D.H. Lawrence and Critical Theory: A Revaluation

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The purpose of this thesis is to present new readings of the later novels by D. H. Lawrence (1885-1930) in terms of established critical theory and contemporary thought and, thereby, set up a new impression of D. H. Lawrence. Lawrence has long been seen as an advocate of spontaneous desire, or as an organicist who espouses sexual liberation and a return to nature. This image may still prevail if we were to refer only to his philosophical essays or study in isolation the words and actions of some of the protagonists in his fiction. However, there are moments when this image of Lawrence is challenged or contradicted by another Lawrence. It is in the novels, especially in the later novels, that these moments can be found: spontaneous desire for what is organic is advocated and resisted at the same time. This self-resistance is important because the approbation of spontaneity or organicism can be easily incorporated into political ideas such as those that inspired Nazism or Fascism. While being faithful to one’s own desire without worrying about the outside world is regarded as a Lawrentian virtue, I would like to show that there was another Lawrence who was sensitive enough to the outside world and to the social discourses of his time to use them in his novels, albeit subtly and with critical displacements.

F. R. Leavis, who included D. H. Lawrence as a novelist in "the great tradition of the English novel" (The Great Tradition 23-27), had an enormous influence on the public image of Lawrence, portraying him as a writer of spontaneous creativity and intelligence. To begin with, Leavis refuted
the books written by two influential critics in the 1930s: J. M. Murry’s *Son of Woman* (1931) and T. S. Eliot’s *After Strange Gods* (1933). Leavis criticized Murry for treating Lawrence’s artistic and creative writing as evidence of “Lawrence’s personal case and inner history,” and for concerning himself in particular with “the difficulties resulting for Lawrence throughout his life from the relation established with him in childhood by his mother” (Leavis, *D. H. Lawrence* 174-75); against Eliot, who pointed out Lawrence’s lack of “the critical faculties which education should give, and an incapacity for what we ordinarily call thinking” (58), Leavis maintained: “His thinking, in fact, is so much superior to what is ordinarily called thinking” (*D. H. Lawrence* 375). Although Eliot constructed an image of Lawrence as a man of “insights” or “intuition,” for Leavis Lawrence was “the great creative genius of our age, and one of the greatest figures in English literature” because “genius in Lawrence was, among other things, supreme intelligence” (*D. H. Lawrence* 367, 374-75). It is of great significance that Leavis salvaged Lawrence’s reputation as a creative artist and a great novelist from the disparaging views submitted by Murry and Eliot, which held that in spite of his keen sensibilities Lawrence was a sexually morbid individual and an intellectually ignorant heretic.

Thereafter, from the late 1950s through the 1960s, Lawrence became quite well-known among common readers as well as literary scholars owing mainly to the trials related to *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* (1928) that were underway in England, America, and Japan. Lawrence’s popularity, however, went hand in hand with his notorious image of being a pornographic writer. In addition, in the 1970s, Lawrence’s reputation was seriously damaged by certain feminist critics, most notably Kate Millett, who denounced his “phallocentrism.” Nevertheless, to this day, Lawrence’s works captivate readers, including critics and scholars, who persist in trying to present new Lawrences through various critical theories and perspectives.

