographical nodes where modernist writers and artists clustered in the 1920s, little magazines and small press publications were the constructed literary spaces forming the loose, contingent, and unstable cartography of the modernist transatlantic.

By the early 1930s, Kay Boyle was a regular contributor to several literary press editions and border-crossing magazines. In 1926, she fell in love with the poet Ernest Walsh who edited an exile magazine in the south of France. Though married to a Frenchman, she began an affair with Walsh and assisted him with the editing of *This Quarter* until his premature death from tuberculosis in the fall of 1926. This experience was the main inspiration for *Year Before Last*, a novel written around the same time that Boyle was writing "Rest Cure." Walsh was intent on making *This Quarter* the space where young writers could experiment with an imaginary of distant America. A staunch admirer of William Carlos Williams's cultural "localism," he encouraged new modes of writing that looked at the American experience from a variety of perspectives with a view to rediscovering the "local." In helping blur the boundaries between "local," "national" and "international," Walsh gained prominent stature in Boyle's transatlantic imaginary. His ailing but resilient figure haunts her poems of 1928-31, and is also intricately embedded in the text of "Rest Cure," beneath that of Lawrence. In 1927, Boyle, who had been friends with Williams since the time she was working as the assistant to Lola Ridge in the New York offices of *Broom*, wrote an enthusiastic review of *In the American Grain* (1925) for *transition* which had succeeded *This Quarter*. Years later, in *Being Geniuses Together*, she paid further homage to the intense relationship and exchange at the heart of the collaborative network that infused transatlantic modernism.[2]

Among Boyle's expatriate friends were also Harry and Caresse Crosby, a flamboyant couple and the owners of the Black Sun Press (1924) who published Boyle's first collection of short stories in 1929. In 1930-31, Caresse Crosby also published Boyle's translations of novels by René Crevel, Joseph Delteil, and Raymond Radiguet under her own imprint Crosby Continental Editions. While her friendship with the Crosbys provided Boyle with material for her fourth novel, *My Next Bride* (1934), it also facilitated her acquaintance with D. H. Lawrence's work and personal circumstances. In the spring of 1929, seeking a commercial publisher for *Lady Chatterley's Lover,* Lawrence and Frieda called on the Crosbys in Paris. Although Harry Crosby was unimpressed by Lawrence's novel, Black Sun published his short novel *The*

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[1] Boyle's contribution was considered by several critics the best contribution to this inaugural issue of *Story* magazine. It was also selected by Edward O'Brien for his *Best American Short Stories of 1931*. Two years later, in 1933, it was collected in Boyle's collection of short fiction, *The First Lover and Other Stories* published in New York by Harrison Smith and Robert Haas.

[2] For instance, she wrote of Bill Bird, Ernest Walsh, and Robert McAlmon (who co-edited the magazine *Contact* with Williams in the United States in 1920-21 and founded Contact Editions in Paris in 1923): "these three men had one enduring thing in common and that was their commitment, as selfless as a woman's, to the work of other men" (*Geniuses* 172).

Escaped Cock as a limited edition in September 1929, three months before Harry committed suicide in New York.[3] Boyle, who had by then become close friends with Caresse, must have heard of – if not read – this resurrection story by Lawrence.

The expatriate milieu in France also played a significant part in the conception of "Rest Cure," although in the haphazard manner which characterized communication and exchange among literary exiles. What makes "Rest Cure" such an appealing story comes in part from its seeming truthfulness. Though the name of Lawrence is never mentioned, details about the main character's appearance and condition clearly point to the novelist and poet in the final stage of his illness. The man who is simply called "the invalid" is sitting on a terrace overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. His pale complexion and wasted body clearly evoke a patient in a very advanced stage of consumption. Another detail would have made it easy for members of the Anglo-American community to identify the invalid as D.H. Lawrence. The English writer's death, on the second day of March 1930, was widely covered in the American, British and European continental press. One incident in particular was circulated by the Paris editions of two American newspapers. It was said that an American sculptor named Jo Davidson had gone to Vence to visit Lawrence in the hope of having him sit for a head and that the novelist was not very happy with the result which he found "mediocre" (Nehls 450-51). While it was true that Davidson visited Lawrence in the Ad Astra sanatorium, the rumor had it that he broke into the sickroom when the patient was much too ill to be disturbed. This anecdote had a crucial influence on the conception and writing of "Rest Cure"; not only did it provide the event which makes up the story's main plot, but it also enabled Boyle to create a space filled with so highly-charged energies that they complicate the relationship between rest and motion.

