Drifting Lawrence on the Deleuzian Plane of Immanence

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Abstract

David Lean’s epic movie Lawrence of Arabia has enchanted generations of audience ever since 1962 for many of its accomplishments, ranging from its memorable cut, the matchstick, to philosophical lines such as “Nothing is written” or “[The desert] is clean here.” When they are crossing the Nefud Desert, God’s anvil, the camel-riding Lawrence, is cautioned by Ali not to be “drifting.” The then “thinking” Lawrence is like an unlocatable nomad on Deleuze’s virtual plane of immanence. His living identity is not something bound in well-defined categories; instead, it inheres as a pure, yet-to-be-actualized singular event engulfed in an indefinite between-time. Lawrence’s pure becomings, irrespective of habit and memory, are being played out in incessant repetitions like a dice throw, only to arrive at a different “broken, dissolved self.”

This paper proposes to read Lawrence of Arabia in the light of Deleuzian concepts of difference and repetition. It examines the relationship between identity or doxa of habitual configurations in the realms of reactive representations on the one hand, and, on the other, self-losing identity that is constantly in the making, constituted by a singular flow of percepts and affects in the active, creative and pre-representational realms. With detailed study of Lean’s cinematic text/ure, this paper will address the problem why Lawrence deviates from his Englishness to becoming Arab.

Keywords: Lawrence, Deleuze, plane of immanence.
德勒茲內在性的層面上身份漂蕩的羅倫斯

蔣裕祺

摘 要

大衛連恩 1962 年氣勢磅礴的史詩電影【阿拉伯的勞倫斯】迄今仍因多項影史成就而讓世代影迷醉心不已，例如他經典的剪接手法、火柴的意象及如「世事無命定」或「沙漠很純淨」等哲學性對白。當羅倫斯一行人穿越納法沙漠(上帝的鐵砧)時，阿里告誡在駱駝上因漫長路途而搖搖欲墜的羅倫斯，小心不要「昏睡」落下。當時辯稱正在「思考」的羅倫斯像是德勒茲內在性擬構平面上無可定置的游牧民族，其身份未囿限於界線嚴明的範疇中，而成為脫逸在時間刻度外純粹，尚未實現的奇異事件。羅倫斯無關習慣、記憶的純粹演生，像在重覆不止地擲骰，只見自我身份如受浪濤拍打般，不斷地破碎消解。

本論文以德勒茲差異、重覆概念來檢視【阿拉伯的勞倫斯】一片中，反動再現境域裡由習慣所形構的身份、常識與主動性、創造性的再現前境域中，那由感知與情感合匯的殊異流動所不斷形塑而消解的自我之間的關係，並深入探討大衛連恩的電影文本(質構)，試圖說明羅倫斯何以會偏離其英國性，脫靶飛向阿拉伯世界。

關鍵詞：羅倫斯、德勒茲、內在性的層次。
Deleuzian (& Guattarian) Nomadic Politics of Desire1,2

Gilles Deleuze’s works are expressive of the idea of an alternative being—separating of constitutive parts of a unity to make a new coming-together possible. Deleuze, in linking literature to life, proposes relating the critical to the clinical. As far as the symptomatological method is concerned, he thinks authors/artists are to a great extent similar to doctors/clinicians in that both can be seen as profound symptomatologists whose labeling process is undertaken either “by dissociating symptoms that were previously grouped together,” or “by juxtaposing them with others that were previously dissociated.”3 However, we just quit playing philosophical Lego when our adult minds fit us conveniently into comfort zone of “truth.” Besides, we are afraid that our “thinking otherwise” might be accused of being mad or nonsense in the courtroom of reason. The Western thought since Plato, on the ground of identity, representation and recognition, tends to suppress difference to form an ultimate foundation from on high. In the twentieth century, two movements of phenomenology and structuralism in traditional ontology continue to look for knowledge on that unshakable foundation.4 However, neither the pure experience in phenomenology nor systematic structures (structuralism) can convince Deleuze or other poststructuralists that the normative or standard model of experience or language can secure the foundation for knowing the world. Instead, Deleuze uses difference and repetition as the questioning power of life to undermine Plato’s towering foundation. In his opinion, human life should not be organized into a closed system where the opening, excess and instability have already cracked upon its pretense of an identical being. Since biopower has its tendency to evolve, mutate and become, it is a philosopher’s task to invent, create and experiment on new concepts in order to question or problematize the pre-existing single voice of universal reason, and unfetter life’s biopower. After all, “[t]he task of life,” according to Deleuze, “is to make all these repetitions coexist in a space in which difference is distributed” (“Preface” xix). To undertake this task, Deleuze first starts his re-reading of the philosophical tradition