While there is no denying that F. R. Leavis played an important role in the present renown of Lawrence, his ranking of Lawrence’s novels has not necessarily had a desirable effect on the successive studies of his novels. For apart from *The Rainbow* (1915) and *Women in Love* (1920), which, according to Leavis, are Lawrence’s “two greatest works,” the other “exploratory and experimental” novels that followed, such as *Aaron’s Rod* (1922), *Kangaroo* (1923), and *The Plumed Serpent* (1926), were underestimated under the rubric of “the lesser novels” (*D. H. Lawrence* 19, 32-33). In *The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence* Raymond Williams, who may be considered one of Leavis’s critical successors, put more value on *Sons and Lovers* (1913) than on *The Rainbow* or *Women in Love*, but he was not so different from Leavis in that he ignored the so-called “leadership novels” (*Aaron’s Rod, Kangaroo, and The Plumed Serpent*), which were all set outside the shores of England. Terry Eagleton, a critical successor of Raymond Williams, also valued highly *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*. As for the leadership novels, he states in *Criticism and Ideology*: “After the war, Lawrence’s near-total ideological collapse, articulated with the crisis of aesthetic signification, presents itself in a radical rupturing and diffusion of literary form: novels like *Aaron’s Rod* and *Kangaroo* are signally incapable of evolving a narrative, ripped between fragmentary plot, spiritual autobiography and febrile didacticism” (160). Lawrence’s later novels, thus, had been construed as inferior not only from the artistic or aesthetic point of view but also from the thematic or ideological perspective.
It was not until the 1980s that Lawrence’s later novels began to be revaluated. One important motivation for dealing with Lawrence’s later novels lies in the prospect of modifying the simplistic negative image of Lawrence as a phallocentric and fascistic organicist. Judith Ruderman’s *D. H. Lawrence and the Devouring Mother* (1984) was a pioneering, full-fledged study of Lawrence’s leadership period. Taking a psychoanalytical approach, she connected his pursuit of a patriarchal leader with his preoccupation with and fear of maternal domination. John B. Humma’s *Metaphor and Meaning in D. H. Lawrence’s Later Novels* (1990) was one of several conspicuous attempts to refute, by reiterating Lawrence’s formal and artistic achievements, such views as that exemplified by Eliseo Vivas’s *D. H. Lawrence: The Failure and the Triumph of Art* (1960). Barbara Mensch’s *D. H. Lawrence and the Authoritarian Personality* (1991), which can be designated as a rebuttal to Kate Millett’s *Sexual Politics*, maintained that Lawrence demonstrated liberal rather than authoritarian characteristics.

When revaluating Lawrence’s later novels, it is essential to put into question the critical standards embraced by critics such as F. R. Leavis and his followers. This investigation can be refined and made more effective by bringing into play post-structural theories that became influential after Leavis. In this respect, *Radicalizing Lawrence* (2000) by Robert Burden is worthy of reference. Although it does not focus on the later novels, Burden’s work insists on the necessity of moving to a new interpretative paradigm created by the advent of post-structural theories.

Another important point is that unlike his early novels much of Lawrence’s later fiction takes place not in England but in places such as Italy, Australia, the United States and Mexico: they provide us with quite global perspectives. It seems possible indeed that problems pertaining to, for instance, the representations of cultures and societies of the circum-Pacific region can be understood using these novels as a starting point. In this sense, recent works such as Neil Roberts’s *D. H. Lawrence, Travel and Cultural Difference* (2004) and Eunyoung Oh’s *D. H. Lawrence’s Border Crossing* (2007) are meaningful because they seek to evaluate Lawrence’s later novels in the light of the theories of colonialism and postcolonialism.

This thesis can be positioned as an attempt to develop on the above-mentioned studies of Burden, Roberts and Oh since 2000. While illuminative explanations of critical theory form a major part of Burden’s work, I would like to focus on questioning some of his accepted interpretations and advancing another reading by applying critical theory. Roberts’s highly evocative work discusses minutely the similarities and differences between Lawrence (Mexico), Joseph Conrad (Africa) and E. M. Forster (India). However, despite the fact that Roberts’s main concern lies in the study of travel and cultural encounters, his work does not cover in any detail the American social discourse of Lawrence’s time and the situation in Asia as part of the circum-Pacific region. Unlike Burden or Roberts, Oh concentrates on the leadership novels from the more explicit standpoint of colonialism and postcolonialism. The primary difference between her work and mine lies in that Oh deals with some later novels that I do not, whereas the critical theories I apply are not confined to (post) colonialism. There have been attempts since the 1980s and in the 2000s in particular to interpret Lawrence’s novels in terms of poststructuralist critical theory or to revaluate his later novels from a global perspective. The originality of my thesis, which is an extension of this critical trend, can be
found above all in the way in which a particular critical theory or perspective is selected and applied to the individual novel in order to present concrete interpretations of each novel.

