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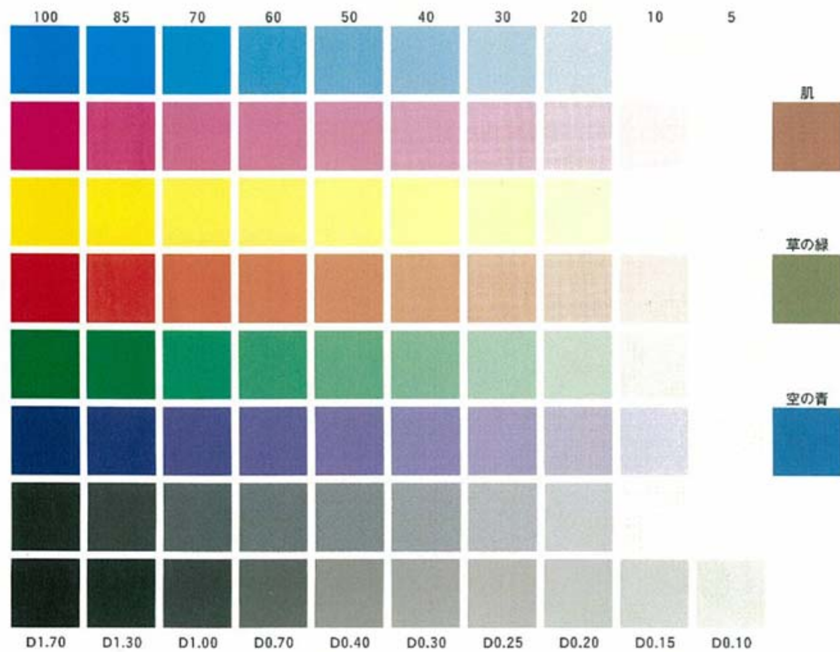

On the Fictionalized Image of D.H. Lawrence in Witter Bynner's *Journey with Genius* —Is Lawrence a Literary Villain?—

Nobumichi Kawada

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Introduction

D. H. Lawrence has been the subject of numerous biographies and memoirs since his lifetime. Lawrence's letters and notes have been accessible to researchers and other writers, which has made it possible for them to thoroughly learn about the author's private life. Lawrence has probably been an exciting and newsworthy subject to many biographers and writers due to his relationship with Jessie Chambers and Helen Corke, the scandalous elopement with Frieda, the prohibition of the publication of *The Rainbow* (1915), and the trials over *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928) . Such matters for gossip and the author's fiery temper itself have often turned him into the subjects in many biographies and memoirs. In addition, the new discoveries about the author's life in recent years have given the writers a certain need and incentive to create biographies in a new light.[1] Moreover, Lawrence has been portrayed in numerous works of literature including Mark Rampion in Aldous Huxley's *Point Counter Point* (1928) and the main character in Tennessee Williams' play: *I Rise in Flame, Cried Phoenix* (1951). What, then, do these repeated portraits of a gifted writer signify? Why do many writers feel the need to recreate and reconstruct the "genius" according to their own insight?

In fact, the number of biographies and memoirs of Lawrence, without mentioning their length and details, exceeds seventy[2]. The readers, consequently, must wonder why such numerous biographies need to exist at all. To answer this question, we must first consider the difference between fictions and facts included in biographies: considering the number of his biographies, Lawrence must have provided a source of creativity and inspiration to many biographers/writers. The readers would often expect biographies

to be the record of a celebrated/famed individual, but if so, they do not really need various interpretations of one individual. In truth, however, as Paul Murray Kendall insists, a biography is "an art, however lowly" since "the biographer is himself interfused into what he has made, and, like the novelist and the painter, shapes his material in order to create effects" (xvi). The biographers, as creative artists themselves, need to be attracted to be their subjects more than anything else. The biographers, then, attempt to create their own versions of the individuals according to their own creative insight. Lawrence was an ideal subject matter which inspired the biographers' artistic imagination because of his status as a literary genius.

Kendall, nevertheless, also points out the difficulties and problems for biographers as creative artists. He argues that while readers "enjoy liking art with the artist," they do not really wish to recognize the presence of a biographer in the biography of a famed individual, and more significantly, "being aware of the biographer" even mars the readers' "illusion of sharing in a life." Thus the biographer often needs to possess "a talent for invisibility" (13). There exists a paradox or difficulty for biographers. If a biography is a work of "art," then the biographers need to make their own messages as "visible" as creative "artists." Yet in order to make the readers focus on the biographers' subject matter—the life story of a great individual—biographers need to conceal their presence as best as they can. In this inconsistency and paradox lies the hardest creative labor of biographers.

In addition, the relation between facts and fictions is also quite intricate in the making of a biography. The readers of a biography would often respect the factuality or authenticity of its content, that is, whether the incidents actually occurred or not in

the individual's life. Nevertheless, as Ira Bruce Nadel argues, the "facts" in one's life are not in any way "conclusions," but they are "manipulated, altered or misused" by the biographers "to sustain an interpretation or characterization" (4). Biographers have their own writing styles and images of the subject matters, so it is often more valuable for them to construe their main characters according to their viewpoint than to tell about their lives accurately according to the facts. Yet it is also true that biographies are hardly seen as fictions because of the assumption that they are based on facts. Nadel thus insists on the readers' need to recognize the relation between narratives and facts in biographies:

> Readers of biographies consistently ignore, however, what is written in favour of what is written about, treating the narrative transparently. Such a response values the content more than the form, but realizing that the narrative of a biography frames the subject and affects our vision provides us with a greater awareness of the complexity and richness of biographical form. (3)

As Nadel argues, the importance of "form" in a biography reveals its "fictional" and "artistic" nature, and thus it should be categorized as fiction. Here lies the reason why numerous patterns of biographies can exist for a certain individual. The more complex and intense one's life is, the more interpretations can be possible. As Virginia Woolf precisely defines the biographers' task, they not only give us "another fact to add to our collection," but also "the creative fact, the fertile fact: the fact that suggests and engenders" (122-23). In summary, even though biographies have been placed in the secondary position to poetry, drama and

novels, they should be considered as significant creative works, and the biographers should be seen as artists as well as poets, playwrights and novelists.

Witter Bynner's *Journey with Genius: Recollections and Reflections Concerning the D. H. Lawrences* (1951) seems an appropriate text to consider this difficulty in biographical works because of Bynner's status both as a poet and a biographer. Bynner, a writer and an artist himself, describes his personal relationship with Lawrence, and analyzes Lawrence's works in great detail, and thus he is far from "invisible" as the narrator of his memoir. It would be more appropriate to call Bynner's work a "memoir" than a biography considering the writer's rather "private" and subjective approach to his subject matter—Lawrence the writer.

Bynner was an American poet who first met the Lawrences in 1922 in Santa Fe and traveled in Mexico with them for four months in 1923.[3] This work was published in 1951, twenty years after Lawrence's death, when Bynner was seventy years old. The 1950s were prolific years for Lawrence biographies: Harry T. Moore published *The Priest of Love: A Life of D. H. Lawrence* in 1954, in which he created the character of Lawrence as the "prophet." This monumental work cultivated a new way for the biographical study of Lawrence in later years. F. R. Leavis' *D. H. Lawrence: Novelist* (1955) praises Lawrence as one of the greatest successor of the traditional English literature. This study can be categorized as the episteme for the research of Lawrence's works.

In contrast to these biographies which basically praise Lawrence's achievement as a literary "genius," Bynner's work seems to present a rather negative portrait of the writer. Moore actually condemns Bynner's book as "ill-timed" because it "turned the clock back to the period" when Lawrence's works did not receive

rightful evaluation, and then he concludes that it was vicious of Bynner to "revive" the "insults" in the 1950s, when "the last malicious memoir of Lawrence" (Mabel Luhan's *Lorenzo in Taos* in 1932) was already published, and his work "was at last being read for its own sake" (453). Actually, compared to Moore's or Leavis' works, this memoir has gathered much less attention among the scholars and researchers on Lawrence. This lack of attention indeed originates from Moore's critical view of this work. Moore, who calls Bynner a "Lawrence hater," harshly criticizes his memoir as not "merely an attack on Lawrence" but also as "a series of self-glorifications" (453) . Furthermore, Moore compares Bynner's *Journey with Genius* with John Middleton Murry's *Son of Woman* (1931), and points out Bynner's malicious attempt to degrade the "genius" while Murry at least shows some respect for the author's gift:

> In 1931, Murry's *Son of Woman*, which Aldous Huxley called "a curious essay in destructive hagiography," had helped to begin the long damaging of Lawrence; but at least Murry did Lawrence the honour of taking him seriously; one must admit this, whatever disagreement one may have with Murry's ideas. And this first book of Murry's on Lawrence (reprinted with a new introduction in 1954) was for the most part a form of literary criticism; the disciples' memoirs which followed hardly pretended to be that. Lawrence's biographers might paint in his faults, but to include nothing else, as the Luhans and Bynners [sic] did, is to present a distorted picture and reduce Lawrence to a pigmy. Murry did not do that: however wrong he [Murry] may have been about

> Lawrence as man or author, Murry at least saw him as a figure on the grand scale. (Moore 645-46)

As Moore clarifies here, the publication of Murry's biography, published in 1931, marked the beginning of the criticisms of Lawrence. Moore, however, partly defends Murry in terms of his "serious" attitude toward Lawrence the author and fellow writer. On the other hand, he totally devalues Bynner and Mabel Luhan as biographers because of their lack of "grace." Yet Moore does not really clarify how and where Bynner presents Lawrence's "distorted picture." Nor does he clearly explain in what way Bynner attacks him.[4] Above anything else, Moore seems to ignore the fact that Bynner intended this memoir to be a personal record of their relation as fellow writers and close friends. Moore sees Bynner's first impression of Lawrence, "a bad baby masquerading as a good Mephistopheles" (Bynner 2), as a sign of his "venom," and concludes that Bynner "the third-rate poet" has intentionally degraded the "first-rate author" Lawrence (Moore 453-54). Yet, here, Moore does not really distinguish between Bynner's views of Lawrence as a personal acquaintance and a fellow writer. Bynner's portrait of Lawrence at their first meeting is mostly of his outward impression, which had attracted many women including Catherine Carswell, not of his capacity as a writer. Because Bynner had already read Carswell's biography of Lawrence by this time, he expected to see the "beauty" and attractiveness of Lawrence in her description[5], yet he found the genius rather unfriendly and distant compared to Frieda's "easy to take" attitude. This impression, although it is not pleasant, does not at all mean that Bynner attempts to deny Lawrence as a "first-rate" author.

In fact, Bynner defends Lawrence's tendency of "verbal

repetition," which has often been criticized, claiming it as "a stylistic trick" and the "effective turnings of an awl" because his genius "did not consist fundamentally in what he had to say or in the way his characters said it for him but in the way he said it himself when he was most himself." He then adds that Lawrence's "redundancy" is a sign of his honesty and willingness to tell the truth (314). In his attempt to thus describe Lawrence's "genius" and authenticity as an artist, Bynner's own "sincerity" both as a biographer and a writer can surely be detected.

In Lawrence's major works, the author himself is often projected into his characters as seen in Paul Morel in *Sons and Lovers* (1913), and Rupert Birkin in *Rainbow* (1915) and *Women in Love* (1920). This tendency of Lawrence has made the connection between the study of his works and biographical sources especially strong. Moore underlines the significance of the biographies in understanding Lawrence's works because of his life's intensity and his attempt to propel personal experiences "more directly" into his works (643). On the other hand, the readers (and the biographers) need to separate the author's personal experience from his fictional world when they try to evaluate the works fairly and with detachment.

As discussed earlier, a biographer is primarily a creative artist, and as Kendall points out, his/her subjects is "a man whom he would have longed to create if he had not existed" (8). In this sense, the biographers of Lawrence have seen him essentially as a chief source of their creative inspiration. In fact, as seen in Moore's biography, it is possible for biographers to select and mold their primary sources into a fitting shape to create their ideal characters and thus control the trend of the literary criticism. On the other hand, as seen in Bynner's memoir, biographers can point

out the differences between the facts and fictions in the author's works in detail, and hence deconstruct and recreate the already established image of the author. These different approaches have repeatedly created various versions of Lawrence's life. The question is, therefore, why we have to keep redefining and reconstructing a certain artist in numerous different versions of biographies.