1 The first draft of this essay, bearing the same title, was presented at The First International Deleuze Studies Conference (11-13 August 2008) in Cardiff, Wales, UK. I am gracious for the invaluable suggestions offered by Deleuzian scholars gathered on the panel. Also, I am deeply indebted to the two anonymous reviewers of my essay for their precious comments.

2 Quotations, except otherwise cited, are the lines from screenplay. For their source, please refer to http://www.angelfire.com/movies/closedcaptioned/lawrence_of_arabia.txt


(e.g. works on Bergson, Spinoza, Nietzsche, etc), then writes on his own (e.g. *DR, LS*, etc), and then co-authors with Guattari (e.g. *AO, ATP*, etc). As Paul Patton suggests, Deleuze’s career, by and large, can be divided into two phases: one side facing earlier texts of his re-reading of the philosophical tradition, the other facing his subsequent work, alone and with Guattari (xi).

In his thinking-the-multiple phase, *Difference and Repetition*, according to Patton, is the first book Deleuze gives his voice of independent thinking; therefore, it has a pivotal place in his oeuvre (xi). This book is a critique of Platonism, which determines difference by defining it in terms of identity or representation.

> Difference appears only as a reflexive concept. . . . As a concept of reflection, difference testifies to its full submission to all the requirements of representation, which becomes thereby ‘organic representation’. In the concept of reflection, mediating and mediated difference is in effect full subject to the identity of the concept, the opposition of predicates, the analogy of judgement and the resemblance of perception. (*DR* 34)

However, for Deleuze, dealing with life’s problem with Platonic organic difference suffocates biopower, dictates its limits, and minimizes what life can do. Instead, he proposes the orgiastic representation, in which Dionysus dances so frenziedly with ecstasy of joy that even the master musician, Apollo, when playing on his golden lyre, can not quite keep to such orgiastic, random beats. If life is livable, thinkable, it does not count on organic representation. Thus, in order to maximize what life can do, the four pillars—identity, opposition, analogy, and resemblance—supporting Plato’s philosophy of identity and representation should be demolished. For Deleuze, “[t]he greatest effort of philosophy was perhaps directed at rendering representation infinite (orgiastic). . . . allowing it to capture the power of giddiness, intoxication and cruelty, and even of death. In short, it is a question of causing a little of Dionysus’s blood to flow in the organic veins of Apollo” (*DR* 262).

Life pulses through us by eternal return of difference. If there is something that does not change through time, it is always the orgiastic power of difference and repetition: only difference returns; it returns eternally.

In his doing-the-multiple phase, Deleuze, a Parisian professor of philosophy, along with Guattari, a psychotherapist and political activist, wants to introduce us to a novel art of