ENERGY, INTENSITY, REGIME

Before his wife returns from the market with a live lobster in her basket and a "visiting gentleman" at her heels, the invalid has been brooding for a while over the early descent of the sun in the winter sky. Confined to his chair by illness, he revisits painful emotional territory, exposing disparate, invisible spaces that disturb spatial and temporal coordinates, and establish a new imaginary geography. The sight of the setting sun brings back painful memories of his unhappy childhood in England where his father worked at the colliery: "Even here, the south, in the sun even, the coal mines remained. His nostrils were sick with the smell of them and on his cheeks he felt lingering the slipping mantle of the English fog." In an attempt to block out the unwanted image of the coal pits, he tries to think back of happier days in Cornwall, only to remember that they were darkened by the war: "Every time his heart had lifted for a hillside or a wave, or the wind blowing, the thought of the turmoil going on had beset and stricken him." Through the process of mental association, the image of the artificial flowerbeds in Monte Carlo comes to superimpose itself on the "vision" of the elemental landscape of Cornwall, which brings the character back to his present state and his growing anguish about the approaching darkness. In an outburst of powerless rage, he viciously breaks off his wife's potted geraniums. Partial contiguities and differences link with separate, incomplete elements in space and time. The rationale of the association between one diegetic thread and another is immediately felt by the reader to be based on these displaced metonymies. Yet, the reference to Cornwall also subtly anticipates the later development of the story by establishing a metaphorical connection with the primitive. The evocation of the character's response to the Cornish landscape ("The first light of day coming had warmed [...] the blood rising in his body") reflects Lawrence's notion that some landscapes have the power to alter consciousness and reawaken latent "blood consciousness." As Jane Costin has demonstrated in an article which reassesses the importance of Cornwall in *Kangaroo* (1923), Lawrence's stay in Zennor in 1915-17 was an important step in his maturing the link between consciousness, place, and the primitive, an endeavor that eventually led to his journey to America and Mexico.

In "Rest Cure," the intertextual allusion to primitive "place" and "soil" prepares the reader for the most dramatic event in the story when the invalid, who has been goading his wife's guest, an unwelcome English publisher, suddenly asks that the lobster she has purchased at the market be released. Setting the creature across the rug on his lap and looking at it closely, he is suddenly stricken by its resemblance to his long-dead father:

> There was the green armored beast lifting his eyes, as if on hinges, to examine the light. Such an expression he had seen before, thought the invalid immediately. There was a startling likeness in those small audacious eyes. Such a look had there been in his father's eyes: that look, and the long smooth mustaches drooping across the wee clefted chin, gave the *langouste* such a look of his father that he exclaimed aloud.

[3] On the subject of D.H. Lawrence's relationship with the Crosbys, see for instance Linda Hamalian (59-61 and 78-79).

The composite nature of the "green-armored beast" with his "eagle's lip" and black, luminous "deadly mantle" conjures up the vivid, cryptic imagery of the Book of Revelation.[4] Yet, the apocalyptic tenor is immediately deflected by the "ludicrous" comparison in the next paragraph: "When he lifted up the *langouste* to peer into his face, the arms of the beast fell ludicrously open as if he were seeking to embrace the ailing man." The description of the animal remains in unresolved suspension between ironic perplexity and spiritual anguish. Nonetheless, what emerges from the text is the idea that the creative energy of the imagination depends directly on contact with the primitive and on continuity with other forms of life. The primeval nature of the sea creature supersedes the differences between human and non-human, religious or pagan categories, and engages the reader with another form of emotional logic based on the gradual concentration and intensification of "image-thinking."

