

# Canonicity: A Hypothesis. Anticipating the Global

D. H. Lawrence in the Hue of the Century

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“This is one reason why literature,  
to a large extent, always arises out  
of literature.”  
(Wolfgang Iser)

**T**HE PROSPECT of teaching art and literature without canons is not at all encouraging, once and for all because the human mind cannot find rest until it frames the complex, intricate reality of art into taxonomies. In the last thirty or forty years, the subject of the literary canon and of canon-formation was addressed, sometimes with irony and denial, some other times with respect and care for what it means, for its function and its future.

However, as English literature has exploded in scope during the last two decades, the subject of literary canon is still part of *the* shift in the modern study of literature, in the increasing attention to literature texts (especially to the novel), as ascertained in masterworks by acclaimed theorists, critics and historians of literature. Suggestive titles of anthologies of English/British masterpieces (such as those now published by Longman, Norton itself, Bedford), including authors gradually expanded, show that the situation was just beginning to change in the last twenty or so years. So much so for the extraordinary sequel of five volumes, *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Literature*, the first outstanding anthology of Irish literature ever published, written and edited between 1991–2006, as a work of collaborative scholarship under the editorship of Seamus Deane (volumes 1–3) and Angela Bourke (volumes 4–5).

The institutionalized canon—as it appears in curricula and syllabi—effectively governs literary study and instruction along with the increasing number of new writers represented in anthologies of literature. The latter category exhibiting the “new system” into which “the old canon has morphed,” to only quote the telling phrase of David Damrosch, to whom the “system morphed from a two-tiered [one] into a three-tiered one,” would divide literature not only into “major authors” and “minor authors:” “co-habiting the literary map in the heyday of masterpiece approach with a range of minor Western authors . . . accompanying the major authors in anthologies, on syllabi, and

in scholarly discussion.<sup>21</sup> It would develop a third level, populated by “new arrivals to the neighborhood” or “unfamiliar neighbors” with lesser fund of “cultural capital.” Amazingly, says Damrosch, the “old major authors gain new vitality from association with them, and only rarely do they need to admit one of them directly into their club.”<sup>22</sup>

Which is to say that interest in canon is part of a larger inquiry into “literature as institution,” literature as literary study and as artistic achievement, institutions which are all responsible for the literary canon itself, no matter whether it is “academic” or “aesthetic.” Literary studies taking care of the academic canon are prone to reflect upon, analyze and internalize the aesthetic canon as well, as part of the age’s artistic accomplishment. For, as Damrosch claims (referring to who is responsible for the writer’s admission “into the club”): “By ‘they’, of course, I really mean ‘us’: it is we teachers and scholars who determine which writers will have an effective life in today’s canon of world literature.”<sup>23</sup>

For many other interpreters (accounted for by Charles Altieri), canon-formation is a measure of the “strength of [these] institutions devoted to the study of art” whereas “the question of what canon is lies in its *being the expression of social and political power*.”<sup>24</sup> Not very much praised, however, by “the School of Resentment,” the opponents to literary canon were mouth-pieced by Harold Bloom as significantly defining “rather the writers who offer little but the resentment they have developed as part of their sense of identity [with] no strangeness and no originality in such a resentment.”<sup>25</sup> Throughout the years, he himself rounded up his own critical concept, the once named “the anxiety of influence” as “canon-maker:”

*There can be no strong, canonical writing without the process of literary influence, a process vexing to undergo and difficult to understand . . . The anxiety of influence, is not an anxiety about the father, real or literary, but an anxiety achieved by and in the poem, novel or play. Any strong literary work creatively misreads and therefore misinterprets a precursor text or texts. An authentic canonical writer may or may not internalize her or his work’s anxiety, but that scarcely matters: the strongly achieved work is anxiety.<sup>6</sup>*

As one of the sources of canon denial and claim that “canon should be opened up, demystified, or eliminated altogether,” the misreading, misinterpretation and even ignorance of precursor texts have all challenged unimaginable reaction these late years by a boomerangish stroke of theoretical interest in the canon debate, called by Damrosch a “surprisingly little cross-cutting work . . . to link our *counter-canonical* and *hyper-canonical* writers beyond the boundaries of national or imperial spaces”, echoing the Bloom-ian strategic “anxiety of influence” perspective.<sup>7</sup> And this, in spite of all evidence of the ever agitated counter-canonical, the consistent discussion about value and canon by scholars, writers, critical theory and academics has been activated lately, in all parts of the world, through the institution of literary study, but from an *agonic* (competing) and not so much an *antagonistic* perspective.