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5 The following abbreviations will be used in giving references to works of Deleuze (& Guattari): *DR, Difference and Repetition; LS, Logic of Sense; AO, Anti-Oedipus; ATP, A Thousand Plateaus.*
living, a non-fascist everyday life. They want to overthrow all the old categories of the negative—law, reason, speech, truth, totality, universality, the Oedipus Complex, etc—and prefer a positive, productive, multiple and nomadic politics of desire. They break allegiance with the majority of philosophers who subordinate difference into identity, put it into the domain of a conceptual difference where the representation of difference is sedentary, not mobile. They want to break the constraints of Freudian structure of lack, ego, and superego and make desire flow again. As Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri suggest, “Deleuze and Guattari present us with a properly poststructuralist understanding of biopower. . . . Their work demystifies structuralism and . . . focus our attention clearly on the ontological substance of social production. Machines produce” (28). There is no longer any fixity of the epistemological frame as an ineluctable point of reference for a conscious self since the constant functioning of desiring-machines and social machines push continuous movements and flows through us to the extent that we cannot recognize who we are. They further argue that, the reason political theory has something to do with ontology is that “politics cannot be constructed from the outside” and “[p]olitics . . . is a field of pure immanence” (354). Their theory of ever-extending global relations of power woven on Empire’s ontological fabric strikes a similarity with Kai Eriksson’s discussion of the ontology of networks. Eriksson thinks that “[t]he network perspective becoming embedded in our world relation is due not to a superior theory or rational planning, but rather to a complex historical process in which nothing is governable in principle” (318). At an age of indistinct boundary lines, structure becomes subservient to network which “integrates without totalizing” and “enables rather than presents meanings” (320) because “rhizome or a multiplicity never allows for a unity” (316).

For individuals, ego-loss is the ensuing result if we determine not to desire our own fascism any more. Then, forgetting oneself is the first step in Deleuze and Guattari’s collective action of non-fascist life. To shake off the deadly neurotic and Oedipal triangulation (daddy-mommy-me), and to free the multiplicity of desire, Seem, in his Introduction to Anti-Oedipus, suggests:

Once we forget about our egos a non-neurotic form of politics becomes possible, where singularity and collectivity are no longer at odds with each other, and where collective expressions of desire are possible. Such a politics does not seek to regiment individuals according to a totalitarian system of norms, but to de-normalize and de-individualize through a
multiplicity of new, collective arrangements against power. (xxi)

For T. E. Lawrence, he has no identical self—neither subject nor object because he is in the middle of making, becoming or deterritorializing. He leads a singular, virtual and impersonal life on a plane of pure immanence because his life is a vague and indefinite one. Lawrence follows the line of flight of becoming-revolutionary—from becoming-woman, all the way down to becoming-child, becoming-animal, becoming-plant, or even becoming-molecular. In a process of differentiation, division or bifurcation, Elizabeth Grosz argues that Bergson’s “[d]ifference is not the union of the two sexes, the overcoming of racial and other differences through the creation or production of a universal term by which they can be equalized or neutralized, but the generation of ever-more variation or differentiation” (7). Therefore, we cannot judge Lawrence’s identity from the perspective of binary oppositions. He is not among humans because that way he will be oedipalized in becoming-molar/man. Instead, he is among rats with anoedipal vitalism in his becoming-molecular (ATP 233). Instead of being punctuated, Lawrence, Mov[es] along this transversal line, which is really a line of deterritorialization. . . no longer has a point of origin, since it is always and already in the middle of the line; and on longer has horizontal and vertical coordinates, since it creates its own coordinates; and no longer forms a localizable connection from one point to another, since it is in “nonpulsed time” . . . that has abandoned points, coordinates, and measure, like a drunken boat that melds with the line or draws a plane of consistency. (ATP 296)

In this way, Lawrence can have n sexes and we can get to see n Lawrences since he is always on the way to the next block of proximity.

In the following sections, I will argue the challenges from diplomatic and Turkish viewpoints for David Lean’s depiction of the heroic true-life odyssey of the famed British officer’s journey to the Middle East, and also his atypical orientalism in his Lawrence of Arabia, followed by my discussion of ontology of Lawrence’s identity and difference.

History Revisited?