This study accordingly examines how the biographers of Lawrence deal with the author as their subject matters, and how they fictionalize and "distort" the author's life as a "prophet" and an artist, mainly focusing on Bynner's *Journey with Genius*. Through these examinations, this paper aims not to construe Bynner's work merely as negative criticisms of Lawrence but as a work to reevaluate and reconstruct Lawrence as a "genius." That is, even though Bynner's work utilizes the form of a "memoir" or "biography" of an actual writer, it contains much of fictional elements to create a poet-genius in Bynner's own manner. In this way, this study also aims to explore how a biographical work can be possibly categorized as a fiction.

To explore these issues, the first chapter aims to trace Bynner's journey to discover and construct his own image of the "genius," examining his memoir's narrative style, organization and content. It is possible to say that the narrative style and organization of Bynner's memoir seems quite unique and innovative. *Journey with Genius* is quite a lengthy work which consists of forty-nine chapters. In the first thirty chapters, Bynner mainly writes about the time he spent with Lawrence in New Mexico and Mexico. The other chapters include comments on the letters he exchanged with Lawrence and his own analysis of Lawrence's works. The latter parts, therefore, can be read more as

Bynner's attempt to analyze and reconstruct Lawrence as a writer than as a simple historical biography. This chapter therefore attempts to explore how the memoir's organization contributes to draw out another aspect of Lawrence both as an artist and a person.

The second chapter mainly deals with Bynner's unpleasant picture of Lawrence, and examines how these negative portraits meet with, or contradict, the author's intention to depict the "genius" of the poet and writer. Bynner repeatedly depicts the temperamental, self-centered behavior and attitudes of Lawrence in his memoir. He was even accused of fabricating an episode which seems to reveal Lawrence's racist attitude toward the others and his self-centeredness. The truth of his attempt of fabrication remains unsolved, but, in some parts, he surely seems to go beyond the boundary of a biographer's creative attempt to grasp a great literary figure from his own viewpoint. This chapter, then, also intend to clarify how Moore's description of Lawrence as "the priest of love" differs from and contradicts Bynner's picture, and also in what way these two studies can coexist in the field of Lawrence study.

While Bynner seemingly fictionalizes Lawrence's life in *Journey with Genius*, he critically points out in detail the differences between the real experiences in Lawrence's life and the scenes depicted in *The Plumed Serpent* (1926). Bynner argues that these gaps originate from Lawrence's wish to dignify its main character, Kate, chiefly because she functions as Lawrence's alter ego. Bynner, in his critical description of Lawrence, intends to point out that Lawrence is not such a dignified figure as Kate. The third chapter accordingly examines how Bynner makes use of his actual experiences (facts) to recreate his own image of Lawrence (fiction). This chapter also aims to clarify the relation between

facts and fiction in a biography.

Bynner is considered to be the model of Owen in *The Plumed Serpent*—a frivolous American poet who disappears in the earlier part of the novel. Bynner was seemingly dissatisfied with this negative description of himself in this fiction. In a different light, however, Owen plays a very significant role: He paradoxically functions as a chance to let Kate abandon the degenerated European lifestyle represented by him. Even though the effect on Kate is not positively depicted, Owen contributes to Kate's growth into a more mature human being. In the fourth chapter, therefore, I intend to clarify where Lawrence's real aim in creating Owen lies and how he uses him as the representative of Americans and the world they symbolize. It also aims to examine how Kate functions as Lawrence's alter ego, and how Bynner evaluates her as a character.

Besides *The Plumed Serpent*, in *Journey with Genius*, Bynner analyzes various other works of Lawrence. Instead of examining the works thoroughly, however, he attempts to reconstruct Lawrence as a character in his own creative work. Therefore, the fifth chapter analyzes Bynner as a critic of Lawrence's works. Perhaps the problem of his analyses lies in his tendency to invariably equate Lawrence's fictionalized characters with Lawrence himself. In addition, Bynner points out the contradictory feelings in Lawrence: his faith in common sense and animalistic instinct cannot possibly coexist with his unconscious inclination toward intelligence or theoretical abilities. Although Bynner's argument can be seemingly construed as a harsh criticism of Lawrence, this contradiction actually draws out Lawrence's outstanding ability as a writer. That is, it shows the genius's enormous, almost tragic efforts to intentionally isolate himself

from ordinary people and to thus maintain his position as a leading literary figure.

In the course of my argument, this paper aims to clarify the relation between a biographer and his/her subject. In Lawrence's cases, because of the intensity of his artistic labor and his life itself, he has been subjected to numerous biographies and memoirs. In the sense that he has been the source of creative inspiration for many biographers/artists, Lawrence has created works of literature both directly, (in his novels, plays and poems) and indirectly (in the biographies and memoirs on him).

Notes

[1] John Worthen, in the "Author's Preface" in his *D.H. Lawrence: The Early Years 1885–1912* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991), argues that "The need for a new Biography of a writer about whose life, to put it mildly, much has been written, arises from the mass of new information in the *Cambridge Collected Letters and Works*, which makes all existing biographies out of date" (xiii), and thus insists on the need for new forms of biography to present the latest information on the writer.

[2] Hidekatsu Nojima points out that Lawrence has been one of the most popular subjects of biographies and memoirs of writers (449) . In addition, Earl G. Ingersoll, in *D.H. Lawrence, Desire and Narrative* (Gaineswill: UP of Florida, 2001), points out the fact that more biographies and memoirs on Lawrence have been published since the 1990s, and argues that the study of Lawrence's works is closely related to the study of biographies themselves.

[3] James Craft wrote about Bynner in his biography, *Who is Witter*

Bynner? He is also the editor of *The Works of Witter Bynner: Selected Poems,* in which he completes the chronological table of his life. For a brief summary of Bynner's career, refer to Yoshio Inoue, *Chirei no Tabi: Hyouden D. H. Lawrence III [Journey with a Spirit That Lives in the Underground: The Biography of D. H. Lawrence III]* pp. 201-202.

[4] In addition, Moore quotes from Richard Church's review of Bynner's *Journey with Genius* in *John O' London's Weekly*: "The reader may ask whether or not Mr. Bynner is justified, after so many years, in reviving the record of his own irritations at the social morbidity of a man of genius" (Church, qtd. in Moore 356).

[5] Catherine Carswell, in her biography of Lawrence, *The Savage Pilgrimage*, describes the "beauty" of Lawrence she discovered at their initial meeting in 1914 thus: "I was sensible of a fine, rare beauty in Lawrence, with his deep-set jewel-like eyes, thick dust-coloured hair, pointed underlip of notable sweetness, fine hands, and rapid but never restless movements" (17-18). She also refers to the graceful movement of Lawrence:

> I have seen Lawrence under many circumstances but I never once saw him heavy or lounging, and he was never idle, just as a bird is never idle. At the same time I never saw a trace of strain or resentment in him when he engaged in any of his manifold activities. In these two ways—never being idle, yet never seeming to labour—he was unlike anybody else I ever met. (18)

Bynner makes a contradictory comment on Lawrence appearance, stating

that, at their first meeting in Santa Fe, he "appeared anything but a scarecrow" with voice like "whistlings of the wind" (Bynner 4). It seems that Carswell was very eager to find "beauty" in Lawrence's appearance, which was likely to be the reflection and source of his exceptional gift as a writer, while Bynner saw the author's seemingly frail physique and restlessness as the embodiment of his pettiness, irritation and latent fear of the others, which he was to describe in great detail in *Journey with Genius*. The difference in their first impressions on Lawrence, consequently, is also reflected in the ways they picture him in their biographies.

Chapter I

The Narrative Style and Organization of *Journey with Genius*

Witter Bynner's *Journey with Genius* can be seen as an appropriate text to examine and reconsider the artistic and literary quality of a biography, given his standing as a poet, biographer, and one of Lawrence's close friends. Bynner records his travel experiences, personal relationships, and arguments with Lawrence in his memoir, simultaneously analyzing Lawrence's works as another author and critic. Because he continually underlines the difference of their opinions concerning creative writing and human relationships, he appears far from "invisible" as the narrator, recorder, and witness of Lawrence's life. This "personal" and subjective narrative style of Bynner's work makes it seem more like a memoir than a biography.

Interestingly, this memoir includes Bynner's reviews and criticism of Lawrence's works and it also introduces his own poems on Lawrence. This memoir's organization, therefore, seems quite ground-breaking as a piece of life writing. In addition, Bynner, as the first-person narrator, constantly reminds the readers how Lawrence asked for, and depended upon, Bynner's opinions and advice as a friend and a fellow writer. That is, he underlines his privilege as Lawrence's personal acquaintance as well as a creative writer himself. He traveled Mexico with the Lawrences, and in this memoir he recorded a series of events he experienced from their initial meeting in Santa Fe in 1922, when the Lawrences stayed in his house through Mabel Sterne's introduction[1], to Lawrence's death in 1930, and also reflected on the meetings and arguments between them. In addition, we should pay attention to the subtitle of this memoir: "*Recollections and Reflections Concerning the D. H. Lawrences*." That means Bynner intends this memoir to be the record of his impressions of both Lawrence and his wife, Frieda. James Kraft points out

in his biography of Bynner, *Who Is Witter Bynner?* (1995) that *Journey with Genius* "offers one of the first and best characterizations of Frieda" (104)[2]. Bynner often admiringly describes Frieda's patience, tenderness and cheerfulness[3] while he disapprovingly portrays Lawrence's fierce temper, spiteful treatment of his wife and self-centered and superior attitude toward others. He even suggests that Frieda can regain "her own nature" once freed from her constant "nervous apprehension" about her husband's ever-changing moods (1953, 63). In this description, Frieda can almost be seen as the victim of Lawrence's whims and temperamental nature.

Bynner's attempt to expose this "dark" side of Lawrence, however, does not necessarily indicate his malice toward Lawrence. Instead, as in Kraft's view, Bynner's memoir represents "one of the first efforts to see Lawrence whole," abandoning the predecessors' "reverential way" of treating the literary genius (104). As discussed earlier, Moore casually dismisses Bynner as "Lawrence's hater" who created the memoir only to degrade the "prophet"-"genius" (453). In addition, Elaine Feinstein argues that Bynner's assumption that most people "detest" Lawrence turns him into "an unreliable witness" as a biographer (191). She also points out that, since this memoir was published at the time the reputation of Lawrence reached its climax, his verbal attacks on Lawrence, especially the description of the frequent quarrels and arguments between the husband and wife, were "received with suspicion" by the readers (194). Such a condemnation chiefly seems to originate from the memoir's inventive narrative voice, and organization and the closeness between the biographer and biographee. Because Bynner narrates the incidents in Lawrence's life quite frankly and unaffectedly as a personal acquaintance and a fellow writer, he is not able to maintain the distance we habitually find between the biographer and his subject.

Probably Bynner is too eager to present Lawrence as our fellow human being, not as a "prophet," but if we could view this work as a series of literary dialogues and discussions on such topics as literature, culture and human

beings between two writers, we would be able to detect other characteristics than the biographer's mere attacks and criticisms on Lawrence. This memoir, therefore, reminds us of the fact that biography has not merely been the record of human life but "debate," which has been carried on since biography's "first golden age" (Hamilton 33)[4]. Because "debate" always contains both affirmation and negation, it is natural for Bynner, as a biographer, to reveal his subject's less pleasant features. In this sense, Bynner' memoir is an attempt to remind us of a biography's fundamental quality.

1. Bynner's Literary Career and his Meeting with Lawrence

Witter Bynner was a poet and a writer with a high-level academic background, profound knowledge of diverse cultures, and outstanding literary achievements. In addition, he, just like Lawrence, had been a frequent traveler throughout his life. He was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1881, and was raised in a considerably wealthy family in Norwich, Connecticut, and Brookline, Massachusetts. He went to Harvard University where he became acquainted with Wallace Stevens and Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

After he graduated from Harvard, Bynner stayed in France, Germany, and England for a year. During his stay in London in 1902, he became acquainted with George Meredith[5], one of Bynner's three "literary gods" (the other two were A. E. Housman and Walt Whitman) (Kraft 15). After he returned to the United States in 1902, he began to work at *McClure's* magazine in New York, with Lincoln Steffens, Ida Tarbell, and Willa Cather, as editor of poetry and fiction[6]. One of his greatest contributions there was to make O. Henry a regular writer for the magazine, which made the two writers become very close friends. He also arranged for the first publication of A. E. Housman in the United States. Bynner worked for the magazine for four years, and upon quitting the job, he moved to Cornish, New Hampshire,

and published his first collection of poems, *An Ode to Harvard* (later *Young Harvard*), which established his position as a distinguished poet, in 1907. After that, he devoted himself to writing including poems, short plays, literary criticism, essays, and translations of Chinese classical poems.

