

PREFACE

AND

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D. H. Lawrence's 'identity' as a critic of culture itself is a cultural construct based on 'difference' that disrupts not only others but itself as well, foregrounding in the process an element of provinciality. This discursive disruption ingrained in Lawrence's thought finds ample support in the currently competing critical modes of our times. Lawrence destabilizes a whole tradition of thought as he finds it in a bid to open up new liberating horizons. This thesis seeks to highlight this radicalism in Lawrence by freeing him from such fixed idealized designations as 'priest of love' and 'pro-fac⁵ist mythologizer of cultural politics'.

For Lawrence 'man is a thought adventurer.' The immense flexibility that such a view suggests helps him explore many of the major issues of contemporary critical discussions. This thesis traces the vital correspondence of Lawrence's thought with those of the contemporary thinkers. We claim that Lawrence the critic of culture has anticipated the key issues of postmodernism and feminism. Lawrence, however, remains a critic of culture but without any fixed 'identity.' All his pursuits of thought have the objective of learning how not to know. The provisionality and contingency of his thought, rather than ensuring 'certitude' to itself, invite us to a space beyond any fixity. "We are prisoners", says Lawrence in Phoenix, "inside our conception of life and being" (325). Thus thought, in the Lawrentian sense, seeks its own suspension by knowing its own limit in order to have a new beginning. This beginning is analogous to the eternal rebirth of the mythical bird, phoenix. In Fantasia of the Unconscious Lawrence has designated the proper place for knowledge and all its pursuits: "At last knowledge must be put into its true place in the living activity of man" (76).

The affinity of Lawrentian thought with those of the leading contemporary thinkers illustrates how much ahead of his times Lawrence has been. Lawrence

'insurrection of subjugated knowledges' and many other such issues as Bakhtin's celebration of 'heteroglossia' in the novel, Lyotard's incredulity towards 'metanarratives', Baudrillard's distrust of 'simulacra', Deleuze's emphasis on 'difference' and 'becoming' and Levinas's ethical concept of the other. Besides such close correspondences, Lawrence has significant affinity with such feminist thinkers as Luce Irigaray, Helene Cixous and Julia Kristeva. Mine will be an attempt to establish as ascertained this community of concern between Lawrence and these postmodern thinkers.

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