Frank W. Brecher personally thinks David Lean’s celebrated release a good film with bad history, and he remains doubtful that if “a work of art” like Lawrence of Arabia can “legitimately claim . . . that it is ‘based on actual events’” (92). As a senior counselor
specialized in Middle East diplomatic history, Brecher puts into question many historical errors in the picture—for example, the secret 1916 agreement between the British and the French, the sole political loyalty of the tribally divided Arabs to Hussein and his warrior son, Prince Feisal—one major Arab hero of the war, and the fate of the film’s protagonist that he is sent packing from Damascus back to England. For Brecher, these deviations from “actual events” are neither “inadvertent errors in reading history,” nor “a conscious twisting of the facts for dramatic convenience”; instead, they are “clearly designed to milk every prejudice the audience has that our governments can be most treacherous when it comes to manipulating the masses and the few honorable, idealistic activists amongst us” (94). Hence, he thinks an artist like David Lean can really impose a restraint upon himself when he claims to base his work on actual events.

However, I would like to use Deleuze and Guattari’s lexicon to argue that Brecher’s History is the Memory of macropolitics, following the law of arborescence where the faciality trait of a male, adult, white, rational European is the central point or third eye of reference for other minor terms (ATP 292). It “operates by the determination of degrees of deviance in relation to the White-Man face, which endeavors to integrate nonconforming traits into increasingly eccentric and backward waves” (ATP 178). If history is governed by a fixed structure, then we submit the line to the point. Which one of them, Brecher or Lean, can claim his narration is the correct version of history of the Arab Revolt, or can claim that he has revisited the history? He who claims his version a true history is no doubt the offspring of Plato, whose dualist ontology (Ideas versus Copies) has incurred many criticisms. If something is repeated to be the same, modeling on the Idea, Form or Truth, then this logic implies a hierarchy in which “low” Copies relate to “high” Ideas by resemblance. The degradation or graded descent distinguishes falsity from truth from on high. However, Deleuze, in his “reversal of Platonism,” asserts such a naval cord does not exist. He turns what Platonism deems as “a copy of a copy” into elevated simulacra—images which bear no resemblance to the Ideas. A is not different from B by degree. It can not be defined as “not B,” either. In Deleuze’s ontology, being has difference in itself, and life has its power to differ. Hence, in terms of history, Deleuze and Guattari are looking for a line-block of becoming of history which is neither subject to mnemonic, arborescent and majoritarian memories—a relation between distant points, nor subordinate to phantasies—a conjunction or collocation of contiguous points (ATP 293). A line-block of becoming has no point of origin, has neither beginning nor end; it is the momentum in fast
motion or absolute speed of movement passing in-between/middle. The line of flight is so fast that “it constitutes a zone of proximity and indiscernibility, a no-man’s-land, a nonlocalizable relation sweeping up the two distant or contiguous points” (ATP 293). The understanding of the idea of passage can be further enhanced by opposing line-system (or block-system) of becoming to point-system of memory, opposing rhizome to arborescence, and by opposing becoming to memory.

From this point of view, one may contrast a childhood block, or a becoming-child, with the childhood memory: “a” molecular child is produced . . . “a” child coexists with us, in a zone of proximity or a block of becoming, on a line of deterritorialization that carries us both off—as opposed to the child we once were, whom we remember or phantasize, the molar child whose future is the adult. (ATP 294)

Brecher gave Lean some good advice, but he, from his arborescent vantage point, did not take it for himself. Besides the challenge from Brecher, Lean’s account of “actual events” also arouses some patriotic protests from the Turks. His cinematic language is like double-edged sword with one blade sharper and the other much blunter.

A (Non-)orientalist Account of Events

The point of view upon the modern-day heroic Odysseus, T.E. Lawrence (Peter O’Toole) in the screenplay worked out together by Sam Spiegel, David Lean, and Robert Bolt, is provocative to the Turks and incurs a Turkish fist. Laurence Raw compares the drastically different Anglo-American and Turkish cinematic representations of these historical events in Lawrence of Arabia and İngiliz Kemal in his much acclaimed article.