Even though Europe considerably impressed and fascinated him, it was in fact "his love of the Southwest and especially of Asia" that greatly influenced Bynner's poetry and other works. Although the group of Americans in Paris in the twenties "felt a need for European manners and culture in order to find themselves," Bynner did not simply find the need in Europe (Kraft15-16). After his return to the United States in 1902, he did not return to Europe for almost fifty years. Instead, he went west and then to Asia. Especially his trips to China made a strong impression on him. In March, 1917, Bynner visited Japan and China for the first time, and he stayed in China again from June 1920 to April 1921, where he became interested in Chinese classical poems and Chinese culture. Between these trips, he taught a poetry class at the University of California, Berkeley, and published two collections of poems, *Grenstone Poems* (1917) and *The Beloved Stranger* (1919). He met a prominent Chinese scholar, Kiang Kang-hu, at Berkeley, and the two began to translate a collection of T'ang poems, which became one of Bynner's greatest literary achievements. At Berkeley, Bynner taught Idella Purnell, who was to publish and edit a verse magazine, *Palm*, and Willard Johnson, who later became his secretary and lover and lived with him in New Mexico.

Bynner visited Santa Fe, New Mexico, for the first time in February, 1922, for his lecture tour that started in the beginning of that year. He went there to see his friend, the painter Willard Nash, and Alice Corbin Henderson. Mrs. Henderson, who was the chief supporter of the writing community of Santa Fe, asked Bynner to give lectures on Chinese culture and poetry. Bynner, during the stay in Santa Fe, contracted tuberculosis and stayed in the sanatorium, Sunmount, for a few weeks. After that, he decided to remain

indefinitely in Santa Fe, and rent a small house from the artist Paul Burlin. Bynner liked living in Santa Fe because, according to Kraft, it was a community "where the artist and writer mattered, where there was a tradition of individual action in varied cultural patters, and where the cultures were part of a living historical continuity" (52). This place seemed to perfectly fit his style, and he lived in Santa Fe for forty-seven years.

Bynner was invited by Mabel Dodge Sterne (later Mabel Lodge Luhan) to her house in Taos in July, 1922. Sterne and Bynner had already met in New York, and by that time she had become famous as a great patron of many artists in Europe and in New York. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, it was through Sterne that Bynner first met with the Lawrences in September, 1922, when the couple spent one night at his adobe house in Santa Fe.

Bynner and Lawrence met again in spring of the following year because Lawrence asked Bynner and Johnson join the Lawrences on a trip to Mexico. This trip profoundly influenced both Bynner and Lawrence. *The Plumed Serpent,* one of Lawrence's most ambitious novels, was generated by this trip, and Bynner also produced his highly praised volume of poems, *Indian Earth* (1929), three of whose poems are actually portraits of Lawrence, inspired by this trip. Accordingly, it is possible to say that their meeting in Santa Fe and their trip to Mexico were quite significant experiences for their creative activities in the sense that they helped the two writers produce important works.

2. The Organization of *Journey with Genius*

As mentioned earlier, Bynner's memoir can largely be divided into two parts. The thirty chapters in the earlier part document and comment on the days Bynner spent with the Lawrences in New Mexico and Mexico from 1922 to 1923. In the first part, Bynner chronologically documents the events and

impressions of them during their stay in New Mexico and Mexico. According to David Ellis, Bynner had stayed in Santa Fe when the Lawrences arrived[7] and by that time, he had already established a position as "a poet of some distinction" in New York, Europe, and California (61), which greatly differs from Moore's assessment of him as "the third-rate poet" (453). Moore assesses Bynner's achievements as a poet and a writer quite unfavorably without really discussing his poems and other works themselves. Judging from Bynner's achievement as a translator of Chinese classic poems, and the outstanding quality of his poems on Lawrence, however, it would be unfair of Moore to evaluate Bynner's ability as a poet when he talks only about his memoir.

The latter nineteen chapters, which start with the title, "Reflecting Again," introduce the letters he exchanged with the Lawrences. In these chapters, Bynner also analyzes Lawrence's novels. Therefore, the latter parts are not simply the record of Lawrence's life. Rather, they are chiefly Bynner's reflections and constantly varying impressions of Lawrence. He quite straightforwardly presents his process of rediscovering Lawrence in his own insight from an artist's viewpoint. Because of that style of organization, this memoir seems to combine several different styles of literary work; a memoir, a book of criticisms and even an autobiography, given Bynner's apparent visibility as the narrator and emphasis on his closeness to his subject. The readers, for that reason, might question why Bynner has to merge these different modes of writing into one biography.

Bynner's memoir faithfully records the development of the relationship between Lawrence and himself. It starts at the point where he was not well acquainted with Lawrence's works, so he failed to find any sign of literary "genius" in his subject. Since Bynner had already established a certain position in the literary world of the United States and Europe as in Ellis's observation, he was in no way intimidated by the presence of the literary "genius." In the "Note" of *Journey with Genius*, Bynner goes back to the time

when he did not know Lawrence well enough: "Except for *Sons and Lovers* and such by-the-way essays as *Sea and Sardinia*, I had not in 1922 found D. H. Lawrence an engaging or coercing writer" (1953, xiii). Accordingly, we should really dwell on the meaning of the memoir's title, "Journey with Genius." This work is presented as Bynner's "journey" to discover and construct his image of Lawrence as a gifted writer step by step. In that process, he has surely detected the unpleasant, unacceptable side of this "genius." His essential aim lies in delineating the process of discovery, not the conclusion. If we can thus clarify his intention, it would be easier for us to trace the memoir's contribution to the study of Lawrence's achievements.

Since Bynner analyzes and examines Lawrence's works including *The Plumed Serpent* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in the latter part, this memoir also bears an appearance of literary criticism. Significantly, however, he does not necessarily prove what he sees in Lawrence's works by referring directly to, or commenting on, certain parts of the author's written texts. Rather, he attempts to see through Lawrence's approach to his subject matters as another writer, and contemplates on the difference in their approaches. For instance, Bynner thus describes the relation between "instinct" and "intellect" in Lawrence's works:

> While Lawrence thought that instinct, intuition, directed his quest into human nature, it was mental determination trying to be instinct. Constantly he condemned probing by the intellect and constantly indulged in them [sic]. The truth was that he could never get out of his head what his abdomen was doing. (1953, 303)

In his analysis cited above, Bynner attempts to point out the contradiction between Lawrence's faith in "instinct" and "intuition" and his unintended devotion to "intellect." The problem here is that, however, Bynner does not really elucidate how and where in Lawrence's works such an inconsistency or

paradox surfaces. Because of this lack of rational explanation and concreteness, it is rather difficult for us to classify the latter part of his memoir as a work of literary criticism. In short, Bynner himself apparently depends on his "instinct" rather than "intellect" when he observes Lawrence's works. It would be easier for us, therefore, to construe this memoir essentially as a dialogue between Bynner and Lawrence. It is also possible to say that Bynner and Lawrence can be placed as the characters in a play or a novel created by Bynner. In summary, this unusual organization of the memoir itself reveals Bynner's attempt to fictionalize and reconstruct the genius's life.

3. Bynner's Narrative Style—the Dialogue with Lawrence

Bynner's narrative style makes him seem an "unreliable witness" (Feinstein 191) mainly because of his familiarity with Lawrence. His memoir is actually the record of the Lawrences' journey in Mexico and New Mexico with Bynner and his secretary and lover, Willard Johnson, so Bynner observes the incidents with the Lawrences in detail, which at times seems a "too-insistent making of points" (Kraft 104). In addition, being a writer and a poet himself, Bynner cannot really distance himself from Lawrence's creative process as an observer. Kendall argues that the biographer's "struggle" with his subjects is in the "opposite" position to that of the novelists. A novelist's material becomes "a part of him," so he cannot successfully detach himself from the subjects. In the case of the biographer, on the other hand, he has already achieved "an inert, a fortuitous detachment" from his materials, but to achieve "true detachment," he must go through "the psychic immersion in his material that the novelist begins with" (16). It is assumed that biographers can achieve and maintain a certain distance from their subjects because, unlike novelists, their subjects are not themselves in most cases.

On the other hand, novelists often create their characters based on themselves, or parts of themselves, no matter how they try not to do so. In a larger sense, they are all the novelists' alter egos. Therefore, to make their subjects lifelike and persuasive to the readers, the biographers, like novelists, firstly need to feel that their subjects are actually parts of themselves while they maintain a certain detachment from them as biographers. In Bynner's case, however, it was difficult for him to achieve a "true detachment" from Lawrence as his "material" because, for him, Lawrence was both the subject of his biography and the character he had created during his creative process.

Considering Bynner's attempt to analyze Lawrence's psyche reflected in his works without thoroughly discussing them, this memoir, especially its latter part, can possibly be seen as a recording of psychoanalysis. Yet again, his narrative style, underling his closeness with the subject, hardly contains the scientific distance and detachment of psychoanalytic approach. According to Kendall, psychoanalysis "explains, provides names for, classifies, deals in clinical record" (121). On the other hand, a biography is "the simulation of that life in words" (121). Then Kendall goes on to argue that "the biographer's relations with psychology" should be "platonic" and the subject for him should be "an invaluable friend but as mistress, a *femme fatale*" (Kendall 121-22). He argues that, although a biographer can effectively employ psychoanalytic approach in several parts, it cannot be the essential method of their creative writing. That is, in Kendall's view, even though a biographer occasionally aims to explore the psyche of his subject, his chief aim should not lie in scientifically classifying and categorizing it. Rather, a biographer traces the subject's life as if it were his own. Although the biographer tries to make himself "invisible" to make the readers focus on the life of the biography's subject, he also sees it as another part of his own life.

Another distinct feature of *Journey with Genius* is that it contains numerous dialogues and letters exchanged in Lawrence's life. Nevertheless,

since the readers would not know if these conversations actually occurred in Lawrence's or Bynner's life, these parts can be perhaps read as if they were dramatic dialogues of a play. In the thirtieth chapter, "The Hospital," Bynner thoroughly describes the exchanges between Lawrence and himself and the process of his discovery of Lawrence's sincerity and kindness. This chapter describes Bynner's infected fistula and his hospitalization in Guadalajara, and it is also the last chapter which records the actual happenings of Lawrence and Frieda's life because the following chapters turn into Bynner's "reflection" on the Lawrences.

Bynner's unfortunate hospitalization unexpectedly marked a turning point in their relationship because of Lawrence's "constant, thoughtful tenderness" (1953, 173). Lawrence reassured the patient that his inability to control his legs was "natural" and did not mean "a derangement of the spine" (1953, 173), which greatly eased his mind. This chapter, accordingly, details how their relationship had grown into a real comradeship. Bynner at first questioned whether Lawrence's kindness meant the showing of his "power" over the sick man, but soon Bynner found it a sign of his genuine affection (1953,174). Lawrence frequently visited Bynner during his two-week hospitalization, and his "hospital attentions" greatly "touched" the patient (1953, 175), and this is where Bynner really began to ponder over the difference in their attitude toward "democracy" perhaps in a more compassionate way than before. Then the memoir's tone sounds like imaginary dialogues between the narrator and his subject:

> "Why doesn't that mind of yours ever rest? Why don't you ever give it a rest, Lorenzo, from this incessant theorizing? Americans aren't irrevocably this and Englishmen irrevocably that and Mexicans irrevocably something else. We're just people, the whole lot of us."
>
> "But you like democracy and I don't," he persisted. Then he gave a slight shrug and smiled, with the look of an innocent but puzzled child, like Stanhope Ficke reacting to his father's exposition of the facts of life: "I understand what you say, but I don't believe a word of it." (1953, 176)

Here, even though Bynner seems to disapprove of Lawrence's tendency to "theorize" and categorize a certain group of people such as "Americans" and "Mexicans" to some extent, and it contradicts his own democratic attitudes, he shows a feeling of compassion and sympathy toward the genius's forever inquisitive, turbulent state of mind as well. Therefore, even during their intense discussion on "democracy," Bynner feels that Lawrence's verbal attacks would hardly anger him now that he has recognized Lawrence's "kindness." Yet Bynner also knows that Lawrence himself "would have recoiled" if Bynner "mentioned that kindness" (Bynner 1953, 176).