This thesis covers Lawrence’s novels from *Women in Love* to *The Plumed Serpent*. Unlike the leadership novels, which tend to be fragmentary in form and address political themes explicitly, *Women in Love* has met with widespread critical acclaim. In this respect, it may not have been necessary to deal anew with *Women in Love*; but this novel is important for another reason—it is the point from which Lawrence’s journey to Italy (*Aaron’s Rod*), Australia (*Kangaroo*), and Mexico (*The Plumed Serpent*) unfolds. It is also true that, in many cases, both *Women in Love* and *The Rainbow* have been considered to belong to the middle period of Lawrence’s career. But John Worthen suggests that the “the crucial division” may lie between *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*: “The great watershed of Lawrence’s writing has, for years, been thought to lie between *Sons and Lovers* and *The Rainbow*. The more, however, we consider the kinds of undramatised narrative Lawrence employed in his early fiction, and the sophisticated uses he made of satire, mimicry, drama and comedy in his writing from 1916 onward, the more the crucial division may appear to lie instead between *The Rainbow* and Lawrence’s subsequent writing, of which *Women in Love* is perhaps the beginning . . .” (42). Likewise, Terry Eagleton sees a break between the “diachronic rhythms” of *The Rainbow* and the “synchronic form,” “fissuring of organic form,” and the “‘montage’ techniques of symbolic juxtaposition” of *Women in Love* (160-61).

*St. Mawr* (1925), too, has been highly estimated by influential critics (Leavis, D. H. Lawrence 271-96; Kermode 111-14; Kermode and Hollander 1834-36); nevertheless, when this text is compared to other works set in the circum-Pacific region, a new reading of *St. Mawr* is rendered possible. I consider it difficult for students of Lawrence to disregard *Women in Love* and *St. Mawr* because of the ample hints offered by these works on the kind of desire that drives characters in Lawrence’s novels onward through their journey. Moreover, insights into the manner in which Lawrence represents desire are also available in these novels.

In Chapter 1, I deal with one of Lawrence’s representative novels, *Women in Love*, and using René Girard’s theory of desire, attempt to elucidate some ambiguities of the novel which can be unriddled neither by the interpretation that asserts the perfection of the married relationship of one couple nor by the rather hasty explanation that regards the love of a principal male character as a repressed homosexual impulse. *Women in Love* is reminiscent of the world of Dostoevsky. In order to disentangle and understand the intricate relationships between the characters’ desires, it is necessary once to be free from the *idée fixe* of Lawrentian spontaneous desire—Girard, who unravels Dostoevskian desire, is of great value here. In the case of Lawrence’s *Women in Love*, the distinction Girard makes between artists with novelistic insight and others with romantic deceit seems to be exclusive. Girard favors that tradition of novelists who, like Dostoevsky, deconstruct the illusion of a spontaneous desire that links in a straight line the subject to the object. According to this scheme, Lawrence, who is regarded as an advocate of spontaneous desire, would belong to the category of the deceptive. Paul Dumouchel, in fact, asserts that Lawrence, among others in English literature, should be excluded from any list of great authors (3). Nevertheless, Lawrence cannot simply be repudiated as a writer who has an illusion of spontaneous desire; it could he said, on the contrary, that Lawrence
recognizes and reveals the structure of metaphysical desire in *Women in Love*. Apart from such classification of novelists, an inquiry into the structure of desire within the framework of Girard's theory can assist in unriddling, for example, the ambiguity of the ending. The tentative tone of the final dialogue cannot negate the importance of Birkin’s vision of ideal relationships. By his “eternal union with a man” in the ending, Birkin does not envisage a mere homosexual relation, nor is he satisfied with the equally exclusive marriage with Ursula. Although Ursula opposes him, saying that “You can’t have it, because it’s false, impossible,” Birkin projects, by saying “I don’t believe that,” his ultimate vision of relationships in terms of the transcendental mediator (481).