In accelerated motion, the invalid is taken on a downward journey into the soulless underground where his father had been forced to descend: "[...] as he watched the *langouste* groping about as if in darkness; he began to think of the glowing miner's lamp his father had worn strapped upon his brow." The memory of his father "[f]eeling about in the dark and choking to death underground" conveys violent rejection: "I got on very well without you, he was thinking. He sipped at his champagne and regarded the animal upon his knees. As far as I was concerned you need never have been my father at all." This process culminates in the complete interpenetration of human and natural, illusion and reality. After another outburst against his visitor, the invalid finds himself clutching the lobster's "unwieldy paw" for comfort: "Father, he said in his heart, Father, help me. Father, Father, he said, I don't want to die."

The last invocative, incantatory sentences of the story provide a perceptive insight into Lawrence's interpretation of Revelation as the pursuit of the "great *down* direction,"[5] a physical-psychical experience made possible by symbols whose "value is dynamic, emotional, belonging to the sense-consciousness of the body and soul, and not simply mental" (*Apocalypse* 48). The lobster symbol draws the reader down a spiral of descent into a space where the character's conflicting, contradictory impulses erupt with poignant intensity. Sensory contact with this creature of an archaic world brings back the long-suppressed memory of a father whose figure is both disowned and called forth in fervent prayer. At the close of the story, what returns with all the power of the repressed in the character's psyche is the symptom of an unresolved conflict which is left suspended, like a phantom, in an interminable unresolved present.[6]

The downward movement of the story grounds the representation of emotion within the transient fluxes of bodily activity. It opens up the space of "the immediate present" in which there is, as Lawrence argues in "Poetry of the Present" (1919), "no perfection, no consummation, nothing finished [...] nothing crystal, permanent" (13). It also connects to Lawrence's view of rest as the lowest energy regime: "There is no such thing as rest. For a thing to us at rest is only a thing travelling at our own rate of motion: or, from another point of view, it is a thing moving at the lowest rate of motion we can recognize" (*Study of Thomas Hardy* 60). In "Rest Cure," this idea is emphasized through the contrast between the invalid's almost complete stasis and the euphoric flowering of emotional, imaginative, and perceptual responses. A measure of the positive value of these inertial forces is conveyed through the character's boundary-transgressive openness to another form of life, and, conversely, through his cantankerous outbursts against his guest. The latter, though he bears the brunt of the invalid's ferocious temper, is not merely a hapless victim. The mechanical quality of his superficial, business-minded over-politeness precludes the shaping of the intersubjective climate in which mutual recognition and reconciliation thrive. His sly refusal to answer the invalid's question ("Why be a publisher?") denies the writer the possibility of a literary conversation, and reduces him to a state of childish impotence.

This form of covert violence may also be implied in the title of the story which obliquely alludes to the treatment devised by Philadelphia neurologist S. Weir Mitchell in the second half of the 19th century. The cure aimed at restoring overwrought patients to mental and bodily health through a strict regimen of food and enforced bed rest. The experience proved particularly taxing on active, intellectual women who were prohibited from reading or writing, as Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Virginia Woolf

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[4] "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority" (*Authorized King James Version*, Rev. 13, 1-2).

[5] As defined by Lawrence in his famous letter of 18 June 1923 to Frederick Carter: "For my part, I should like to see the end of the Return. The end of the Little Creation of the Logos. A fresh start, in the first great direction, with the polarity downwards [...]. The great *down* direction [...]." (*Letters* 461).

[6] The choice of the lobster as the instrument for this downward journey may have been inspired to Boyle by the passage in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in which Clifford Chatterley is compared to a lobster "with a hard, efficient shell of an exterior and a pulpy interior" (110) to stress his allegiance to the "weird," soulless "Age of the Machine" sprung from industrial capitalism. In associating the lobster with the figure of the invalid's father, a poor collier, Boyle reverses the perspective: "the mechanized man" "feeling about in the dark and choking to death underground" is the victim of progress but also a potential source of regeneration.

famously emphasized in their fictional accounts of the rest cure.[7] In casting a male writer in the role of the female hysteric, Boyle's story points out the arbitrariness of gender and sexual constructs while harking back to two of its most obvious modernist antecedents. Investigating the relationship between stasis and physiological experience, Boyle affirms, in typical Lawrentian fashion, that writing is bound up with the body and with interpersonal communication. Yet, while she acknowledges the experiential import recorded in the pursuit of the downward direction, she seems to be suggesting the limitations of our human knowledge of revelation.