The last part of this chapter then begins to sound like a monologue secretly addressed to Lawrence; Bynner pictures the genius as an "odd man-child" who is "winning, flashing, sulking, malicious, angry, or merely innocent" (1953, 176), and thus reveals his complex, solitary side. He also cites a passage from his diary, which describes Lawrence as "a child, a good child, a naughty child, a spoiled child, a frightened child" who is "afraid of the dark and he tries to talk the darkness down" (1953, 176-77). By thus repeating the expression "child," Bynner suggests how Lawrence's innocence and fearfulness have kept the others from truthfully understanding him. In this chapter, accordingly, the biographer is far from criticizing Lawrence. He rather shows his process of understanding the genius's agony. He then closes this chapter with his picture of Lawrence's internal split by questioning himself thus:

> I wondered if he was still frightened of Mexico, if that was why they were leaving. Or was he wistful for some other place, the

> right place yet unfound? He had seemed, on the whole, happy in Chapala. Did even happiness frighten him? (1953, 177)

It took Bynner, with his "energetic assurance" and insistence on "seeing the light and the pleasant" (Kraft 53), much time to really construe Lawrence's inclination toward "the dark and the difficult" (Kraft 53). In this chapter, however, Bynner finally frees himself from the harsh, critical tone, and instead, attempts to look into another "dark" side of Lawrence concealed in his seemingly self-assured and superior attitude toward others. This chapter then marks the end of Bynner's "journey" to discover the "genius" and also, "tenderness" in Lawrence.

The latter part of Bynner's memoir, starting with the thirty-first chapter, "Reflections Again," does not chronologically and biographically trace Lawrence's life, but looks back on their journey in Mexico and New Mexico together, and ponders over how it is reflected in Bynner's creative writing. Bynner, in these chapters, talks to the readers as a narrator who can see through everything in Lawrence's life when he describes Lawrence's inner struggle. He especially focuses on the impact of Mexico and its people on Lawrence. In Bynner's portrait, Lawrence was shocked to hear about a murder case in Chapala, Mexico, in 1923[8], and commented on Mexicans that they tended to "give murderers the same sort of admiration an Anglo-Saxon gives soldiers" (1953, 182). Even though he might be able to understand the Mexicans' preference of "personal motives" to "national" ones, Lawrence saw "their blood streams were too different" from his own (Bynner 1953, 182). Therefore, Lawrence, in spite of his fascination with Mexico's "natural" spirit, remains a "foreigner" in Mexico as portrayed in Bynner's poem quoted in the thirtieth chapter, "Reflections Again." This poem portrays Lawrence as a "foreigner" who came to Chapala "with a pale red beard and pale blue eyes / And a pale white skin that covered a dark soul" (1953, 182), which underlines his unconquerable fear and rejection of what he sees as brutality and fearless

attitudes in Mexicans. The poem then concludes that Lawrence left Chapala, "walking, walking away from something" (1953, 182) out of that fear. The expressions, "pale blue eyes" and "pale white skin" embody Lawrence's fragility and fear as a European who cannot comprehend the "dark soul" of Mexicans, which constantly threatens his being.

In fact, the latter part of *Journey with Genius* focuses on Lawrence's restlessness and unfitness for any place in the world. For instance, Bynner begins the thirty-third chapter, "Wanderer," with quotations from Lawrence's postcard from Texas and then his letter from New Jersey, in which he says, "Where am I going? Ask me. Perhaps to Los Angeles, and then to the Islands, if I could find a sailing ship. Quién sabe?" (qtd. in Bynner 1953, 187). Bynner's "reflection" on Lawrence, then, proceeds in the form of his reaction to this letter: "I was sorry that he was without Frieda, wondered what he would do without her and where he would go" (1953, 188). By thus paralleling Lawrence's own writings with his reaction to them, Bynner makes the readers notice the difference of their tones. In this way, they become aware of Lawrence's aloneness and restlessness without Frieda's support in America.[9] Lawrence's reference to his own indecisiveness in his letter and Bynner's concern over him emphasize the author's "wandering" spirit. Bynner is aware of the contradiction between Lawrence's love of England and his hope to create a "new life" in Mexico, abandoning "greediness" and seeking for "nature and seriousness." In Bynner's viewpoint, Lawrence wishes to stay in Chapala in Mexico to "build a new colony" in which he can lead a "simple, ideal life," "as an author," yet he cannot really separate himself from England and its culture "as a man," which causes his internal split and restlessness. Bynner is also aware that the writing activity itself makes Lawrence constantly suffer and struggle (1953, 192). Here, Bynner probably suggests that writing becomes a heavy burden for Lawrence because his sense of duty as an author often contradicts his unconscious yearning for England "as a man."

Bynner thus utilizes his position as a biographer, friend, and fellow writer of Lawrence to record and review the events of Lawrence's life. The harshness of Bynner's tone of describing Lawrence's fierce temper and ill treatment of Frieda gradually changes into his compassionate understanding of the subject both as an author and a human being. In the latter part, Bynner, as a narrator and one of Lawrence's closest friends, looks into his mind and often speaks for him. In view of that, Bynner does not set himself up as "invisible" as a narrator and a biographer. Moreover, the events and the subject's state of mind are described in the present tense as if they were happening at the moment. In that sense, this memoir's narrative style is much closer to that of a novel, and Lawrence would rather seem to be the novel's main character. The readers, who expect to see the exceptional features of Lawrence, would possibly see Bynner's account as inaccurate and biased, but as James Kraft precisely characterizes it, its distinct feature lies in the portrait of "the complex Lawrence personality," showing his "brilliant, sensitive, stubborn, angry, and repressed" side (Kraft 54). Furthermore, Bynner does not show his "stubborn, angry and, repressed" features one-sidedly. He rather attempts to clarify *how* these seemingly negative characteristics have contradictorily created his "genius." In this sense, Bynner's distinctive narrative style effectively reveals Lawrence's inner sufferings, and thus has made a great contribution to the biographical study of Lawrence.

4. Lawrence as the Subject of Bynner's Poems

Another distinctiveness of *Journey with Genius* lies in its citation of Bynner's own poems on Lawrence. In other words, Bynner explains how Lawrence has inspired him as a poet and a creative writer. In this sense, this part of the memoir can also be characterized as Bynner's own autobiography.

For example, the eighteenth chapter, titled "Diary," mostly consists of citations from Bynner's diary and his poem, "The Winged Serpent." This chapter describes Lawrence's fear of the "Mexican Indian's character" and his reaction to "the feathered serpent" as the guardian god of the Mexican people. Bynner starts depicting his reaction to Lawrence's fear and dislike of Mexico by presenting some parts of his diary. Even though the diary seems to criticize Lawrence for his failure to see "how that feathered serpent has guarded Mexico against the higher gods, the devouring gods of Europe," by showing that a time gap existed between the creation of his diary and biography, Bynner suggests that his own reaction to Lawrence has possibly changed since the time he wrote the diary. He then ends the citation with a rather negative portrait of Lawrence: "From country to country he flees the agglomerated particles of himself, of his own factions, of his own weakness, of his own strength" (1953, 105), but he abruptly closes the discussion there by stating, "There was to have been more of this, but I left off, because of tired eyes in candlelight" (1953, 105), and proceeds to the citation of his poem, "The Winged Serpent." Why does he avoid describing his *present* reaction to Lawrence in more detail and instead ends up citing his own poem? In this part, we can hardly detect a biographer's task to make himself invisible. The following is a part of Bynner's poem cited in the chapter:

> The eagle is of the air toward the sun,
> And the rattlesnake is of the air toward the sun;
> And the mewing of the eagle is the sound of many people under
> the sun,
> And the rattle of the snake is the sound of many people under
> the sun
> But where are the people who can make the sound of the winged
> serpent,
> Clapping the air into thunder

And shaking lightning from his scales?

(Bynner 1953, 106)

In this poem, "the mewing of the eagle" and "the rattle of the snake" possibly embody Lawrence's fear of Mexico and Mexican Indians while "the people who can make the sound of the winged serpent" represent those unafraid Mexican Indians. Here Bynner points out that Europeans, embodied as "many people under the sun," are protected by a "decadent religion" (1953, 105), and have greedily used people in Mexico. Consequently, the "winged serpent," Quetzalcoatl, becomes the only protective god for these suffering people who have been long exploited by Europeans. Bynner's only comment on this poem is that he believes he was "successfully challenging Lawrence's fear of Mexico and of Quetzalcoatl," and mentions that Lawrence "quite meekly" accepted his challenge expressed in this poem (1953, 107). Here Bynner openly presents the dialogue, or discussion between Lawrence and himself, and leaves a space for the readers to exercise their own imagination and make their own judgment. His seemingly negative exposure of Lawrence's "fear" in fact reveals its later development into his ambitious work, *The Plumed Serpent*. In the sense that Bynner's way of description clarifies the author's profound struggle of creation, it is possible to say that the citation of his own work makes this memoir quite inspiring to the readers who study Lawrence's works.

In the forty-fifth chapter, "Letters," Bynner introduces his longer poem on Lawrence and the letters they exchanged, which lead to their discussion on *The Plumed Serpent*. This poem seemingly contains Bynner's critical stance toward Lawrence's glorification of manliness and his failure to achieve that state:

After wondering a long time, I know now
That you are no man at all.

The whiteness of your flanks and loins and belly and thin neck
Frightens you, affronts you,
A whiteness to be sloughed off, to be left behind you like ashes,
Forgotten by the new body, by the new mind,
By the new conforming surfaces.

Women have chosen you, in your white arms.
But what have you to do with women?
Only your seeming is theirs and the falsehood of your skin.
You would lengthen your finger-nails and your teeth
To mangle these women, these people;
You would drop them behind you with your cast-off skin;
You would wonder at the glaze of their eyes;
And your new pelt would contract and would tremble down your spine
Before it settled into place;
And you would steal away, solitary,
To try in the wind the vibrancies of a new voice.

(Bynner 1953, 326)

In this poem, Bynner's denies Lawrence's ideal of manliness, stating, "you are no man at all." He also emphasizes the author's physical fragility, repeatedly using the expression, "whiteness." In the next stanza, Bynner indicates that Lawrence selfishly exploits women around him and fails to achieve genuinely affectionate relationships with them. Accordingly, their relationships remain merely superficial ones. In this rather cynical portrait of Lawrence, however, Bynner underlines the author's "solitary" state, which everlastingly seeks for "a new voice," that is, a new source for inspiration and truth of human relationship. In other words, Bynner takes a sympathetic stance on

Lawrence as his subject by showing that his "genius," or exceptional creative talent, has separated him from the others and caused his solitude and struggle with himself.

5. Bynner's Creation of "The Genius"

In summary, the narrative style and organization of Bynner's memoir is quite innovative and noteworthy in the sense that it also includes autobiographical elements. That is, the biographer shows us how his view of Lawrence has changed and reconstructed as the time passes. Harry T. Moore insists that Bynner's memoir, published long after the time he spent with Lawrence in Mexico, deliberately intended to degrade the established fame of one of the most talented writer of our age (453). In my view, however, Bynner needed these 'reflecting' years to trace the development of their friendship and comradeship as authors. To mirror Bynner's changing view of Lawrence during these years, this memoir's style also changes from the harsh, critical tone of the earlier chapters to the sympathetic, appreciative manner of the latter chapters. In this way, Bynner invites the readers to a "journey" with the Lawrences and himself to gradually discover Lawrence's suffering, difficulties, anger, and tenderness wrapped in his harshness.