In the above paragraph, for the purpose of this study and from its outset, we have strongly refreshed our mind and recollection with Harold Bloom’s *The Anxiety of Influence*, his theoretical construction of a “theory of poetry,” which is only at first reading an analysis about poetic influence and about literary influence, in general. Followed, two years

after, by *A Map of Misreading* (1975), Bloom's theory of influence does not only search into the meaning of the term "influence," but shows why this should seem a timely subject that can do much to illuminate canon debate, in the light of a minority of "strong poets" who create original work in spite of the pressure of influence, based on "revisionary ratios" and "a map of poetical influence."<sup>8</sup>

However, at the outset of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it appears that the long debate about *what*, exactly, canon is, a debate about the texts and their authors and about which of them would be included in the category of literary canon, is one of which his contestants had been aware of from the beginning. The less familiar debate, the real *problem-solving* polemics, is about the debate itself as representing crisis in literature. From Frank Kermode's *Institutional Control of Interpretation* (1979) ("Canons are essentially strategic constructs by which societies maintain their own interests since the canon allows control over texts a culture takes seriously and the methods of interpretation that establish the meaning of 'serious'"<sup>9</sup>) to Barbara Herrnstein Smith's *Contingencies of Value* (1984), and to Bloom (1994), canon is defined as a "strategic construct" with an impact on the methods of interpretation (Kermode) acting by way of its "standardizing contingencies," challenging *interaction* (Herrnstein-Smith) with and between members of a group—competent, trained, informed, an interaction construing the "art of memory" within which literature challenges value "from the struggle between texts: in the reader, in language, in the classroom, in arguments within society."<sup>10</sup>

Canon, we see now, is its own problem and solution, probing and questioning the relationship between literature texts and the consumers, based not only on *competition* and *selection*, but on *accommodation* and *accumulation*. Accordingly, one has to understand and to accept that the other facet of canon debate, the problem-solving debate (encompassed by critical theory) is not similar to any *historical account* of literary canon formation; the latter operates by "exclusion" (exerted by the institutional and institutionalized forms: book market, publishing house policies, reading and interpretation, syllabi, curriculum), whereas the former operates by "inclusion." Assuming these ideas, the problem-solving debate also refers to the *historical* category of literature as an organizing principle of canonical selection and/or accumulation, within the *category of canonicity* viewed as a "historical crisis in literature"<sup>11</sup> in the context of the millennium-old tension between the "creative/meditating individual" and the individual's search for knowledge.

Beginning with the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and the 21<sup>st</sup>, the millennium-old tension between the "creative/meditating individual" and his/her search for knowledge became even more difficult in a *knowledge-based world* in which discriminating between true and false means building a personal system of truths and related beliefs by means of *examination, analysis* and *interpretation*<sup>12</sup> as a basis of the "accurate intellectual attitude" which is necessary to cope with this knowledge-based world. But still, as it is assumed, in moments of crisis, radical and severe questioning of the basis of value reveals how important the *issue of authenticity* is and how examination, analysis and interpretation may function in search of authenticity. One may submit the process to *evaluation* (viewed as tension between the objective and the subjective, acceptance and rejection of norms) by focusing on what is genuine and on what is not. Evaluation may influence the re-adjustment of "the competence to understand."<sup>13</sup> The above opinion, explored at its best by

Harold Bloom, to whom canon is first of all a *type* of relation, a relation between an *individual reader* (the Critic, the Historian, the Theorist, the Reader) and an *individual writer*, both accepted as samples of “individual thinking” and “the consciousness of reality testing” (“the individual self is the only method and the only standard in selection.”)<sup>14</sup>

As early as 1973<sup>15</sup> and later in 1994, Bloom hypothesized that the institution of literature forms “a world of interdependence,” one that may form and thwart consciousness, a process that he had defined as “the anxiety of influence” (“Literary influence is the politics of spirit,”)<sup>16</sup> similar but not identical, we might say, to the fundamental consequences of modernity: a process of “uneven development that introduces new forms of world interdependence.”<sup>17</sup> We are speaking here about *emergent forms* of world interdependence and, with a new terminology, planetary/global consciousness. Against these conditions, knowledge itself becomes a matter of personal choice based on the “notion of discrimination.” We also understand that, in the philosophical perspective, modernity highlights an essential tension, the tension between the normative (what should be done) and the real (what is actually done), the tension between *consensus* and *conflict*. Thus understood, the bloom-ian concept of literary canon, viewed as “an achieved anxiety,”<sup>18</sup> seems to be the high expression of modernity: not as an expression of “cultural fragmentation” or of “dislocation of the subject” into a “world of signs.” Our hypothesis is that canon is identical and contingent with “the literary art of Memory” based on *selection/accommodation* and *discrimination/accumulation* (i.e. identification of sample and isolation of canon by way of canon-framing, seemingly a process based on accommodation-accumulation, rather than elimination). In our opinion, canon-framing overtly indicates the visible transformation of (human)subjectivity as reflected in what the sociologist Anthony Giddens defined as “a process of simultaneous transformation of subjectivity and [global] social organization,”<sup>19</sup> in account of the truth that the specificity of literature is neither *into*, nor *outside* it (neither intrinsic nor extrinsic), but a matter of relationship between literature and itself or what makes literature to be literature: as relationship between literature and the *Author* (intention); as relationship between literature and the *World* (representation); as relationship between literature and the *Reader* (reception) and as relationship between literature and *Value* (canonicity and canon-framing).