*Aaron’s Rod* contains ample fissures and contradictions. The prevalent view, therefore, that sees Aaron and Lilly as the two halves of Lawrence and the author’s split selfhood as what prevents Lawrence from resolving the problem of self-discovery and rebirth might be still valid. However, the critical measures that value protagonists’ development or formation of selfhood cannot apply to the anti-developmental inclination of *Aaron’s Rod*. The split of Lawrence’s self, moreover, cannot be ascribed to his psychological problems alone; rather, it is closely related to the aesthetic and political ones, causing radical ruptures not simply between Aaron and Lilly but also within each of them. The split can also be seen between the work and the reader as well as between the author and the work. Chapter 2 insists that it is impossible to reevaluate this novel from the standpoint of the novel’s organic construction and that the protofascistic and phallocentric inclination of the novel must and can be deconstructed by means of analyzing the characteristics of the narrative, the various tropes, and the system of certain conceptual oppositions. It is Aaron’s words, I insist, that sustain the novel’s anti-aesthetic and anti-organic tendency, making it impossible either to reassess *Aaron’s Rod* in terms of a coherently or organically constructed work or to condemn it as an embodiment of fascistic ideology because the leadership scheme itself is led into a logical impossibility. The anti-aesthetic expressions, however, do not necessarily exclude the readership; rather, they reconnect the reader anti-organically and anti-aesthetically with the work. The novel brings to the reader a not necessarily happy consciousness but a critically important one, which provokes the reader not only to rethink the standard that has valorized and canonized Lawrence’s major novels until then but also to be vigilant against the organic retotalization in Lawrence’s writing in later novels like *The Plumed Serpent* and in our reading of them.

Continuing to treat *Aaron’s Rod* and drawing on Deleuze-Guattari’s concept of deterritorialization/reterritorialization, Chapter 3 tries to rearticulate the relationship between Aaron and Lilly, who have often been considered to be Lawrence’s split selves. A new articulation shows that Aaron embodies the spirit of deterritorialization, whereas Lilly represents the concept of reterritorialization. D. H. Lawrence does not necessarily enjoy a privileged position in the works of Deleuze or Deleuze-Guattari. While Gilles Deleuze discussed literature in some of his books and dealt with Marcel Proust and Lewis Carroll, Lawrence was never accorded a systematic exploration in a book form. One exception to this may be “Nietzsche and Saint Paul, Lawrence and John of Patmos.” However, there is no denying that Lawrence is often mentioned in the works of Deleuze and Guattari and that even if their references are fragmental they are quite positive. Therefore, I used Deleuze-Guattari’s theory of desire, which is congruous with Lawrentian desire, making it a mandatory
reference for a positive revaluation of Aaron’s Rod, along with a deconstructive perspective. (Meanwhile, in order to understand Deleuze-Guattari’s concepts such as “line of flight,” Aaron’s Rod is useful as a sort of isagoge.) The various concepts presented by Deleuze-Guattari and their reading of literary texts based upon such concepts have nothing to do with the organic construction or coherence of the texts. One of their standards of literary value is whether a line of flight has been drawn to break up what is organic. Hence, their concepts and viewpoints are highly suggestive when challenging the aesthetic standard that has haunted Aaron’s Rod: the artistic achievement of the novel consists in the organically and coherently developed or constructed theme and form. It is no coincidence that Deleuze-Guattari mention not Lawrence’s well-known novels but later minor works such as Aaron’s Rod or The Man Who Died (The Escaped Cock). With the emergence of postcolonialism and other critical perspectives, Deleuze, himself, is sometimes liable to be criticized. In consideration of such trends, it may be supposed that new Deleuzian readings of Lawrence’s literature will be explored. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that Deleuze and Deleuze-Guattari prompt not only a revaluation of Lawrence’s minor works but a new reading of his major works as well.

In Chapter 4, comparing Kangaroo to Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War by Wilfred Trotter, I clarify the meaning and function of the concept and representation of the crowd in Lawrence’s novel. This reveals that the view of Lawrence with regard to the crowd in Kangaroo is similar to that of Freud, who was against a eugenic ordering of society. In the end, Somers, a character who closely resembles the author, Lawrence, renounces the prospect of revolution through the political movements of Australia in the early 1920s. Somers (Lawrence) returns in the final chapter of Kangaroo (“Adieu Australia”) to reflect on the implications of “our real civilised consciousness” and “the aware, self-responsible, deep consciousness” (348). This “consciousness” is rather ambiguous; yet, when the plot development of Kangaroo is taken into consideration, the word begins to resemble what Sigmund Freud calls “conscience,” formed by directing his or her desire for aggression toward one’s own ego (Civilization and Its Discontents 84). In terms of the emphasis on leadership or “civilised consciousness,” Lawrence at this stage of his career seems to occupy a theoretical position similar to Freud’s after Beyond the Pleasure Principle. To be sure, it should not be forgotten that although Kangaroo avoids an existent or near-future vision of totalitarian society, there is still a possibility that this novel might be associated with a vision that aspires for a strong leader who can mediate between the God of negative theology and each individual with unconscious vitality. However, the renunciation of a subversive or romanticist transformation of society can be fairly significant if political phenomena such as Fascism, Nazism, or Stalinism are interpreted as products of a modern mass society, which is accompanied inevitably by despotism.