Michael Benton argues that the subjects of a literary biography provide the readers with "the prospect of access" to "the workings of the creative imagination," and this process is mainly developed through "the shared medium of words" and "literary forms" between the biographer and the subjects, and the intimacy between fictional and historical narratives in a biography (2). In Benton's view, therefore, when biographers offer their subjects to the readers in the form of a biography and a memoir, they induce the readers to share their visions with the biographers. The readers naturally assume that biographies are based on the facts of the subjects' life,

yet in the process of narrating the subjects' life, some rearrangements and reorganization of these facts necessarily occur through the biographers' creative and imaginative vision. Accordingly, the readers can move closer to the subjects by sharing their visions with the biographers, that is, they are induced to observe the subjects through the biographers' viewpoints. That is to say, what they see as the subjects' life is actually the biographers' image and reflection of it. This process can be taken essentially through the biographers' "words," the chief "medium" of communicating their creative imagination to the readers. The biographers, therefore, plays the role of connecting the readers and their subjects through their literary medium (words) and creative imagination.

Benton's definition of a literary biography, in fact, can be closely applied to Bynner's memoir. Firstly, he deconstructs the already established image of Lawrence as a "genius" and a "prophet" by revealing his pettiness, self-centeredness, superior attitude toward others, and violent treatment of his wife. Yet that unpleasant picture gradually alters into a more profound portrayal of the complicated nature of Lawrence as an author with an unexceptional gift. As a result, the readers can share the memoir's intention, narrative style, and overall tone with Bynner, and gradually shape a common, new image of Lawrence as *their* subject. Because Bynner invites his readers to view the subject with the eyes of an author, like himself, through his literary criticism and introduction of his poems, they can read this memoir not only as the record of a great literary figure but also as a character named Lawrence newly created by an author. In this way, this memoir is doubly effective to the readers' imaginative mind.

According to Leon Edel, just as a poet, novelist and playwright identify their subjects with themselves, a biographer "as an artist," "becomes the biography" itself and a detached, "impersonal" biography can be "tasteless" (17). By stating this, Edel means that a biographer, as a writer and artist himself (or for the purpose of becoming one), should wholly devote himself to

his subject. He ought to be attracted by and attached to his subjects above anything else. That is to say, they ought to establish an extremely close relationship with their subjects as if they had known each other personally and intimately throughout their lives. For that purpose, the biographer often ends in identifying himself with his subject matter, and in that process, the subjects are necessarily fictionalized, idealized and even criticized by the biographers. Yet the biographers fictionalize, idealize, and criticize not only the subjects but also the reflections of themselves in their works because the subjects often function as their alter egos. The readers should also be aware that there could be various interpretations of one literary figure, reflecting each biographer/artist's viewpoint and insight. Bynner's version of Lawrence, therefore, has fruitfully presented us another novel aspect of the literary genius.

Notes

[1] Bynner's initial meeting with the Lawrences was quite accidental. Mabel Sterne invited the Lawrences to her house in Taos in August, 1922. Mabel and her lover (later her husband), Tony Luhan, met the couple at first in Lamy station, New Mexico, and then Tony gave them a ride to Santa Fe. Since their car broke down on the way, when they arrived in Santa Fe, accommodation for all of them was no longer available, so Sterne decided to "entrust the Lawrences" to Bynner in his house in Santa Fe (Ellis 60). Sterne describes the detail of this trip in her *Lorenzo in Taos* (38-39).

[2] The tenth chapter of Bynner's memoir, titled "Frieda," is wholly dedicated to the description of Frieda's devotion and supportiveness to her husband and his exceptional gift as a writer. Additionally, as far as

his description goes, it was Bynner to whom Frieda could really confide with her concern over Lawrence's "intemperate bursts" (1953, 61).

[3] Contrary to the "shrillness" of Lawrence's voice and his satirical comments on persons and places at their first meeting, Frieda's "smile beamed and her voice boomed" (Bynner 1953, 4). In addition, while Lawrence suffered from "reluctant distaste" for his own physique, his wife showed no sign of "physical timidities and reservations" (Bynner 1953, 3-4).

[4] Nigel Hamilton defines "biography's first golden age" as the age of Plutarch (*c.* 46—120 AD), the Greek biographer, essayist, and historian. Hamilton thus emphasizes Plutarch's earnestness as a biographer. He criticizes Herodotus's "misrepresentation of individuals" for the purpose of neatly arranging historical plots and Suetonius and Tacitus's malicious attempt to reveal the privacy of "commemorated heroes of Greece and Rome" (34).

[5] For a detailed description of Bynner's meeting with George Meredith refer to Kraft 15.

[6] For a detailed account of Bynner's achievements at McClure's journal, refer to Kraft 16-23.

[7] Just like the Lawrences, Bynner was invited by Mabel Dodge Sterne (later Mabel Dodge Luhan), whom he had met in New York before that. Mabel had been famous for being a patron of the artists in Europe and New York by the time he first met her, but her tendency to dominate everyone soon distanced Bynner from her (Kraft 52).

[8] Bynner reports the murder case as follows: A local butcher, being jealous of his wife's "too much interest" in a customer, killed the man, imagining that his wife was having an affair with him. The husband

killed his rival and severed his head and put it on the desk of their shop (Bynner 1953, 182).

[9] Lawrence's letter to Bynner from "New Jersey" cited here is dated August 14, 1923. Although Bynner documents that this letter is from New Jersey, the address on it is as follows; 5 West 50th St. New York (*The Letters of D. H. Lawrence 4: 1921-24*, 483). At that time, Lawrence was alone in the United States because Frieda had already sailed to Southampton, England, to see her children. According to Ellis, the Lawrences left Chapala July 8th, 1923, for San Antonio, and then they moved on to New Orleans. Having spent only one night in New York, they moved to the cottage near Morris Plains in New York (Ellis 121-22). In New Jersey, Lawrence was occupied with correcting the proofs of *Kangaroo, Mastro-don-Gesualdo,* and *Birds, Beasts, and Flowers*. He felt quite uneasy in the U. S., and from the end of June to early August, he indicated in his several letters that he would go to Europe while he shows strong desire to go back to Mexico (Ellis 124).

Chapter II

Bynner's Portrait of Lawrence in *Journey with Genius*

In the previous chapter, we examined how Bynner's unfavorable impression of Lawrence has gradually developed into a positive and favorable one as his memoir moves forward. His recollection and reflection on the days he spent with the Lawrences have also developed into an approving view after his separation with Lawrence. Even so, however, Bynner's attempts to expose every little detail of Lawrence's hysterical outbursts and vehement quarrels with Frieda seem to go beyond a biographer's conventional licenses. Do these attempts indicate that he intentionally makes himself a villain to paradoxically arouse the readers' sympathy for Lawrence, or is it, as Harry T. Moore argues, Bynner's act of "self-glorification" (453)?

The previous chapter mainly deals with the narrative style and organization of *Journey with Genius* and how they contribute to the overall effect of producing a new, unconventional image of Lawrence as the literary "genius" and "prophet." This chapter will examine more closely Bynner's unsympathetic description of Lawrence, and how that representation paradoxically reveals Lawrence's sensitive, complex nature as an artist in its later chapters. In that process, this chapter also aims to clarify how Bynner dramatizes his memoir by thus emphasizing the unfavorable side of Lawrence. His attempt to make Lawrence a villain seems malicious to the readers in the earlier chapters of *Journey with Genius*, but that negative portrait changes into the more intense and more imposing one in its latter chapters. That is, the unfavorable picture of Lawrence in the earlier chapters in fact indicates Bynner's tactic to underline Lawrence's sincerity, faithfulness, and greatness in the end. In that way, the memoir can be

evaluated as the more dramatic, and its subject, Lawrence, is transformed into a more complex thus dramatic being.

1. Bynner's Portrait of Temperamental Lawrence

Bynner reflects his impression of Lawrence quite frankly in his memoir. Especially, its earlier part is filled with the particulars of the incidents which show Lawrence's temperamental nature. At their first meeting in Santa Fe, in truth, the genius did not really strike Bynner as brilliant and inspiring. Bynner, having become acquainted with Amy Lowell and Harriet Monroe, had already read a considerable number of Lawrence's works including his favorite works, *Sons and Lovers* and *Sea and Sardinia*, and was eager to meet the author[1]. In fact, however, it was Frieda to whom Bynner was more attracted and to whom he paid much more attention than Lawrence himself, who seemed to be "a thin, agile figure getting out of the car, holding one end of a painted wood Sicilian panel" (Maddox 324). Bynner consequently describes his first impressions of the couple in a letter to his mother dated September, 1922:

> Like many of the writing Englishmen, Lawrence has that curious blond voice, that almost petulant treble. It is a petulant that whines into a grin. They all have it. Apart from that, and in spite of his gnomish beard, he was as likable and easy as a kid. His wife, a capacious and vibrant German, was even more magnetic, with the large and ready charm which almost all German women have for me. It was as if she were the earth, and he the house. The house of course gets the notice.[2] (*Selected Letters* 1981, 94–95)

In this part, while Bynner praises Frieda's jolliness and charm, he describes Lawrence merely as a typical "English" writer. Bynner did not seem to find any exceptional creative gift in this Englishman at least at this first meeting. On the other hand, considering that Bynner actually sent a similar kind of letter to several of his friends, even though the couple stayed in his place only for one night, he was unconsciously attracted to Lawrence, and his passion for writing about Lawrence probably started from this meeting.

Although Lawrence did not seem to make a strong impression on Bynner at their first meeting, he was harshly criticized for his fierce, impudent, and arrogant nature by Bynner. In fact, the first chapter of *Journey with Genius*, "Santa Fe," starts with a portrait of Lawrence as an extremely difficult and narrow-minded person who tends to reproach others for trivial matters. This chapter actually focuses on a small episode, which was to become Bynner's encounter with the first "Lawrencian explosion" (1953, 1). On their way to Santa Fe, Antonio Tony Luhan, who was to become Mabel Sterne's last husband, accidentally damaged one of Lawrence's pictures, which Frieda insisted on bringing to Taos on their journey. Lawrence then one-sidedly and quite vehemently blamed this damage on Frieda: "It's your fault, Frieda! You've made me carry that vile thing round the world, but I'm done with it." Then, after this reproach, he also exploded to Tony, saying "you're a fool!" (1953, 2), and thus even ignored Tony's kindly act of giving them a long ride to Santa Fe. Lawrence, after the outburst, insisted that this accident would not have happened if Frieda had not carelessly brought the picture to Taos in the first place.

This unsympathetic portrait of a "genius" is merely the beginning of Bynner's criticisms of Lawrence's arrogance and ferocity. This chapter would make the readers wonder where this biography's purpose truly lies: the introduction of the domestic quarrels in the Lawrences would not really

present the making of an influential literary giant. They, therefore, would probably question whether they are too trivial and insufficient matters to draw out the "genius" of the renowned writer.

Bynner's description also focuses on Lawrence's whimsical, temperamental side almost too insistently. In the sixth chapter, "Excursions," Bynner narrates the incidents on the trip he and the Lawrences took to Puebla and Orizaba. It was the trip Lawrence proposed, and supposedly, it "should have been a short train trip" (34). Yet, when the train reached the border between Mexico City and Puebla, it made a sudden pause, probably for the fear of certain rebels or bandits, but with no explanations or apologies. They had to wait for hours on the train "with all window shades down," feeling the immediate danger. Yet for Bynner and Frieda, Lawrence's verbal attacks on everything around him seemed more "imminent" than the possible rebels and bandits. According to Bynner, Lawrence started criticizing "the railway service first, the government second, the Mexican race third, the human race fourth," and this lasted more than nine hours. Lawrence took all this fearful, disturbing experience as "a personal affront," and this vehemence physically affected him, making his cold "markedly worse" (Bynner 1953, 36). After their arrival in Puebla, therefore, even the gorgeous appearance of Puebla cathedral failed to impress the over-stressed author. Lawrence, accordingly, rendered the interior of "all Mexican churches" as "dead," being simple, and yet "completely vulgar, barren, sterile" while he found "a shadow and stillness of old, mysterious holiness" in the Italian churches built in similar styles (Bynner 1953, 36). Their trip was, therefore, a series of unfortunate incidents, yet Lawrence's vehemence seemed quite distinctive when comparing it with the calmness and patience of Bynner and Frieda.