Borrowing from John Guillory’s theory of cultural capital the notion of “regulatory procedure” (“the systematic regulation of *reading* and *writing* to social conditions in which the practice of writing is no longer confined to a class,”)<sup>20</sup> we define canonicity as the adaptation of literature’s “regulatory procedures” to the *function* and *reception* of the literary text. Such as the explosion of popular writing in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the canonization of a popular genre; such as the history of writing by women, with the canonization of the novel written by women, in fact, the canonization of a popular genre (i.e. of tradition), by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These processes outline not only “legitimizing forms” but also “evaluative procedures” into the field of writing. We understand the process as an act of accommodation, of determining literature texts to *perform* certain specific *functions*. Among these, the “exchange value” (to borrow Guillory’s term) is a condition for the *retroactive construction* of the literature text as an expression of its value. As we are aware of, in “The Hospitable Canon: Literary Value and Social Value Options,”<sup>21</sup> Virgil Nemoianu (1991) defined the two distinct canonic tendencies—

the retroactive construction referring to the *aesthetic canon* whose main source is tradition, tradition analyzed, contested, re-affirmed, but considered from another perspective. And a similar theoretical perspective on the meaning and value of tradition, when it comes to the adaptation of the system's regulatory procedures (by reading and writing), is also identified in Wolfgang Iser's *The Fictive and the Imaginary: Charting Literary Anthropology* (1993). In defining "tradition," Iser discussed the *importance of interchange* (on basis of "accommodation" and "assimilation") in the recasting of formerly canonic forms ("the reshuffling of what is inherited,") only to bring to the surface (by "the tilting game of imitation") the otherwise inaccessible *variable*:

*Tradition grows less from what is handed down, through generations, than from the constant reshuffling of what is inherited, and the observable interchange between the accommodative and the assimilative component of the schema allows such recasting to be pinpointed . . . The inaccessible varies historically, determined as it is by human interests of the time, and the tilting game of imitation and symbolization is able to master all situations because it can be played in any number of ways. This is one reason why literature, to a large extent, always arises out of literature.<sup>22</sup>*

Wolfgang Iser's "reshuffling" (and Harold Bloom's "anxiety of influence"), acting similarly upon canonicity, which is viewed, at its turn, as potentiality (defined by adaptation on basis of assimilation as procedure and accommodative component) is an *interchange* and, respectively, *recasting* of formerly canonic forms. It is also *accessibility* to the "invisible variable" (because diachronically manifested), where the variable defines *forms* out of use. One may also reflect and take into account or notice Barbara Herrnstein Smith's own demonstration, in 1984, about the "works that are no more culturally reproduced:"

*A work is no more culturally reproduced when under the emergent and changing conditions, the functions for which the text was earlier valued are no longer desirable (the work becomes a "relic," for historical and archaeological interest) and in competition with newly produced or other re-produced works [when] it will produce differently framed or configured properties, including "emergent meanings."<sup>23</sup>*

Our thesis, so far presented with no firm claim of demonstrating it, is that *canonicity*—challenged by historical crisis in literature—is disclosed (time and again) by the relationship between literature and value, a relation disclosing the literature's internal mechanisms of *self-adaptation* and *self-adjustment*, in the process of change. Canonicity is, thus, the configuration of the dynamics of literature.

In a very brief and sketchy outline, we will further define what this configuration might be, as identified with one of England's modernist writers, David Herbert Lawrence (1885–1930), who encountered difficulties with both adapting himself to the times and with the times adapting themselves to the authenticity of his literature: most of his literature texts were submitted to censorship (dismissed as pornographic). He was an exile on the Continent as many other English modernist writers and, for a short while, in Central America, he was a rebel and an ex-centric marginal, a fantastic poet of the turn

of the century and of the consequences of WWI upon the human nature, however remaining in the history of English literature as a great late Modernist novelist, a personality to whom living one's life to the brim was more important than being acclaimed for his literature: D.H. Lawrence *anticipated the global* (understood as any description and explanation of a world which is characterized by networks of connections that span multi-distances) and this anticipation we accept as being closely tied to *canonicity*, understood as the *configuration* of dynamics in literature, a relation disclosing the literature's internal mechanisms of *self-adaptation* and *self-adjustment* and the "literary change" represented by the 1920's in the history of English literature.