As Raw suggests, “the orientalism of Lean’s film has been . . . focusing on how the director’s representation of Arab culture seeks to challenge familiar stereotypes of the ‘sophisticated’ West compared with the ‘uncivilized’ East,” but “there has been scant critical attention paid to the portrayal of the Ottomans in the film, who are represented as inefficient, ruthless, or perverted” (252). It can be observed from Raw’s argument that two contrasts are operating in Lean’s cinematic representation. At the first level, the “sophisticated” West (e.g. Lawrence) and “uncivilized” East (e.g. Arabs) are contrasted on a scale where a manifest reversal is taking place—the latter becoming more civilized while the former becoming less sophisticated. At the second level, Lean’s orientalism pits Ottoman brutality against Arab humanity, even though Ottomans and Arabs are initially both on the side of “uncivilized”
East. In Lean’s representation, while the “uncivilized” Arabs are being elevated higher, the “uncivilized” Turks, on the contrary, are becoming even more uncivilized.

It is significant throughout the picture that Lawrence has gone more “native” and savage and meanwhile Arabians have gone more civilized. In the very beginning, Murray calls the Arabs “sheep-stealers” and any time spent on the Bedouin army is time wasted because they are “a side-show of a side-show.” This stereotype is “proved” when Lawrence’s Arab guide is savagely shot dead by Ali because he illegally drinks at the Harif well. Lawrence angrily says, “So long as the Arabs fight tribe against tribe, so long will they be a little people; a silly people; greedy, barbarous, and cruel, as you are.” However, later when questioned by Bedouin about the rumor of his motive in the Arab Revolt, Lawrence spits to show disagreement, only to incur Bedouin’s sarcastic response “[t]his is not an agreement.” Also, Lawrence’s change after his ordeal at the hands of the Ottomans in Daraa is even more obvious. As Raw puts it, “Once Lawrence has been captured at Daraa, he is put into a line-up inspected by the Turkish Bey. . . . There follows a close-up of the Bey’s shiny leather boots—a clear allusion into his sado-masochistic desires—before he rips open Lawrence’s shirt” (254).

BEY. You have had a lot of experience. It’s an interesting face. I’m surrounded by cattle. He wouldn’t know an interesting face from a sow’s belly. I have been in Daraa now for three and a half years. If they’d posted me to the dark side of the moon, I could not be more isolated.

The orientalist identification of the Ottomans as predominantly homosexual can be seen when Bey kneads Lawrence’s fair skin in a close-up of the former’s moist lips contrasted with another close-up of the latter’s frightened eyes, shortly to be followed by another pair of reaction shots between the soldiers’ lascivious grinning, and Lawrence’s agonized look (Raw 254). The Turkish Bey and troops seem to have gained some sexual excitement from the sado-masochistic punishment, but the question is “To what extent?” Could it be pederasty? Lean does not show us directly, but only cuts to a medium shot of Ali waiting worriedly in the darkness outside. When the lights are on again late in the night, the wretched Lawrence is taken out to be dumped in the muddy water puddle—quite an irony to his self-proclaimed ability like “walking on the water” or “I’m invisible.” Concerning this disillusionment, Alexander Lyon Macfie argues:

In the process, strangely, Lawrence is transmogrified into a messianic
figure, a hero and even a god, a god who spends his own “forty days” in the wilderness. It is as a god-figure that Lawrence performs miracles (the capture of Akaba), writes the future and raises the dead [Gasim] . . . . But in the end, unlike the true god, Lawrence cannot withstand the crucifixion which is apparently all too often the lot of gods, and he is brought brutally down to earth in the Daraa incident, as just an ordinary human being after all, albeit one capable of extreme courage, violence and cruelty. (85-86)

This turning point makes Lawrence retreat into an ordinary human being and goes back to ask Allenby for an ordinary job.

ALLENBY. Look, Lawrence. I’m making my big push on Damascus . . . and you are . . . an important part of the big push.

LAWRENCE. I don’t want to be part of your big push!