After Puebla, the three of them went to Orizaba. They arrived at the station early in the morning, yet soon after, Lawrence, with his cold worse,

suddenly insisted that they should go back, stating, "Don't you feel it through your feet? It exudes from the platform. The place is evil" (Bynner 1953, 37-38). Both Frieda and Bynner became quite at a loss, facing Lawrence's unreasonable whim. Bynner consequently narrates an episode in which he quite heroically and maturely confronted this outburst:

> My patience broke. I tried hard to speak quietly and perhaps did. "Lorenzo, I am going to see the town. If I like it I am going to spend the night. There is no reason why I should give in to your whims. I knew from the way you treated Leighton that I ought not to come with you and I'm sorry now that I did. But you're not going to boss me. I'm going to the hotel. If Frieda wants to come along, you can indulge your nerves here by yourself." I don't know whether or not my voice shook from the shaking of my ganglion.
>
> He looked extremely and childishly surprised, not as if my standing him off was a shock, but as if it was an unwarranted attack on him out of the blue. He was instantly docile and dumb. He followed us into the vehicle. He sank his beard into his breastbone. He was a deflated prophet. (Bynner 1953, 38)

Here, Bynner contrasts his reasonableness with Lawrence's unfairness, particularly emphasizing the author's infantile behavior. Bynner's attempt to persuade Lawrence in a mature way, then, unquestionably transforms him into a brave protagonist in this episode. In addition, by calling the genius "a deflated prophet," Bynner seems to emphasize the less heroic side of Lawrence, which contradicts the public image of Lawrence as a "prophet" and a "priest of love." Furthermore, in the description of this episode, Bynner underlines how effectively his speech worked on Lawrence.

In this scene, while Bynner eloquently persuaded Lawrence to discard his selfishness, Lawrence was completely at a loss and could not defend himself with words. In this attempt, Bynner even seems to deny Lawrence's gift of speech, a sign of his "genius."

Nevertheless, Bynner's description of Lawrence, in several places, is not necessarily supported with enough facts and evidence, and if we changed the viewpoint, the exchange among Lawrence, Bynner, Johnson, and Frieda would possibly sound like the author's creation. In the twenty-third chapter, titled "The Orphans," Bynner relates his experience when he stayed with the Lawrences and Willard Johnson in a hotel, which Inoue defines as the act of "delivering a fatal blow" to Lawrence's reputation as a renowned writer (209). At that Mexican hotel, they found many Mexican orphans and children of drunken parents wandering around in the hotel dining room, looking for temporary jobs. They often played with Bynner and Johnson on the seaside, and they made their living by polishing the guests' shoes. Lawrence could not tolerate these orphans' presence and impudence, naming the group "a public nuisance" (131). He then asked the hotel owner, Mr. Scott, to ban their entrance into the hotel. Yet the hotel owner did not try to solve the problem promptly and efficiently, and Bynner and Johnson still let the children polish their shoes. Finally, Lawrence called a police officer straight away and made him arrest the orphans during the absence of Bynner and Johnson. Bynner, quoting from the hotel owner's words, compares Lawrence's tyranny to that of "a Mexican general" (131). Bynner also introduces Johnson's (Spud's) reaction to this unreasonable outburst of Lawrence, thus underlining Lawrence's narrow-mindedness and childish jealousy:

> This time my irritation became contagious. Spud was irritated, roused out of his usual mute acceptance of whatever might happen. Those urchins stoutheartedly struggling for the day's

> sustenance and now facing fines because of a bad-tempered mean-spirited Britisher! "He wouldn't have done it if we'd been here," muttered Spud. "But he couldn't wait till we were out of sight," I barked, "to vent his spleen on a lot of children. And it wasn't really spleen against them, it was spleen against us or against me anyway for having a good time with them and for giving Frieda a good time. He doesn't want anyone to have a good time, that's what his damn theories amount to. He wants suspicion and spite, meanness and rage, he wants to indulge his contemptible ill nature and call it living according to the blood stream or any crazy folderol which will let him have his own way. And it's a way that isn't worth having. It's a denial of all happiness, all comradeship, all decency, all positive living, all humanness. He'd better stay with the beasts he belongs with. But even they're too good for him. He's a death worm. (131)

Bynner prudently exploits the hotel owner's and Johnson's reactions to Lawrence's outburst to support or strengthen his unfavorable picture of Lawrence. Even though Bynner himself calls Lawrence in this scene "a bad-tempered mean-spirited Britisher" who mercilessly pushes the "urchins stoutheartedly struggling for the day's sustenance" to the corner, Johnson's words sound far more intense in this scene, condemning Lawrence's inhumanness. Bynner, then, to make his picture more concrete, describes that a French woman, who owned a candy stand near the beach, kindly offered food to these poor children, which saved them from starvation. She actually witnessed the arrest, and then Bynner quotes her impressions of Lawrence: "He must be very unhappy. I am sorry for him" (132). Bynner himself does not clearly express disapproval of Lawrence's act, yet he reflects the others' reactions which emphasize Lawrence's intolerance, and then, he shows his efforts to overcome his friend's negative influence:

Bynner was afraid of "becoming like him," but the other people's description of Lawrence assured him that he was actually far from the selfish author. By thus underlining Lawrence's selfishness and childishness, Bynner yet again successfully turns himself into a heroic character in this scene.

Bynner's description indeed seems to clarify the distinction between the generous minded, unprejudiced Bynner and the narrow-minded racist Lawrence. Bynner, consequently, thus closes the description of this incident: "I did realize now a deep-seated jealousy in Lawrence's nature which he would have been the last to acknowledge but which he could not unseat" (133). Here, he describes that Lawrence did not care about the orphans' behavior, but because they seemed to attach themselves to Bynner, Johnson, and Frieda, and ignored Lawrence, he became jealous and harshly treated the children simply out of jealousy. That is, in Bynner's view, even though he did not wish to admit it himself, Lawrence lost his temper whenever he could not be in the center of attention. Bynner, by thus describing Lawrence as a person full of jealousy and immaturity, is likely to disfigure the image of the renowned writer. The incident itself seems trivial, yet the damage caused by its description indeed seems irrecoverable.

According to Yoshio Inoue, however, this episode is totally denied in Frieda's letter to Murry, where she indicates that Bynner made up Lawrence's action of calling and bringing a police officer to the hotel. She instead suggests the possibility of the hotel owner's or other guests' having reported the incidents to the police. [3] Inoue argues that, because Frieda had no reason to lie to Murry long after her husband's death, Bynner's episode cannot possibly communicate the truth (211). Yet considering Frieda's letter was written more than thirty years after this incident, there may be a possibility that she had already forgotten all about the orphans' incident and its aftermath. We cannot trust Frieda's letter to be completely based on actual incidents, so it is not really possible for us to judge whether Bynner's episode is based on facts or not. If we are to trust

Frieda, however, Bynner goes beyond the boundary of fictionalization and subjective viewpoint acceptable in a biographer.

Concerning the orphans' episode, Inoue also argues that Bynner's "reflection" over it in the thirty-first chapter, "Reflections Again," exposes his stupidity and unreasonableness (211). That is, in this chapter, Bynner reveals that, even though he could not accept Lawrence's harsh treatment of the orphans at the time of their arrest, later he found that Lawrence's judgment might have been "more reasonable" than he first thought (181), which entirely contradicts his condemnation of Lawrence in the earlier chapter and thus exposes his malicious intention to degrade Lawrence. Bynner consequently quotes a letter to his mother, in which he describes the Mexican children's behavior as beyond his toleration:

> They are learning too readily to ask for cigarettes; and when they vie with one another, scrambling up to dive from my shoulders, they tear my bathing suit and dig me with their fingernails. I learn also, as I accumulate more Spanish, that their large-eyed, sparkling gaiety depends to a great degree upon obscenities. ... I have found, as Lawrence warned me I should, that their light fearlessness becomes almost impertinence, an easygoing ingratitude. Good as one might be to them, they often act like suspicious animals, holding away on the instant, remote. "They would betray you in a moment," declared Lawrence. "I let my servants know yesterday that I had brought back considerable money from Guadalajara. It was very foolish of me." (181)

Inoue criticizes the way Bynner totally fails to describe the possible righteousness of Lawrence in the chapter "Orphans," and then suddenly exposes it in the later chapter. In his opinion, that attitude of Bynner is

far from the "American way of expressing honesty," but merely the indicative of his silliness and thoughtlessness (212). In my view, however, as discussed in Chapter I, Bynner does not merely follow the incidents chronologically, but intends to show the process of truthfully perceiving Lawrence's "genius" and reasoning. The readers can possibly misjudge Lawrence's way of thinking in the earlier chapter, guided by Bynner's narration, yet, because he openly admits his lack of judgment and misinterpretation later on, it is Bynner himself, not Lawrence, who would seem ridiculous and unreasonable to the readers' eyes in the chapter, "Reflections Again." What he presents in these two chapters is actually the victory of Lawrence over Bynner. Contrary to Inoue's argument, therefore, Bynner rather attempts to dramatically reveal Lawrence's incomparable gift both as a writer and a human being, which would seem far more superior to his own, to the readers.

Because Bynner presents these episodes as "facts" in the form of a biography or a memoir, the readers would find it difficult to interpret some parts of them as fictions guided by Bynner's creative impulse as an artist. This fictionalization, in the sense that it is not fully supported by evidence, indisputably reflects Bynner's critical opinions of Lawrence, yet it is also possible to state that Bynner deliberately blurs the boundary between fictions and facts. In other words, his aim lies in expanding the definition of a "biography" and a "memoir," and thus challenges the literates who tend to view them merely as life stories based on facts. Considering that the readers do not possess a measure to prove the written descriptions of those incidents to be perfectly true or not when they read the biography, we should put more emphasis on what intention the biographer embraces when he treats his subject rather cruelly and unsympathetically.

2. Bynner's Picture of Self-important Lawrence

Bynner's description also focuses on Lawrence's self-importance and sense of superiority, but his tone gradually softens as the memoir's pages move on. In the twenty-fourth chapter, "Notes and Letters," he introduces a part of his diary in an earlier day in which he severely criticizes the author: "D. H. Lawrence pushes everything. He vituperates any religion but his own—which is himself in a vacuum. He values the British Empire because he is himself its peak" (134). Here Lawrence is depicted as a person full of egocentrism and hatred for the others, yet Bynner simultaneously admits that those words of reproach were strongly influenced and misguided by his sense of "distrust" of Lawrence just after the orphans' incident (134). Again, this time difference exposes Bynner's weakness in judgment, so it could be interpreted as his means of self-condemnation. In the same chapter, he seems to search for the core of Lawrence's aloneness, irritation, and never-ending struggle with himself. He analyzes that Lawrence's harsh words indicate his tendency to "speak whatever he thought truth," yet the others hardly empathize with his opinions because it often seems "an imposed or transient truth—a truth felt irresponsibly under stress or impatience, rather than truth considered, orderly truth related from moment to month, from month to year, or to another individual however different from himself" (140). Here, apparently the harsh tone of his earlier diary somewhat diminishes, and he tries to construe Lawrence's impatience with people in a different light. That is, Lawrence's "truth" should be interpreted differently from the others essentially because of his sincerity and inclination toward instinct rather than intellect.

In the twenty-fifth chapter, "Agreements and Disagreements," Bynner furthers his discussion on Lawrence as a writer. He, again, alleviates to a great extent the former harsh tone of attacking Lawrence, and tries to

distinguish Lawrence as a person and as a writer. Here, he admits that Lawrence was not "an egocentric" as "a writing man," even though he looks like one in everyday life. He also states that, in spite of being senior to Lawrence, he was "younger in writers' egocentricity" (144). Here Bynner indicates that Lawrence deals with the subjects in his works much more sincerely and honestly than Bynner himself. That is, Lawrence profoundly reflects on his deeds, including his failures and misconducts, by projecting himself into his works, which Bynner cannot really succeed in doing so. Additionally, even though Lawrence tended to distance people in his real life, he affectionately and closely watched over his characters as the reflections of the people he knew in the real life. As an artist, Lawrence could free himself from the egocentrism and sense of superiority which somehow distanced him from the others in the real world.