In an essay of 1975, "The Problem of Change in Literary History," Hayden White says that any discussion of a topic as comprehensive as "literary change" must begin with an identification of the objects conceived to be part of what might be called "the literary field."<sup>24</sup> Which, as Hayden White claims, is not exactly to provide an exhaustive list of the types of objects inhabiting the literary field (mimetic, pragmatic, expressive, objective). It is rather taking no account of a given genre, a given group, or generation, or line of authors or interpreters (publishers, successive readers).<sup>25</sup> For these groups are themselves undergoing changes, in the larger socio-cultural context. The context itself may be undergoing changes. These all are changes in the code: the "code of the natural historical context," that we define as a *change of sensibility*. In fact, the change of sensibility is the change in the audience "programmed" to receive *innovative messages* and contacts with one condition to be fulfilled as specified in Hayden White's analysis: ". . . only if the socio-cultural context is such as to sustain an audience whose experience of that context corresponds to the modes of message formulation adopted by the writer."<sup>26</sup>

**A**ND INDEED, as it has been lately explored in a recent interview of Haun Saussy, editor of the Fifth Report of the American Society of Comparative Literature (2010), this idea is brought to the fore: readers quickly notice the appearance of a lot of the same properties in texts from different cultures and in texts from different ages. Saussy concluded that the human mind, receptive to similar things and patterns, identifies "the literary change:" "The objects created in different cultures and different ages are dissimilar on the level of the text and the cultural background, but if the mind is receptive to certain patterns and regularities, maybe that is where we would find the literary change in the literary language."<sup>27</sup>

Which is to say that literary innovation must be presumed to be going on all the time, but *historically significant innovation* is possible only at those times in which the Reader or potential audiences—for a given form of literary work—have been so constituted as to render intelligible both messages (history's and innovation's) as well as the Writer's mode of contact that prevailed in some preceding era. Literary change, he concluded, is the product of a tension, which is, in our understanding of Saussy's assumption, *collaborative* rather than agonistic (or antagonistic, for that matter). Similarly, almost forty years ago, for Hayden White in 1975, literary change is also the product of a tension between "the cognitive content of the messages and the *dominant trope or mode of figurative usage*."<sup>28</sup> In his much acclaimed theory of tropes, they shape the message into a spe-

cific kind of contact between artist and audience. Which is exactly the case we will briefly present further on, in D. H. Lawrence's literary innovation.

At present, D. H. Lawrence is accepted and much acclaimed as the particular case of the English Modernist writer (and a canonic writer of Modernism), in whose work "alternation" of metaphor/simile and synecdoche (an act we understand as both "the act/process of alternation or causing to alternate" and "succession" reaching to inclusive "disjunction") as dominant tropes of his novels are indicative of his *innovative messages* and also of the literary change that he had proposed to his contemporaries, in the aftermath of WWI. An age of war consequences in as far as human experience of war and of the war consequences on human nature and change of sensibility, the 1920's exhibited interests in "archaic heritage" concerned with the difficult state the human race and its history, with recuperation of "remains" and "tradition." Contemporaries of E. Pound and T.S. Eliot—novelists especially—appeared more disposed and inclined to share (Freud's) interest in their present experience and in this experience manifold connections with a recovered and *revisited past* in what is "psychically innate" not in the race as a whole but in individuals. This encouraged *emphasis on memory* in modernist fiction (with the respective consequences in its departure from linear narrative structures and the exploration of an archaeology of consciousness). As early as 1921, D.H. Lawrence's description of Gudrun in *Women in Love* (on the verge of sleep), displays such emphases alternating memory and archaeology of consciousness and associating the process with either the "rope" or "the ephemerality of the particle in a flux" and announces *knowledge of new type* in which "nothing that will come into existence will have passed away:"

*. . . conscious of everything—her childhood, her girlhood, all the forgotten incidents, all the unrealized influence and all the happenings she had not understood, pertaining to herself, to her family, to her friends . . . it was as if she drew glittering rope of knowledge out of the sea of darkness, drew and drew and drew it out of the fathomless depths of the past, and still it did not come to an end, there was no end to it. . . she must haul and haul . . . from the endless depths of the unconsciousness.*<sup>29</sup>