Lawrence’s hysterical rejection shows his homophobic mania again, only this time at a linguistic level. Both the Turks and the British in Lean’s picture feminize Lawrence in different ways. When Bentley notices the change in Lawrence, he asks Ali for the cause.

BENTLEY. What did that Turkish general do to him in Daraa?

ALI. What did the English general do to him in Jerusalem?

However, Lean is much nicer in dealing with Ali’s great affections for Lawrence.

AUDAR. You love him.

ALI. I fear him.

AUDAR. Then, why do you weep?


Where the Arabs’ behavior in the picture might still seem cruel and unreasonable to western moviegoers—e.g looting, fierce exchange of words between tribal leaders or blood feuds, “Lean seeks to justify it in terms of local traditions of male honor and leadership” (Raw 255). According to Macfie, the Arabs are “made to appear sober, rational and judicious, and Lawrence, portrayed as a sado-masochist, . . . appears increasingly irrational, hysterical and even psychopathic” and “the traditional representation of the European ‘self’ as rational, humane and superior, and the oriental ‘other’ as irrational, aberrant and inferior, is reversed” (85). However, Lawrence is not victimized mercilessly by Lean’s cinematic language as the most damned in this world. Lean paves the way for Lawrence’s descent from heroic supporter of Arab liberation into a cynical, ruthless killer in the second half of the picture, and then, to save him from the doom, Lean respectively prepares implicit cause (Daraa.
incident) and explicit reason (Ottoman atrocities)—both have to do with “uncivilized” Turks—to justify Lawrence’s bloodbath of the Turkish column outside the village of Tafas. Naturally, Lawrence’s righteous indignation is aroused by the sight of what the Ottomans have done to the villagers. In the long run, Lean applies homosexual and atrocious orientalism specifically to the Turks, which incurs the opposite cinematic representation from Lütfi Ö. Akad’s Turkish point of view. As Raw suggests,

[The director] simply reverses this opposition by foregrounding the Turkish struggle against British colonizers (particularly Lawrence), while reducing the Arabs to marginal figures in the background. . . . [T]he director sought both to celebrate the achievements of the Turkish nation in general and in particular the achievements of an adventurer . . . “Ingiliz Kemal”. . . . a Turkish version of James Bond. (253)

When the Anglo-American cinematic representation invents a hero figure like Lawrence, the Turks creates “Ingiliz Kemal” to counterbalance Lawrence by portraying him as “a black-haired, smooth-talking villain with an unshakeable conviction . . . that he remains ‘the uncrowned emperor of Anatolia and the best spy of the Empire!’” (Raw 256). Moreover, “[u]nlike Lawrence of Arabia, where Lean suggests that Lawrence’s cruelty only emerges as a spontaneous reaction to the Tafas massacre, Akad characterizes him as a cold, calculating sadist who will stop at nothing in his quest to dominate the Turks and at the same time line his own pocket” (Raw 257). The Turkish cinematic representation of Lawrence returns Lean’s blow back upon Lean himself with patriotic Turkish fist by orientalizing and demonizing Lawrence.

Macfie mentions Edward Said’s analysis of Lawrence’s orientalism gives rise to two conflicting problems: “that the Seven Pillars of Wisdom is almost entirely concerned with change, and that the orientalist sections are mostly confined to the introductory chapters” (79). That is, Said’s “system of knowledge of the Orient” cannot serve as “an accepted grid for filtering the Orient into Western consciousness” (Macfie 81). Said’s orientalist paradigm is not so much about change than stagnation. However, to solve these problems, Said comes up with “new dialectic” to include the process of change (instable, diachronic narrative) in his knowledge of the Orient (static, synchronic vision): “History and the narrative by which history is represented argue that vision is insufficient, that the ‘Orient’ as an unconditional ontological category does an injustice to the potential of reality for change” (qtd. in Macfie 80). While Said thinks the Apollonian being of vision comprehensively defeats narrative,
Macfie thinks the Dionysian becoming of narrative gains the upper hand—“[f]or in allowing the possibility of a narrative account of developments in the Middle East in the period of the Arab Revolt is Said not tacitly admitting the possibility of a non-orientalist account of events in the Orient?” (80).