In this chapter, Bynner furthermore explains about his "disagreements" with Lawrence, especially with "his own terms about other men." According to him, Lawrence could not have effortlessly valued friendship because he was too "important" for the other ordinary people (149). His extreme sense of superiority naturally kept himself from the others. Simultaneously, he also reveals that his own criticism of Lawrence can perhaps relate to Lawrence's "too overpowering" influence over him. He confesses that Lawrence's tempers had often strongly influenced him and he ended in becoming a temperamental person just like Lawrence. Furthermore, even in his writing and speech, Bynner found "reflections and echoes of Lawrence's way of seeing and saying things" (148). In these descriptions, he portrays Lawrence as a much more prevailing literary figure than Bynner himself. Accordingly, contrary to Inoue's or Moore's analysis of Bynner's narration as malicious, therefore, he actually aims to clarify the focal point of Lawrence's "genius."

When he attempts to differentiate Lawrence the writer from Lawrence the man, Bynner deliberately underlines Lawrence's egocentrism to present

the gap between what the author creates in his works and what he actually is in his everyday life. Mabel Dodge Luhan, in her review of *The Plumed Serpent*, argues that however hard an artist may try to "picture himself as he is," he is often "creating himself as he is not," reflecting in his works "his deep wish for perfection, rounding himself out, completing himself in his work" (qtd. in Udall 302). Her remarks at this point evidently coincide with Bynner's description of Lawrence[4]. Even though Bynner's attempt to point out every little gap existed between facts and fictions in Lawrence's works seems to contradict Luhan's definition of an artist, Bynner paradoxically reveals how Lawrence aims to create what he *wishes to be* and abandon what he really *is* in his creative writing. As in Luhan's expression, Lawrence "attempted to complete himself" in his writing (qtd. in Udall 302). Because the gap between his real life and creative world appears intolerably large to him, Lawrence's suffering becomes graver as he engages himself more intensely in his creative labor.

3. The Relationship between Lawrence and Frieda in Bynner's Eyes

As discussed in the first chapter, Bynner's memoir corrects and reinterprets the often misapprehended image of Frieda Lawrence. Viewing the way he pictures Frieda much more sympathetically in considerable parts of *Journey with Genius*, it is possible to see that Bynner employs her as a means of attacking Lawrence. That is, he depicts Frieda mainly as the victim of Lawrence's violence and venom. Lawrence's most violent treatment of his wife is exposed in the twenty-fifth chapter, where Lawrence tears the picture of Frieda's children into pieces in front of her and Bynner. Lawrence's extreme jealousy over her children emerged as early as the time of their elopement, and Frieda once wrote about her anger over his unreasonableness in her letter to Edward Garnett: "Over the

children I thought he was beastly; he hated me for being miserable, not a moment of misery did he put up with" (*Memoirs and Correspondence* 202). According to Bynner, that ill temper of Lawrence was revealed when Frieda talked about her children to Bynner, clasping their picture to her breast. Ostensibly, Lawrence tore the picture simply out of jealousy, but Bynner narrates that, after the outburst, he followed his wife to their bedroom, soothingly saying, "It was better" for her to take her mind off her children (1953, 151).[5] In this episode, Bynner suggests that, even though Lawrence appeared like a whimpering child full of jealousy and unreasonable possessiveness at a first glance, he was well aware that thinking about her parted children would not do Frieda any good after that long period of separation. His actions might seem quite instinctive and vehement, but in those behaviors, tenderness toward his wife was contained.

Bynner also points out the much less examined side of Frieda—her devotion and emotional support for her husband, which many scholars and biographers on Lawrence have failed to notice. In fact, many of his biographers and acquaintances portray her as a destructive matriarch of a woman. For instance, F. R. Leavis, in his monumental study on Lawrence, *D. H. Lawrence: Novelist* (1955), slanders her as having "no home, and having abandoned her children, no maternal function.[6]" He further places her in a much more minor position than her husband, determining that "she had no place in any community, no social function, and nothing much to do." In his viewpoint, we should "pay tribute to" Lawrence's remarkable intelligence by which he had surpassed "the limiting and disabling effects of personal history and the accidents of situation" (49). What Leavis indicates here as "the limiting and disabling effects" in Lawrence's life is undoubtedly his marriage to Frieda, to which he alludes as one of the "accidents" in the genius's life. In Leavis' picture, indeed, Frieda was nothing but a nuisance and disadvantage for Lawrence which he had struggled to overcome, and this one-sided categorization of Frieda into the

stereotype of a much less intellectual wife who doted on her husband's reputation as a genius, shaped her image for a long period.

In fact, as in Rosie Jackson's observation, Frieda was "already construed in ways that set up traditional gender stereotypes" (12). Mabel Dodge Luhan, in her memoir on Lawrence, *Lorenzo in Taos,* labels Frieda as almost brainless when she describes her as "the mother of orgasm and of the vast, lively mystery of flesh" who tied her husband and made him "incomplete and limited" as if he were "a lively lamb tied to a solid stake" (37). Jessie Chambers, in her letter to Helen Corke written after Lawrence's death, compares Lawrence to "a caged panther lashing himself into a fury to find some way out of his strait prison" (Corke 40), and thus underlines Frieda's matriarchy and possessiveness, which could possibly ruin Lawrence's gift. Their unfavorable comments on Frieda, however, would seem to be the means of glorifying Lawrence's exceptional gift as a writer in contrast, considering their excessiveness and over-simplification.

Even though Frieda might not have intellectually guided her husband, she had surely been the most significant emotional support for Lawrence. For example, she pointed out Lawrence's profound attachment to England: although he was not "patriotic," to Frieda, he seemed to represent "England itself," that is, "a flower sprung out of its most delicate, courageous tradition" (Jackson 172). Here Frieda quite compassionately analyzes the contradiction between Lawrence's avoidance of staying in England and his unconscious longing for returning to the country, which undeniably reveals her perception and thoughtfulness. Bynner further clarifies how Frieda had contributed to the making of Lawrence as a gifted author:

> While I was listening to her, I was thinking that Lawrence was theater and Frieda was life, he shadow she substance, he calculation she spontaneity, he tentative she assured, he lightning she rainful thunder. I did not always trust what he

> said; but what she said, yes. Sometimes I had found myself listening to her to hear what he was meaning. And it is so in his books: his own many voices are confused, her one voice rings clear—comes out of his pages, alive. She needed no shift from country to country. She was herself the earth, the home, while he was the constant change of houses. (1953, 63- 64)

As Bynner often suggests, Lawrence can hardly cultivate substantial human relationships with people in the real world, yet to fill in the missing area, Frieda often speaks for her husband. In short, she functions as a mediator between her husband and the people in the real world. Indeed, Bynner himself often inquired of Frieda about the true interpretation of Lawrence's enigmatic words and expressions, or the reasons for his sudden outbursts, and each time he was utterly convinced by her explanation. Even though she valued the freedom of her own self-expression, as Jackson points out, "she was no model for independent woman" (3) and had "no longing for worldly success" (7) for herself. She, as the wife of the "genius," rather embraced Lawrence's popular success as the world's recognition of his creative, inner life. As Bynner observes, with her "absolute animal sense of security," Frieda had "powerfully directed the genius" (351). Her own words indicate that she had regarded "Lawrence's genius" as a gift "given to" her, and felt "deeply responsible for what he wrote." For that sense of responsibility, she dared to fight with Mabel Dodge Luhan, when she said that she didn't think Frieda was "the right woman for Lawrence." To those intrusive words, Frieda defiantly responded: "Try it then yourself, living with a genius, see what it is like and how easy it is, take him if you can" (qtd. in Jackson 165).

Frieda's guidance and contribution to Lawrence's creative process as a writer have been mostly unnoticed or ignored, and it is noteworthy that Bynner's memoir focuses on that role of hers. Moore also examines the

Lawrences' seemingly turbulent relationship rather favorably, stating, "At the deepest level, the Lawrences were inextricably bound to one another," yet since their quarrels and arguments were "dramatic and violent," they would seem more conspicuous and prolonged than their "period of quietness, sweetness, and gaiety" (268). Here, even though Moore aims to describe the couple as fairly and positively as possible, he totally misses Frieda's constant efforts to sustain their relationship as it was. Moore simply regards the biographers' misinterpretations of the couple's relationship as their failures to recognize "Lawrence's tenderness and gentleness" as well as "his irritability" (268).

Jackson argues that the difficulties in discussing the relationship between Lawrence and Frieda can be found in the way their lives and characters "have been transmuted into myth." Additionally, this "mythologizing process" has created the image of Lawrence as a "prophet," and "the priest of love." Indeed, his aim to justify passion and erotic love as a necessary means of "restoring human vitality" have made it necessary for his own marriage to be "legendary. " Because of that need, Frieda has often been construed as "the incarnation of Womanhood" (4). This categorization of Frieda as the representative of womanhood can also stem from Lawrence's tendency to present women "only as examples" and thus "undervalue individuality in women" in his works (Pullin 50). Bynner's attempt, on the other hand, has revealed Frieda's individuality as a substantial being, minutely and sometimes too insistently describing the Lawrences' arguments and quarrels in their daily lives. Although he on occasion seems to attack Lawrence's violence and cruelty on his wife, Bynner rather intends to draw out Frieda's sense of security than to underline Lawrence's irritation. In summary, his intimate and devoted observation of the Lawrences effectively results in shedding a new light on their myth and legend and recreating a more substantial, unfeigned version of the renowned couple.

4. Lawrence as a Writer and Wanderer in Bynner's Eyes

While he praises Frieda's security and generosity, Bynner shows profound compassion toward Lawrence's insecurity and fear of other people, which seemingly contradict his sense of superiority and self-assuredness as a gifted writer. Bynner often criticizes Lawrence's characterization and way of narration in his works, and we will examine that aspect later in Chapter V, but he undoubtedly defends Lawrence's standing as a writer. In the thirty-eighth chapter titled "Seer," Bynner interprets Lawrence's feature as a prophet reexamined in his own insight. According to Bynner, while Lawrence saw himself as a "seer," that is, "his own identity was enough" to "know of the divine," he also seeks for "some myth of the outer" and "various deities" most of which were "created in his own image" (240). In explanation, because he thoroughly recognized his role as a prophet and also felt proud of it, Lawrence thought he only had to depend on his own instinct when cultivating the mystic world in his creative process. Yet he also felt that his identity alone was not enough to sustain his creative mind, so he suffered, looking for some divine existence which could emotionally support him. However, he often ended in finding only the reflection of himself after the search. What Bynner presents here, consequently, is a wandering artist who can never fill his "heart-emptiness" anywhere in the world.

Bynner introduces Lawrence's disapproving attitude toward "a mere thinker," that is, the "homeless" intellectual with a lack of the earthly bond and "its divine source." In Bynner's view, therefore, Lawrence detested someone who depended only on theory and despised his instinct and intuition. He saw those people as lacking substance and connection with the natural world. Yet, in his view, Lawrence still lingered as "the bewildered intellectual himself, wandering the earth in search of a natural home" (242-43). He continues to argue that, although Lawrence denies "all

proud pretensions of the intellect" and insists on the importance of "common sense" as "anybody's possession," he at the same time depends on "a prop of theory" to defend his view of "common sense." That is, while he distrusts the intellect, in the core of his mind, he longs more for theories than for common sense (243). Bynner then concludes that, if he had possessed more of Frieda's "fundament," Lawrence "would have been a happier native of the universe" (243). Bynner in these words argues that Frieda had successfully achieved a security of mind, directly and instinctively connecting herself with the real world, while Lawrence forever wandered between the worlds of intellect and instinct, so he could never make himself a secure being.

In spite of his outward criticism of Lawrence's ambivalence toward his view of intellect and common sense, Bynner does not necessarily deny Lawrence's role as a "seer." He rather insists that, because of his standing as a leading figure in the literary world, Lawrence could not fully abandon the "intellect." While Bynner pays tribute to Frieda's sense of security, he accepts the fact that a genius's creative labor often requires inconsistency, ambivalence, and homelessness. To prove this view, Bynner argues that, when he left "landscape," "animals and birds and real people," and left "the concrete, the objective" and turns to "idealism," "theory," or "monologues of" the theory, Lawrence never sees himself as "a theorist," but "a seer" (246). That is, as a "seer," he felt the need to guide and educate the others according to his "theory." His standing as a prophet makes his intellect also instinctive and intuitive because it is partly a gift naturally given to a "genius."