Lawrence's "rope of knowledge" is similar to Virginia Woolf's "memory as a seamstress," as they reunite together disparate parts of characters' experience, and of the novels in which they appear: earlier phases of development regularly connect with the latest ones through instant associations. Such experiences were not singular in the epoch, only to remember Marcel Proust who wondered in *A la recherche du temps perdu* (1913–1927) whether "really everything is in the mind" and who dismissed the value of the literature of description when "value lies beneath the surface" and "reality has its hidden existence." As these/his remarks confirmed, the novel of the century's second decade shifted the paradigm from the "visible" and from "inspecting what lies exposed to the view" to observing "what lies beneath the surface." D.H. Lawrence was *the* important actor (if not exactly the main) of this shift. Such a goal required a new tactics, better equipped to narrate in terms of this shift of priorities, between "visible" and "buried" worlds that novelists of the '20s and '30s sought to distinguish themselves from their predecessors, as also required new strategies.

His central strategy was that of *condemning industrialism* as an attitude of mind and as an effect of industrial priorities over individuals: Lawrence condemned what he called the “sheer mechanical materialism” forcing all human energy into “competition of mere acquisition.” To Lawrence, forcing the individual into *new functions* all tied to materiality and acquisition of goods and absence of spirituality and “feelings” engendering “ugliness” instead of “beauty” are only but a few consequences of industrial capitalism and of modernization:

*In my generation, the boys I went to school with, colliers now, have all been beaten down, the whole national and human consciousness hammering on the fact of material prosperity above all things . . .*

*The real tragedy of England, as I see it, is the tragedy of ugliness. The country is so lovely: the man-made England is so vile . . . It was ugliness, which betrayed the spirit of man, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The great crime which the moneyed classes and promoters of industry committed in the palmy Victorian days was the condemning of the workers to ugliness: meanness as formless and ugly surroundings, ugly ideals, ugly religion, ugly hope, ugly clothes, ugly furniture, ugly houses ugly relationship between workers and employees. The human soul needs actual beauty even more than bread.<sup>30</sup>*

What he proposed as an option, in exchange of “that real tragedy,” was the regaining of what he called “the quick of the self” or the “creative quick,” metaphors for the sense of living while experiencing by a common sympathy between human beings:

*You can have life two ways. It is either that everything is created from the mind, downwards; or else everything proceeds from the creative quick, outwards, the actual living quick itself is alone the creative reality . . . The source of all living is in the interchange and meeting and mingling of men to men, of men and women.<sup>31</sup>*

The two main ideas he questioned in his whole work—the novel, poetry and essays altogether (that no experience escapes its context and that no man escapes his limitless connections) show his *high consciousness* and *ethical concern* with the problem of our times, such as the insistence on the relativity of good, the rebellion against consumerism and material acquisition, absence of emotion, and consequently, he called for a *drastic* revision of our whole civilization. Born out of a personal controversy (his efforts to reconcile the daily contradictions of living), his novel, with its thematic oppositions such as beauty/ugliness, men/society, life and death, pleasure and pain, this novel was the outstanding expression of *change* in the English Modernist literature, setting forth the writer’s awareness of the decay of the 20<sup>th</sup> century culture and, as a response, his personal responsibility for the events. This set him apart from established society not as a misfit but as a judge, holding the social order unfit for mankind. And his work, written on behalf of mankind, is a mark of the change of sensibility in English and European literature that, in that age of troublesome relations, asked for an *interchange of perspectives* with other fields, other than literature such as psychology and sociology in the full accomplishment of his artistry.<sup>32</sup>



The change also included Lawrence's complaint of 1928 about an excess of "social being" in Galsworthy's fiction, to the detriment of the "psychology of the free human individual." Lawrence belonged to the trend nevertheless, a trend of denials and dismissal of older points of interest, and enthusiastically embraced new ones adhering to the exploration of "the dark places of psychology" (such as Woolf explained in her "Modern Fiction" essay, first published in 1919).

For literary historians, as indicated in several contemporary histories of literature,<sup>33</sup> the year 1928 appears to be extremely significant in terms of changes: it was a year of Victorian endings and postmodern beginnings. Thomas Hardy, last of the great Victorian writers, died in January 1928; after seventy years of collective work, the *Oxford English Dictionary*, an unfinished business of Victorian lexicography was published. Andy Warhol and Stanley Kubrick were both born in 1928, which was also the breakthrough year for the advent of a new technology of the visual: the first television transmissions, including the first transmission made across the Atlantic, were demonstrated in 1928, and the first TV sets were manufactured. Cinema witnessed the arrival of the first Walt Disney, Mickey Mouse cartoons.