**Ontology of Lawrence’s Identity/Difference**

When Lawrence and Doud reach the bank of Suez Canal, the motorcyclist asks the protagonist twice, “Who are you?” It is not an easy question. In Deleuze’s *Difference and Repetition*, to repeat is not to repeat the same, but to “carry the first time to the ‘nth’ power” (1). Repetition is against the law, is transgression, passage. It is not about what we are, but what we become. James Williams argues two principles that dominate Deleuze’s *Difference and Repetition*: “connect with everything” and “forget everything” (5). He thinks Deleuze’s philosophy encourages us to “taste everything” and then “leave behind all possessions” (5). It is this double rhythm with which we can live best with the change instead of holding on to everything. It is the interchange of flow and break-flow in the connecting and disconnecting of machines that makes productive desiring-machines and unproductive body without organs alternate. First is the productive synthesis “and . . . and . . . then . . .,” and then “[e]verything stops dead for a moment, everything freezes in place—and the whole process will begin all over again” (*AO* 7). Through the double rhythm, life moves on with variations. Everyday, one is being added upon something new like Henri Michaux’s schizophrenic table—“a table of additions” (*AO* 6). The carpentering going about the table is not intended for any specific use you can expect of a table. The table of no use is an individual rather than a self-conscious “I” where thoughts may take place. Rather, as Williams puts it, “[i]ndividuals must connect to the changes that things may undergo. We must connect to the increases and decreases that flow through us, through our thoughts and sensations, when we are in the presence of things” (6). To escape the hold of a conscious self, identities, one needs to throw Nietzsche’s dice, and Nietzsche’s dice throw is entirely about his theory of force in the formation of will to power. Kai Eriksson, in his “On the Ontology of Networks,” argues that:

This is basically the Nietzschean world with competing and struggling forces that continuously transform and reinterpret each other in an incessant process from which there is no escape to any “true” world with permanent and—unchangeable meanings. A whole set of heterogeneous forces are
immanently involved in creating, re-interpreting and cancelling out things
in a continuous movement, and some forces are stronger than others. (314)
In Nietzsche’s inhuman and immanent vision of life, all life is an expression of the
constitutive conflict between forces—a common striving for power, which as a result, can
lead to the quantitative difference between dominant/active forces with affirmative quality
and dominated force/reactive forces with negative quality. It is also the difference between
noble or base, creative or slavish. If all life exists as a game of chance, it is a game played
by gods with dice and the earth as their table. Dorothea Olkowski points out,

[C]hance is played out on two tables: on the earth and in the heavens, yet
there is only a single dice throw at a time. Each single dice throw is played
out on the earth—as the affirmation of becoming—and also in the
heavens—as the affirmation of the being of becoming. Each dice throw
affirms chance, but the numbers on the die affirm the necessity of chance as
the being of becoming. The necessity of chance is precisely what
constitutes its innocence . . . it releases all things from having a purpose. In
this way, the necessity of chance in the dice throw is an affirmation, and
force can only be understood as an affirmative and thoroughly
nondialectical element. (126-27)
Being nonteleological, nondialectical is making one a Body without Organs, or an
aforementioned schizophrenic table in the passage of time—“always already passed” and
“eternally yet to come,” sidestepping the present (LS 165). Body without Organs is the
ontological being of becoming through the affirmation of necessity of chance. It is “an
event of the Aion where they have an eternal truth” (LS 64)—an eternal truth with volitional
intuition (the will that the event creates) in opposition to its temporal actualization with
empirical intuition. According to Deleuze, first there are the events-singularities—the
neutral, terrible battles of impassibility of which the will of anonymity, will of indifference
and beyond-polar-oppositions are characteristic. “[T]he battle hovers over its own field,
being neutral in relation to all of its temporal actualizations, neutral and impassive in
relation to the victor and the vanquished, the coward and the brave. . . . Never present but
always yet to come and already passed” (LS 100). It is Nietzsche’s Overman or Dionysian
sense-producing machine or “will to power” that explores “a world of impersonal,
pre-individual” and “nomadic singularities which are no longer imprisoned within the fixed
individuality of the infinite Being (the notorious immutability of God)”—divine
individuation of Apollo, “nor inside the sedentary boundaries of the finite subject (the notorious limits of knowledge)—human character of Socrates (LS 107). Then, “it leaps from one singularity to another, casting always the dice belonging to the same cast, always fragmented and formed again in each throw. It is a Dionysian sense-producing machine, in which nonsense and sense are . . . co-present to one another within a new discours” (LS 107).