TO THE LIMIT… AND BEYOND?

The best way to approach the question of revelation in "Rest Cure" is through an analysis of the figures of speech. The impression of familiarity initially felt by the invalid at the sight of the lobster is conveyed through an unambiguous analogical association. However unexpected – or preposterous – the image, its meaning is simple enough to grasp: "There was the same line of sparkling dew-like substance pearling the *langouste*'s lip, the same weak disappointed lip, like the eagle's lip, and the bold suspicious eye. Across the sloping shoulders of the beast lay a sprinkling of brilliant dust, as black as coal dust and quite as luminous." As the character further engages in recollection, however, embittered feelings start to erupt: "You've never counted, he was thinking mildly. I've led my life very well without you in it. You better go back to the mines where you belong." All of a sudden, he starts talking aloud to his father, as if oblivious to the presence of his wife and their guest: "'I've got on very well without you,' he was thinking bitterly. From his wife's face he gathered that he had spoken aloud. The visiting gentleman looked into the depths of his glass." This sudden outbreak of submerged emotional tensions attracts closer attention to the sequence of signifiers operating homologically and homophonically throughout the story ("fathomless black pits of his lids," "black blank mines," "clawing under," "shackles," "groping in darkness," "hard, brittle armor," "unwieldy paw"[8]). The sequence keeps charting the route into the invalid's conflicting desires until it ultimately condensates into a metaphoric bond occurring in the imaginary: "His hand had fallen against the hard brittle armor of the *langouste*'s hide. There were the eyes raised to his and the canny feelers lifted. His fingers closed for comfort about the *langouste*'s unwieldy paw. Father, he said in his heart, Father, help me." At his moment of crossing or transgression, the ailing man is faced with radical primordial loss. In other words, in just a few sentences, the story moves from the baroque bizarreness of the "Portrait of the Writer's Father as a Lobster" to a phantasmatic, impossible-to-embody thrust toward the unattainable Other. The final sentence opens up a translational space "where everything returns to deep being," as Blanchot has described in *The Space of Literature*:

> But in imaginary space things are transformed into that which cannot be grasped. Out of use, beyond wear, they are not in our possession but are the movement of dispossession which releases us both from them and from ourselves. They are not certain but are joined to the intimacy of the risk where neither they nor we are sheltered any more, but where we are, rather, introduced, utterly without reserve, into a place where nothing retains us at all. (140)

The metaphoric transformation (from incongruous lobster into lost father into unreachable otherness) interrogates the possibility of a crossing "beyond" by taking the language of representation to the sacrificial point which is, Blanchot writes, "the infinite trace of absence."

While Boyle shared Lawrence's belief in "experience" or "sense-awareness" through images as necessary for emotional connection, she was also influenced by the form of metamorphosis of the visible into invisibility pursued by René Crevel in his novel *Babylon*, the first chapter of which she translated for Black Sun Press around the time she was writing "Rest Cure." "What is death?" demands a little girl in the opening line of Crevel's book. By way of an answer, the story takes the reader into a vertiginous spiral by which the familiar is estranged and can never be refamiliarized again.[9] The anguish of transmogrification fuels the imaginary process linking death, from the start, to the movement of the artistic experience. Boyle used this technique in her experimental poem "Lansdscape for Wyn Henderson" (1931) which mourns the death of her lover Ernest Walsh:

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[7] Gilman was treated by Weir Mitchell in the spring of 1887, an experience she reworked and gave expression to through the Gothic imaginary in her semiautobiographical short story "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892). In *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), Woolf associates the rest cure with social convention and control: "Worshipping proportion, Sir William not only prospered himself but made England prosper, secluded her lunatics, forbade childbirth, penalized despair, made it impossible for the unfit to propagate their views until they, too, shared his sense of proportion" (Woolf 125). Dreading the cure at Bradshaw's "country house," Septimus commits suicide by jumping out of a window.

[8] I thank Linda Collinge-Germain for pointing out the curious homophony between "paw" and "pa."