For the literary developments, the year 1928 is the time of the arrival in Paris of Samuel Beckett, who soon met his fellow James Joyce. Meanwhile in England there emerged a fresh generation of poets and novelists and non-fiction writers (journalists) who had been born in the 20<sup>th</sup> century itself: W. H. Auden and C. Day Lewis, Evelyn Waugh and Christopher Isherwood, George Orwell (E. A. Blair) who began his journalistic career. 1928 is also the year of D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, of Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, of Aldous Huxley's *Point Counter Point*, of T.S. Eliot's essays. And from some of them, significant notes of departure from civilization and appreciation of the past, considered *retro-actively*, and therefore of revolt and resignation, were noted in histories of literature. Such is the title tale of D.H. Lawrence's new collection, published by Mark Secker in 1928 and based on the title story *The Woman Who Rode Away (and Other Stories)*, a fantasy of symbolic suicide, in which an unnamed white woman willingly abandons her "gods" and accepts her fate as a human sacrifice at the hands of a Mexican Indian tribe. From the two books of the year 1928, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was banned and the ban was lifted only in 1963. In 1959, a Penguin paperback edition of the novel was planned, but it was prosecuted in a trial the following year (1960). Penguin's victory was of high significance during the decade that followed and contributed directly to Lawrence's growing influence on the early 1960s—a symptom as well as a source of a new attitude: a writer described in 1960 as the best representative of the rebellion, the discontent and the aspiration of the first half of the century.

Looking back from the early 1960s, Stephen Spender described these authors as "those deliberately setting out to invent a new literature" as a result of finding their age "unprecedented, and outside all the conventions of past literature and art."<sup>34</sup> This determination "to make it new" (in Pound's famous phrase) clearly appeared in the literature of 1928, and also in other contemporary art forms such as painting and music. In Stephen Spender's definition of the terms, the "moderns" and the "contemporaries" are different in their respective attachment or rejection of change. The moderns are, therefore, those who think

that human nature has changed: “. . . or if not human nature, then the relationship of the individual to the environment, forever being transformed by science, which has altered it so completely that there is an effective illusion of change which in fact causes human beings to behave as though they were different.”<sup>35</sup>

The moderns distrust the idea of progress viewing the results of science as a catastrophe to the values of past civilization, whereas “contemporaries” see the changes as a result of the developments of scientific technology and art as a support of the cause of progress.

Much acclaimed today, by historians of literature and critics, for setting forth a new theory (that he pretended would form the basis for a new kind of science) about the time that logical positivism was approaching its heyday, D.H. Lawrence envisaged his “subjective science,”<sup>36</sup> an attempt to define the *world as a field of interaction* that includes both subject and object. To do so, he adopted his idiosyncratic terminology from the “field theory” elaborated by Maxwell theory of electromagnetic fields. However, ignorant of the post-Newtonian physics, he indicated the human psyche to be the site of a field of interaction, but he had only a notion of an integrating field and understood that it must, by its own nature, resist articulation. Though ignorant of much of the factual knowledge about new science, Lawrence *anticipated its spirit* in his attempt to analyze and define “the vile tendencies” of science in the contemporary world. The most important and genuine innovations—a historically significant innovation—in his novel bear the mark of Lawrentian intuition: the belief that reality is a dynamic whole and that we have the means for grasping its nature intuitively and directly. Out of this belief, his paradoxical use of language in the paradoxical imagery and the alternation of tropes in his “new construct,” fundamentally changed the novel into a *centripetal construction of subsequent episodes*, in which “language” is not only the Word, but also the non-verbal gesture or even pantomime. Essentially constructed out of images and, as trope, alternating metaphor with synecdoche so as to render reality out of subsequent images, the Lawrentian novel requires for co-participation of the reader to accomplish interconnection between images and to render the “parts through the whole,” in more or less different manner. Co-participation of the reader, a modernist tactics, traditionally (and from a point thereon, dogmatically) based on narrative strategies, in D.H. Lawrence’s novel, is the foundation of the author’s *questioning authenticity*, as reducible to the simple interrogation *Who/What speaks as part for the whole*. It legitimizes the particular way in which he understood issues of identity and difference, his articulation of what culture means, the consequences of industrialization, modernization and urbanization. Authenticity is related to the way in which Lawrence understood the issues of identity against these influencing processes: of consumerism, of industrialization, of influence and interchange and transaction. But it is also related to the loyalty to one’s self, to its own past, heritage and ethos. It is related to one’s own history, by utilizing and recreating one’s past and the past of one’s people, projecting them with resoluteness towards one’s future. They say that uniqueness is related to the “presence in time and space” of the work of art.<sup>37</sup> The existence of the work of art is ascertained by its history, which—now we know— “begins with the material changes it is exposed to and ends with the problem of ownership”.<sup>38</sup> *Uniqueness* and *ownership*, says Walter Benjamin, are practically impossible to be reproduced, mechanically or otherwise. Words like “original” and “authentic” designate the uniqueness of the work of art