Chapter 5 reexamines representations of evil in St. Mawr, focusing on its location and shifting features. Many critics have discussed the implications of “a vision of evil” to which Lou is led after St. Mawr falls on top of Rico and crushes his ankle. But why the center of evil should be located in “the core of Asia” does not seem to have been fully investigated. Lawrence’s letters of 1924 make it possible to infer that by “the core of Asia” he specifically means Tartary. This location, along with the global nature of evil, invites us to read the novella in relation to, for example, the Yellow Peril. Actually, there is a similarity between The Rising Tide of Color against White World-Supremacy

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(1920) by Lothrop Stoddard and Lou's vision of evil in Lawrence's *St. Mawr*: in both cases, the peoples of the world are categorized by their color, and the common figure of a rising flood or tide is used to show that Asia is the source of the calamity. But after evil is ascribed to degraded civilization and the setting is shifted to America, the very notion of evil is itself marginalized. The ambiguity of evil can be explained by revising Walter Benn Michaels' reading of *St. Mawr* as "the structure of nativist modernism without the nativism" (101). Michaels claims that *St. Mawr* is nativist because it advocates purified blood and breeding, a characteristic theme of nativist modernism. Yet Michaels finds differences too: while the nativist text identifies "the refusal of procreation" with "racial or cultural purity, with 'breeding' itself," Lawrence identifies it with "a deeper reality and with masculinity" (*Our America* 98). Although Michaels' argument about Lawrence's non-nationalistic tendency is astute and to the point, it would be problematic to generalize Lawrence as simply primitivistic or universalistic.

What has become clear by examining *Kangaroo* in Chapter 4 and *St. Mawr* in Chapter 5 in comparison with the social discourses of the day is that although Lawrence's texts are often strongly influenced, they nevertheless manage to diverge narrowly and subtly from the discourses, drawing lines of flight or combat. It could be said, in fact, that the intended interpretation of degeneration in *Kangaroo* is divergent from the concept of degeneration in the discourses of eugenists represented by Karl Pearson. The representation of "the core of Asia" as the center of global evil in *St. Mawr* invites us to read the novella in relation to Pan-Mongolism or the Yellow Peril. But a close examination of the features of evil in this novel has revealed that the very notion of evil is itself marginalized in the end.

Bringing Nazism and postcolonialism into view, Chapter 6 investigates representations of sexuality in *The Plumed Serpent* with Michel Foucault's citation from this novel as the point of departure. As a result, it is shown that the novel does not necessarily endorse sexuality without reservation because Lawrence's insight that people are enslaved by sexuality is consonant with Foucault's. Like Girard, Foucault is effective in relativizing the spontaneity of Lawrentian desire. This thesis, therefore, attempts to elucidate the implications of Foucault's quotation from *The Plumed Serpent*. Foucault may suggest that we should think of Kate as an instance of the subject who is trapped by the desirability of sex. However, as long as Kate floats schizophrenically, it can be said that there is a possibility for a "line of flight" which will enable her to escape from the trap of sexuality. It could also be said that in this representation of Kate there is a key to understanding what Deleuze-Guattari term "a becoming-woman": "even those who pass for the most virile, the most phallocratic, such as Lawrence and Miller," in writing, become "women" (276). Thus, I add that *The Plumed Serpent* brings into relief the difference between Foucault and Deleuze in terms of imperialism and colonialism as well as sexuality.