[9] "Au-dessus des têtes, sortie de la soupière comme Vénus de l'Océan, et aussi digne fille d'un potage banal que la plus belle des déesses, de l'insaisissable écume des mers, la suspension jette ses ombres de danseuse ridicule, et, des jupes de cette ballerine, tombe, en guise de lumière, une méchanceté verte" (Crevel, 12)

> No cradle where to rock the head
> The worms came through and riddled it
> The snails strung slime birds carried off what plumes of it
> To garnish rump No spinet left the flax to iron
> Remains the Cave the Rock the Tree
> Were not for you the avalanche the Cave turned mad with fire
> For you the Rock to shape your hand for you the Tree to shelter
> *I saw the snails curl up like lead I saw the worms expire*. (*Collected Poems* 50, emphasis added)

In "Rest Cure," the act of dying (symbolically evoked through the invalid's experience of the dying sun) is also closely associated with the activity of language and imagination, but neither clarifies the other. As Blanchot writes: "This is revelation where nothing appears" (198).

OF LOBSTERS AND SPECTERS

"Rest Cure" introduces the reader to a form of orphic experience which stresses Boyle's intimate knowledge of the process of dying as well as her will to inscribe the figure of the dying poet as a powerful intermediary in the literary *process*. As any reader familiar with Boyle's life and work will notice, the story is closely related to *Year Before Last* (1932), the novel that she started to write during the time she composed "Rest Cure," and to the poems she wrote as a tribute to Walsh after he died of consumption in Monte Carlo in October 1926. In the last ten months of his life, Boyle lived with Walsh, first in Grasse and then in the Riviera hinterland. This experience gave *Year Before Last* its autobiographical angle. At the end of 1930, Boyle returned to live in Villefranche-sur-Mer with her second husband, Laurence Vail. Anecdotally, yet intriguingly, Vence, where Lawrence died that same year, is situated halfway between these two locations.

The invalid writer in "Rest Cure" shares several traits with the main characters in *Year Before Last*. His sense of alienation from the Mediterranean landscape echoes Hannah's impatience with the "cramped and wary sea" at Fréjus or Monte Carlo. Conversely, his nostalgic wish that the place be restored to its pristine wilderness ("The whole sloping coast should have been left a wilderness with no order to it, stalked and leafed with the great strong trunks and foliage of these parts") reflects her wonder at the luxuriance of the southern vegetation. The description of the invalid's bodily gestures, sensations, and reactions also proves Boyle's familiarity with disease and impending death from the time she was nursing Walsh in the final stage of his illness, as well as her capacity for emotional empathy: "[...] the invalid cleared his throat, dissolved the little pellet of phlegm which had leaped to being on his tongue so as not to spit before them, and sank back in his chair." Another important episode in the novel is reworked in the story. After a severe hemorrhage, Martin Sheehan agrees to see an English doctor who mechanically advises him to go to a sanatorium. Exasperated by the doctor's lack of emotional response, the young man asks for a cigarette and a glass of champagne, and petulantly retorts:

> "It's no mountain vista or eggs or milk that can work the miracle now. Something else might heal me, but if you'll pardon me, sir, it's nothing a doctor could do. It might be done by America restored to the Indians, or an entirely new race of men sprung up, or *enough good books written out of the austere spirit of people who do not falter and conform*." (Boyle, *Year Before Last* 203; my emphasis)

His staunch belief in the integrity of art provides an oblique reading into the invalid's personality.

The reference to *Year Before Last* reveals a close-knit web of intertextual references. The novel contains several allusions to poets, writers, and editors who were committed to the discovery of a new language for American literature. The passage mentioned above contains a loosely-quoted extract from William Carlos Williams's *In the American Grain*. "The poet in Italy" is Emanuel Carnevali, the Italian-American poet who worked as a co-editor to *Poetry* magazine in Chicago in the early 1920s before he was diagnosed with encephalitis and had to return to Italy where he was dying a slow death in a public hospital in Bazzano. Walsh's figure also haunts "A Christmas Carol for Emanuel Carnevali" (1927), "A Confession to Eugene Jolas" (1928), "A Valentine for Harry Crosby" (1929), and "The United States" (1928), a poem addressed to Williams. In "Dedicated to Robert McAlmon," the persona seizes upon the notion of "blood-consciousness" to gently chastise her addressee for having forgotten his connection to place. "What good did your blood do you?" she asks him before dreaming up landscape as the space where contact with the phenomenal world is renewed and celebrated in such a way as would certainly have appealed to the author of *The Escaped Cock*:

It would be a good thing to return
out of the cold now the seams in the ice cracking wide
the wild heart whoring the hard eye warming
to the nest of an oriole hanging like iron grapes in a pine
Talk of the afternoon you found a young goat
and brought it home in your arms with its legs dangling
and its muzzle pressed cool and wet on your face
Eyes beckoning a sail off the cold plains that lie like priests' gowns
discarded
and the priests themselves in their white skins
lost in the music of the waves. (*Collected Poems* 36)

These references cast an interesting light on Boyle's overall project in "Rest Cure." By conjuring up the figure of D. H. Lawrence and inscribing it at the core of a web of real and imaginary interpersonal exchanges, the story points out Boyle's modernist belief in the sanctity of art and the figure of the artist-genius. At issue was the possibility to benefit from the functioning of the symbolic capital of genius associated to the name of Lawrence. In utilizing the English writer, Boyle draws a line of connection between the literary experimentations of the younger generation of American modernists and Lawrence's innovative aesthetics. At the same time, by portraying the artist as a childishly spiteful invalid engaged in conversation with a live lobster, Boyle gives a twist to the rhetoric of individuality and genius. The constant oscillation between the binaries of feminine and masculine, static and mobile, hysteric and balanced, transgresses the traditional, masculinist, gendered characterization of the artist-figure.

Furthermore, Boyle's story invites the reader to reimagine modernism in a way that allows for much more transnational participation. In advance of the *Téléphone-homard* imagined by Salvador Dalí around 1936-38, she invites the reader to an investigation of a sub-surrealist form of the "wireless imagination" advocated by André Breton. She also anticipates Beckett's baroque fulgurations in *More Pricks Than Kicks* (1934) in which the main character, Dante Belacqua, is horrified to discover that the lobster he has purchased for his dinner must be boiled alive. Beckett's tormented Belacqua – named after a character in the *Divine Comedy* who refuses to leave Purgatory – is yet another avatar of the writer-figure portrayed in "Rest Cure." Neither present nor absent, dead nor alive, it hovers like a ghost, ready to haunt future textual spaces. This spectral quality of the text underlines late modernist writers' anxieties about issues related to the notions of origin and formal mastery. It also emphasizes their interest in curious cultural interactions and random gathering of material in the shaping of a new reader.[10]

More than merely an occasional piece inspired by Lawrence's death, "Rest Cure" provides a spectrographic view of Boyle's ragged, unfinished transatlantic imaginary. Its energy comes from the fruitful tension with Lawrence's poetics. The English writer's emphasis on the hidden physical-emotional pattern that makes life and art was instrumental in shaping the younger writer's approach to the literary process. However, by drawing representation towards the point where it undergoes impossibility, Boyle precludes the possibility of revelation. Instead, she invites us to penetrate into an orphic space where the writer is engaged in the "pure movement of dying," thus making sure that we will remain haunted by his ghostly presence and by the sense of urgency of his task.

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[10] For a fascinating investigation of modernist "spectralities," see for instance Jean Michel Rabaté's *The Ghost of Modernity*, Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1996.

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"Rest Cure" (1931) est une nouvelle écrite par l'écrivaine et poète américaine Kay Boyle (1902-1992) peu après la mort de D. H. Lawrence. Si Boyle n'avait jamais rencontré l'auteur de Birds, Beasts, and Flowers*, elle connaissait bien son œuvre en prose et ses poèmes. "Rest Cure" indique des affinités surprenantes avec la poétique de Lawrence, notamment sa conception dialectique et transgressive de la différence entre mouvement et stase. Pourtant, sur la question de la Révélation, Boyle s'éloigne de l'écrivain anglais. Cet article propose d'explorer ces différences et similitudes. L'objectif est de jeter un éclairage sur la nature collective et trans-subjective de l'imaginaire transatlantique de Boyle.*