In conclusion, Lawrence’s identity does not fall into the logic of binary oppositions: either English or Arabian. In addition to English or Arabian Lawrence, we can get to see a prophet Lawrence, British Officer Lawrence, narcissistic Lawrence when in his new Arab gown, agonized Lawrence when captured in Daraa, blood thirsty Lawrence when shouting “No prisoners! No prisoners!” warrior Lawrence in the Arab Revolt, clean desert-loving Lawrence, shrewd Lawrence who talks the Howitat into helping fifty men of the Harif, messiah Lawrence who saves Gasim from God’ Anvil and believes nothing is written, afflicted Lawrence who stops the blood feud by executing Gasim he saved from the desert, and many others. There are a series of scenes I find particularly interesting in Lean’s picture. When Lawrence again gives his “men” victory after the explosion of the train, a Turkish soldier shoots him at the arm. After the assassinator fails to claim Lawrence’s life, his is taken by Audar with a sword. The slightly-wounded Lawrence says, “[t]hey can only kill me with a golden bullet.” Then, he climbs to the top of the train to receive the cheers from his “men.” The shot is cut to the shadow cast on the ground moving forward with Arabians cheerfully follow. They are following Lawrence’s shadow. Then in the talk between Allenby and Feisal, they discuss whether illusory shadow can be powerful.

**FEISAL.** The Arab council took power in my name.

**ALLENBY.** They have no power, sir. It’s illusory.”

**FEISAL.** Illusions can be very powerful. . . . The world is delighted at the picture of Damascus liberated by the Arab army.

As Macfie argues, Lawrence in the picture is not identified “as the symbolic embodiment of the European ‘self’ . . . but as a psychologically empty vessel, a ‘desert’” (84). This empty vessel of Lawrence is the illusory shadow—the locus of incorporeal events where “Aion stretches out in a straight line, limitless in either direction. Always already passed and eternally yet to come, Aion is the eternal truth of time: *pure empty form of time*, which has freed itself of its present corporeal content and has thereby unwound its own circle, stretching itself out in a straight line” (LS 165). As Grosz puts it, “[m]ore a ‘shadow,’ a
‘swirling of dust’ . . . intuition is an emergent and imprecise movement of simplicity that erupts by negating the old, resisting the temptations of intellect to understand the new in terms of the language and concepts of the old” (8). Intuition, for Bergson, is the affirmative bio-power of becoming. This powerful illusion, shadow, or whirlwind has been carrying Lawrence from one singularity to another, constituting the acceleration and expansion of differences—faster at one time, and slower at another. There are no localizable coordinates for Lawrence’s lines of flight. Grosz notes that, “[d]ifference is an ontological . . . not reducible to things insofar as it is the process that produces things and the reservoir from which they derive” (6). It is about a process of Lawrence’s becoming rather than a being of his identity. According to Deleuze, a successful transit from Apollonian stasis to Dionysian fluid hinges on the individual in intensity who “finds its psychic image neither in the organization of the self nor in the determination of species of the I, but rather in the fractured I and the dissolved self” (DR 259). When people catch a glance of Lawrence, don’t ask “who is Lawrence?” because the moment when one delivers the question, he is already not there.

Works Cited