Each chapter of this thesis is meant to renovate the previous interpretations of Lawrence's novels. An examination of his later novels proves that Lawrence extends far beyond his image of an organicist who advocated sexual liberation and a return to nature, and that he is a novelist who pursued an ideal society and perfect relationships among people, responding to various discourses or thoughts of the time yet resisting or modifying them at the same time.
I have to admit that besides the limited reference to critical theory, my selection may be viewed as arbitrary or inconsistent. However, each adaptation has a reason behind it: my primary motivations have been, first, my sense of discomfort about the fact that the image of Lawrence is almost exclusively associated with sexuality, and second, my subconscious yet incessant purpose of grasping the essence of Lawrentian desire. It may be possible to reconsider and redefine Lawrentian desire by way of investigating not his novels but his philosophical works. But it is most probable that the attempt would result in the reinforcement of the image of Lawrence as an organicist who espouses spontaneous desire. It is nothing but this image that the different readings of his novels in this thesis seek to resist and encourage the reconsideration of.

This thesis does not insist on some radical re canonization of Lawrence’s novels; it is not proposed, for example, that we should replace Sons and Lovers or The Rainbow with Kangaroo or The Plumed Serpent. What I urge is that it is difficult to revaluate Lawrence’s later novels by using the old norms and that it is necessary to attempt a new reading in the light of critical theory. I hope that my attempt here leads to the reconsideration of not only Lawrence’s later works but also his other novels and the works of other writers.

論文審査結果の要旨

本論文は、イギリス・モダニズムの作家 D. H. ロレンス（D. H. Lawrence）の後期小説を現代批評理論と対話・共鳴させることによって、それぞれの作品の新たな読解を提示した論文である。

第1章は、ロレンスの代表作である『恋する女たち』(Women in Love) をあつかい、この小説の理想的異性愛を自明視する解釈や、異性愛の後背にある同性愛を見出す解釈では理解不可能な問題点を、ルネ・ジラール（René Girard）の欲望論を援用することで解明した。

第2章と第3章では、『アーロンの杖』(Aaron’s Rod) の語りの構造や隠聡などを分析し、この作品を伝統的な有機体論的美学の観点から評価することが不可能であること、さらにはこの作品が含むとされてきた全体主義的なイデオロギーを、むしろ解体する契機を含んでいることを明らかにした。

第4章では、『カンガルー』(Kangaroo) において表現されたロレンスの群衆に関する思想を、同時代の社会的言説、とくにイギリス生理学・社会心理学者ウィルフレッド・トロッター（Wilfred Trotter）の著作との比較をとおして明らかにし、この小説におけるロレンスの群衆観が、優生学的社会再編成に批判的であった、フロイトの群衆観に近いものであることを明らかにした。

第5章は『セント・モーア』(St. Mawr) における悪の表象の問題を分析している。とくにこの小説で、アジアが「悪の中心」と名指しされている点に注目し、当時の黄禍論や社会ダーウィニズム・優生学の言説とロレンスの思想との関連を考察した。さらに、そうした社会思想史的な考察から得られた知見と精緻なテクスト解釈を結びることによって、ロレンスのテクストは、黄禍論や社会ダーウィニズムを解体する契機を含んでいることを示した。

第6章は、ナチズムやポスト・コロニアリズムを視野に入れてつつ、『羽毛の蛇』(The Plumed Serpent) における性の表象を、ミシェル・フーコー（Michel Foucault）による本作品の解釈を出発点として考察し、本テクストにおいて必ずしも性が無批判に肯定されているわけではないこと、ならびに、ロレンスもフーコーと同様に、性が人々を隷属させているという洞察をもっていたことを解明した。
本論文は、これまで取り上げられがなかったロレンスの後期小説に対して、現代批評理論の観点から独自の解釈を加え、自発的な欲望を肯定したモダニズムの作家という従来支配的であったロレンス像を覆す独自のロレンス解釈を提示している。精緻なテクスト分析と現代批評理論に対する鋭利な問題意識を組み合わせた独自の方法論によって、新たなロレンス像を打ち立てた本論文は、野心的であると共にきわめて説得的であり、その卓越した成果が新界の発展に寄与するところ多大である。

よって、本論文の提出者は、博士（文学）の学位を授与されるに十分な資格を有するものと認められる。