and assign the work of art, its right place in history, because of its own history. *Uniqueness*, in the present research that we have so far pointed in D.H. Lawrence's new literature, is validated by "canonicity"—understood as historical crisis in literature—and defined by the "relationship between literature and value," a relation disclosing the literature's internal mechanisms of *self-adaptation* and *self-adjustment*, in the process of change. And D.H. Lawrence's novel, the living proof of the dynamics of literature and testimony to the history which he has experienced as authentic and unique, not only highlighted his rightful place in the history of English literature but, anticipating the "global," processed a drastic revision of our whole civilization.



## Notes

1. David Damrosch, "World Literature in a Postcanonical, Hypercanonical Age," in *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*, ed. Haun Saussy (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 45.
2. Damrosch, "World Literature," 45.
3. David Damrosch, "World Literature," 45–46. This view is also assumed by Mads Rosendahl Thomsen in *Mapping World Literature: International Canonization and Transnational Literatures* (London: Continuum Publishing House, 2010), 27, 31. He claims that "one may dream of changing things, of promoting counter-canon to hyper-canon, but even the most influential critics have realized that their personal preferences cannot in themselves change the canon, and that diffusion of power is basically a good thing, because it keeps idiosyncrasies out of the system" and that "the process of change is a reflection of a complex web of selections in many contexts." Similarly, "the process of the selection that has taken place over the years, knowing that changes in the canon cannot be *commanded*, but only suggested . . . they representing a sum of choices."
4. Charles Altieri, *Canons and Consequences* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1990), 23.
5. Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon: The Books and Schools of the Ages* (London and New York: Papermak, 1994), 7.
6. Bloom, *Western Canon*, 8.
7. David Damrosch, "World Literature," 50.
8. Harold Bloom, *A Map of Misreading* (Oxford and London: Oxford University Press, 1975), 4.
9. Frank Kermode, "Institutional Control of Interpretation," in *The Art of Telling: Essays on Fiction*, (Baltimore and New York: Harvard University Press, 1985), 54; and also Harold Bloom, *Western Canon*, 5. See also David Fishelov, *Dialogues with/and Great Books: The Dynamics of Canon Formation* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2010/2012), Preface, ix: he broadened the perspective offered by aesthetic considerations in the analysis of canon and canon-formation, as in the bloom-ian defense of "poetic strength" and opposition against what he terms "schools of resentment" with their moral and political agendas. Fishelov talks about "complementarity" in what concerns canon formation. His analysis goes beyond emphasis on traditional aesthetic qualities like beauty and harmony, also referring to the systematic accounts of the "mechanisms of criticism:" journalistic reviewers, essayists and academic critics. He argues that the contributions made by these three distinct types of critics complement each other. He shows (concluding) that "*intertextuality* and *canon formation*, *reception theory* and *close readings* are not competing, but rather complementary perspectives on the artistic text" and that they encour-

- age “the dialogic approach to great books” so as “to shed new light on *external*, cultural factors as well as the relevant *intrinsic* qualities of a text involved in the *dynamics of canon formation*.”
10. Bloom, *Western Canon*, 35.
  11. John Guillory, *The Cultural Capital. The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 7.
  12. Colin McGinn, *Knowledge and Reality: Selected Essays* (Oxford and London: Oxford University Press, 2002 and Michel Foucault, *Hermeneutica subiectului* (Iași: Editura Polirom, 2004).
  13. Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press 1949/2002).
  14. Bloom, *Western Canon*, 15.
  15. Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (Oxford and London : Oxford University Press, 1973/1997).
  16. Bloom, *The Western Canon*, 526.
  17. Anthony Giddens *The Consequences of Modernity* (London: Polity Press, 1991), 175. About the change of subjectivity, see also, Elena Voj in “Inside and Outside Dublin. James Joyce’s Double Vision,” in *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai* 2 (2009): 131–139. Proposing a new type of reading and understanding of Joyce’s *Ulysses* (“being inside and outside the text, its double value and double disposition make it easier for the reader to follow both ways of looking at it, according to either centripetal and centrifugal movement of the reading eye”) (Voj, “Inside,” 137), Elena Voj associated the “mechanics” of the re-contextualizing of Joyce’s modern vision of Dublin with the modernity of “in-betweenness” (“by positioning [the] reader both inside and outside Dublin, both in its social networks and underlying urban mechanisms and outside its geography” (134). In her study about Ioana Em. Petrescu’s “practices of reading,” she further analyzed the reader’s reading places and the “inside” (text)–“outside” (critic/Reader) shift from the (presumed) objective to the subjective, understood as transfer of function/role in spotting “the truth value of an assertion”. See “Reading Places: Ioana Em Petrescu and the Practices of Reading in the 1980’s in Cluj-Napoca,” *Transylvanian Review* 2 (2010): 78.
  18. Harold Bloom, *Western Canon*, 526.
  19. Giddens, *Consequences*, 177.
  20. Guillory, *Cultural Capital*, 24; and also Barbara Herrnstein-Smith, *Contingencies of Value: Alternative Perspectives for Critical Theory* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1988).
  21. Virgil Nemoianu, “The Hospitable Canon: Literary Value and Social value Options,” in *The Hospitable Canon: Essays on Literary Play, Scholarly Choice and Popular Pressures*, eds. Virgil Nemoianu and Robert Royal (Philadelphia and Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publ. Co., 1991), 215–249.
  22. Wolfgang Iser: *The Fictive and the Imaginary: Charting Literary Anthropology* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 256; and also *Prospecting: From Literary Anthropology to Reader-Response Criticism* (Baltimore and New York: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989).
  23. Herrnstein-Smith, *Contingencies*, 34.
  24. Hayden White, *The Fiction of Narrative* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 25.
  25. White, *Fiction*, 25.
  26. White, *The Fiction of Narrative*, 164.
  27. Haun Saussy, “Interview” *The Arch Literary Journal* (2011).
  28. White, *Fiction*, 56.
  29. D. H. Lawrence, *Women in Love* (Harmondsworth, London: Penguin Books, 1971/1998), 391.
  30. D. H. Lawrence, *Collected Essays* (Harmondsworth, London: Penguin Books, 1984), 34–56.

31. Lawrence, *Collected Essays*, 58.
32. Katherine Hayles, *The Cosmic Web: Scientific Field Models and Literary Strategies in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1984); and others.
33. Terry Eagleton, *The English Novel* (London: Routledge, 2005); Randall Stevenson, *The Last of England* (London: Routledge, 2008); and in Sanda Berce, "The Sun-Myth: A Parable of Modern Civilization," in *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai* 1 (1988): 33; quoted in *D.H. Lawrence: A Reference Companion*, eds. Paul Poplawski and John Worthern (London: Greenwood Publishers, 1996).
34. Stephen Spender, *The Struggle of the Modern* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963).
35. Spender, *Struggle*, 45.
36. As in Hayles, *Cosmic Web*, 1984. She interpreted D.H. Lawrence's concern for the place of the individual in "society," "community," as constant care about the relationship between the latter and the former, in what sociology, as science, studies today. Well acclaimed as a post-modern literary critic, Katherine Hayles and her stunningly new perspective was somehow generated by her first degree in chemistry (BS at Rochester Institute of Technology and MA in California Institute of Technology), her working as a physical chemist at Xerox Company and her PhD in English Literature. This book (as many of her theoretical and literature studies) is written under the influence of Ilya Prigogine (1917–2003), himself a physical chemist, the Nobel Prize winner of 1977 for his study on irreversible thermodynamics and for his research of complex systems and irreversibility. His book of 1984, *Order out of Chaos: Man's New Dialogue with Nature* (by Ilya Prigogine and Isabelle Stengers) has (as assumed and acknowledged by Hayles) influenced her in forming her hypotheses and in her demonstrations.
37. Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections* (New York: Harcourt Brace, Random House, 1968/1996), 298.
38. Benjamin, *Illuminations*, 299.

### Abstract

#### Canonicity: A Hypothesis. Anticipating the Global. D. H. Lawrence in the Hue of the Century

An inquiry into the terminology about the process of canonization (canon-canonicity), as it presents itself in the critical-theoretical use, the paper questions two of the theses about canon formation and evaluative judgments considering that what is called canon formation is a problem of access to the "means of literary production and consumption" and that "evaluative judgments" are necessary, but not sufficient for the process of canon formation. It is also an analysis of the subtle *change of sensibility* that occurred in the English novel of the 1920's (in D. H. Lawrence's novel), as a remarkable effect of types of relations (or relationship) between modernity and canonicity—defined and understood as "historical crisis in literature."

### Keywords

canonicity, canon-formation, authenticity, literature as institution, reshuffling, centripetal construction, field of interaction.