Speaking of the characters in *The Plumed Serpent*, Bynner argues that they do not only "join the author," but frequently become "the author" himself because of Lawrence's tendency to interrupt his characters "with his own rhapsodic or vehement chatter" (213). Bynner's analysis here poses a question as to why Lawrence cannot fully describe his characters as

themselves, not as his mouthpiece or spokesperson. Bynner suggests, then, Lawrence does not let his characters speak for themselves because he often fails to trust the others full-heartedly. Even his characters, once set apart from himself, would become foreign to him because of his absolute aloneness and feeling of detachment. As in Bynner's observation, Lawrence suspects that he might be "the only being, both natural and noble" (159) , so his characters dissatisfy him. John Middleton Murry, in his memoir on Lawrence, *Son of Woman*, presents a similar view on Lawrence's longing for dictatorship:

> Lawrence was completely divided between love and hatred. He was impatient of his fellow-men, and he was impatient of any sacrifice of his own freedom. A leader of men must be tolerant, and he must subdue himself to his followers; he is the head of a body, and he must never forget the body, by which and in which alone he has his being as a leader. This essential and instinctive self-submission was completely alien to Lawrence's nature. He was impatient with himself; how could he be patient of others? (Murry 150-51)

Murry and Bynner share the view that Lawrence's inner division had made him unable to achieve his leadership, and neither of them denies Lawrence's impatience with people. However, while Murry views Lawrence as a totally self-centered, unsympathetic being and denounces any possibility of his leadership, Bynner argues that Lawrence's irritation originates from his never-solved struggle with his characters and also with himself. Moreover, Murry indicates that Lawrence's "dreams" for leadership can possibly mean "being a leader in America" mainly because *Women in Love* was enthusiastically received by Americans, which gave the author "the first taste of popular success" (151). In this analysis, Murry

naively identifies Lawrence's yearning for "leadership" with his search for worldly success, saying that it may possibly harm the author's sincere struggle for artistic creativity. Murry's view on Lawrence here, therefore, apparently contradicts Moore's argument that, unlike Bynner, he "at least saw him as a figure on the grand scale" (646).

In Bynner's insight, on the other hand, Lawrence's inner-division and self-contradiction contain far more complexity. Lawrence aimed to portray and seek for the genuine leadership in Don Ramon and Cipriano in *The Plumed Serpent*, and identify his own image with the "vast wildness" of Mexico, but he also detected that, "save himself, nobles were not natural and naturals were not noble." Lawrence, seeing himself as a prophet, sensed that he was the only being who could connect nobleness and savageness and create a well-balanced, ideal world based on that connection. Yet because he could not depend upon any instinct and intuition but his own, he ended in seeing himself as groundless and insecure. Accordingly, while Mexico was undeniably fascinating to him just as expressed in Kate's fear and fascination of Mexico, it also "frightened" him. Therefore, he had to continue his search for the ideal noble savage until he could find "surcease in the most primitive land of all, the land where no inhabitant, apparently, disappoints" (159). That is to say, while Mexico's primitiveness fascinated Lawrence, its people frightened and even disgusted him because of their lack of nobleness. Therefore, he had no choice but to seek his ideal world solely in a land with "no inhabitants," that is, in total aloneness. In this analysis, Bynner shows a profound sense of understanding for the genius. The author aimed to compensate for what he lacked in the real world, the authentic leadership and noble savageness, in his creative world. Yet he failed to find any being equal to his genius even among his characters, so he ended in using his own voice instead of theirs.

Moreover, even though Bynner repeatedly points out Lawrence's aloofness, he concurrently tries to clarify the reason for it and justify his deeds by closely examining it. The thirty-sixth chapter, "Would-Be Aristocrat," thoroughly analyzes the contradiction between Lawrence's craving for friendship and aloneness. In Bynner's eyes, Lawrence longed for friendship because it "diminished loneliness." In Lawrence's and Bynner's view, moreover, "loneliness" and "aloneness" have different meanings. Frieda was together with Lawrence even "in his aloneness," but "he could be lonely" even when he was by her side (222). That contradiction can be found in Don Ramon's intention of attaining the leadership while he wants to "detest and despise masses of people" even though they are his "own people" (*Plumed Serpent* 226). Ramon believes that "one must disentangle oneself from persons and personalities, and see people as one sees the trees in the landscape" because "humanity dominates" human consciousness (*Plumed Serpent* 227). Ramon's remarks here sound quite condescending, but they actually contain his unconquerable fear of people. He urgently needs his people's support to attain his leadership, yet the same people, even the seemingly faithful Cipriano, can dominate his "consciousness." Lawrence, likewise, desperately needed Frieda's support to sustain his being as an artist, but, as in Ann Smith's argument, her "matriarchal, Queen Bee assumptions, combined with her aristocratic background" possibly frustrated and terrified him (26), and this intimidation was located at the core of Lawrence's loneliness and aloneness.

Even though Lawrence searched for noble savageness in New Mexico and Mexico, their primitiveness and fearlessness scared him and made him reject them. In truth, his intellectual and theoretical superiority, which he was well aware of, distanced himself from others. For that reason, "he had been lonely in Chapala, as he would have been lonely anywhere." Yet he also sensed that he could not make himself a satisfactory being only through his efforts (Bynner 1953, 222). Lawrence's failure to blend himself

into the life in Chapala, as Bynner thus clarifies, encloses his masked wish to remain an Englishman with "his insistence upon caste among men." Yet the "caste" in this case signifies "the naturally ordained superiority of individuals," that is, what Bynner and Lawrence call the "native aristocracy," in which the genius is destined to face his creative labor with his "aloneness" and "loneliness" (1953, 222).

Bynner often presents himself as a companionable, congenial individual, which sets him apart from Lawrence. Yet as he approaches the latter part of his memoir, particularly after the "Hospital" episode, he begins to detect their shared interests and way of thinking. The tenderness Lawrence showed at the hospital made Bynner aware of the humane side of Lawrence, and he discovered that, despite the conflict between Lawrence's "dark center" and Bynner's "light head," between Lawrence's defense of "divinely anointed leadership" and Bynner's "humanly appointed fellowship," they had been "quietly drawn together" (Bynner 1953, 218). Lawrence, in spite of, or owing to, his intellectual superiority over others, could not make the others follow him as a dictator, nor could he make himself a follower because he found any other person unsatisfactory as a leader. Perhaps for the very same reason, Bynner valued fellowship over aloneness. He abandoned attaining leadership himself, nor did he search for it in any other person, so he tried to achieve an ideal fellowship among people.

Bynner's negative portrait of Lawrence in the earlier chapters, in summary, turns into an appreciative, supportive one as he "reflects" on and "recounts" their meetings, debates, and disagreements. His exposition of Lawrence's turbulence, violence, aloofness, and childishness may seem exceedingly meticulous and hostile at a first glance, yet it surely dramatizes the process of Bynner's discovering the author's genius and also, humanness. The presentation of that process itself, in addition, shows the readers how Lawrence, both as an artist and a human being, has been

misconstrued by the public. By faithfully presenting his own misguided process of dealing with the "genius," Bynner paradoxically has drawn out the goodness and "genius" of Lawrence.

Notes

[1] Brenda Maddox, in her biography of Lawrence, *The Married Man: A Life of D. H. Lawrence,* narrates how Bynner, on the night of the Lawrences' arrival, invited Alice Corbin Henderson, a poet and a former assistant editor of *Poetry* who invited Bynner to Santa Fe in 1922. Then the three of "the Santa Fe literary establishment," Bynner, Henderson, and Johnson, were eager to see what the celebrated author would be like. (323)

[2] Mabel Dodge Luhan, despite her prolonged longing for meeting Lawrence, could not clearly recall her first impression of him. Her impression, actually, was very similar to that of Bynner: "I had an impression of his slim fragility beside Frieda's solidity, of a red beard that was somehow too old for him, and of a nervous incompetence" (Luhan 36).

[3] For the details of Frieda's letter, refer to Frieda Lawrence, *The Memoirs and Correspondence* (London: Heinemann, 1961), and for a more comprehensive discussion on the chapter, "The Orphans," refer to Inoue 202-212.

[4] Bynner, by contrast with Moore's unfavorable review of Mabel Luhan's memoir on Lawrence (354), *Lorenzo in Taos,* received the book quite approvingly, stating, "It is a vivid and in many ways a courageous book, since it does not spare the author any more than it spares other figures appearing in it," but he also

reveals that Luhan's description of Lawrence exceedingly bothered Frieda. (Bynner 346)

[5] David Garnett, when he and his wife Constance met with the Lawrences in England, and faced Frieda's strong wish to see her children and Lawrence's jealousy over it, sided with her without any hesitation. He thus recalls his confrontation with the Lawrences: "It was difficult" for him "not to be shocked by" Lawrence's jealousy of Frieda's love for her children (qtd. in Spencer 41). At that time, Frieda's attempts to see her children "had reached a crisis," and she became upset with Lawrence's ignoring of her distress. The couple then started a fierce fight in front of the Garnetts. Constance, while she sympathized with Frieda's suffering, saw that her "insensitivity" made Lawrence "literally scream in anguish" (Feinstein 101-102).

[6] Frieda responded to Leavis's comment—the denial of her maternity, by writing a letter to him in 1956, in which she insisted that she was undoubtedly "maternal." (*Memoirs and Correspondence* 374)

Chapter III

"Fiction," "Facts" and Characters in a Biography

In Chapter II, we examined how Bynner's negative descriptions of Lawrence in *Journey with Genius* have been transformed into favorable ones as the memoir approaches the end. This chapter, accordingly, aims to articulate how Bynner *fictionalizes* the events in the Lawrences' life in *Journey with Genius*, and what he intends to do in that fictionalization. Of course, we cannot perfectly prove if the incidents narrated as "facts" in a biography are "truth" or not. This chapter's argument would rather focus on how that fictionalization can draw out the essential part of the subject, in Lawrence's case, his genius, based on the assumption that Bynner fictionalized or distorted some events narrated in his memoir for his creative purpose. In the previous chapter, I argued that Bynner attempts to draw out Lawrence's genius and tenderness by paradoxically revealing his unfavorable side first in the earlier chapters in his memoir. This can be seen as undoubtedly a manipulation of truth. If we change the viewpoint, however, Bynner's attempt to blur the distinction between fiction and facts may indicate his intention to employ his subject to depict not only Lawrence as an individual but also as a universal symbol of "a genius."

Moore's critical view of *Journey with Genius,* that Bynner's description contains considerable "attacks" on Lawrence (453), would be plausible if the readers construed "Lawrence" in this memoir solely as the actual author. Their views, then, would focus on the point whether the events in the memoir truly happened in his life or not. However, what if Bynner utilizes the image of Lawrence as a symbolic figure of "genius" in his vision? Since he employs the actual name of the renowned literary giant in the form of a biography, it might be difficult to distance the Lawrence in Bynner's description from the actual author, yet he possibly searches for his

own image of "genius" mirrored in Lawrence. That is, what he really intends to offer in this work may not be Lawrence himself but a fictional character named Lawrence the genius. Significantly, Bynner repeatedly underlines how demanding it had been for him to deal with Lawrence in his memoir. The emphasis on Lawrence's difficult personality does not necessarily signify Bynner's attack on Lawrence, but it reflects Frieda's challenging remark to Mabel Luhan, in which she suggests that "living with a genius" is far from "easy" (qtd. in Jackson 165). While Bynner employs the popular image of the famous author to some extent, he also creates a vision of a character called "a genius" who can greatly influence others' lives. He may have over-dramatized some events or episodes for the purpose of underlining the difficulties and hardships which any "genius" has to go through during his/her lifetime. Being different from the others, that is, being intellectually far superior to the ordinary, naturally causes problems and struggles in one's life. In this chapter, consequently, we will examine *Journey with Genius* mostly as a fiction based on actual events and people, and figure out where a boundary between fact and fiction in a biography may be traced.

1. The Interpretation of "Truth" in Bynner's Memoir

For biographers, the way they interpret facts in their works ought to be of great significance. They firstly collect factual information on their subjects as the primary sources of their works, but the value of their biographies ought to be found in their method of interpretation of those facts. As discussed in the Introduction of this thesis, different versions of one's life story can exist because each biographer nurses a different interpretation of the facts they collected. Kendall argues that, for a biography to "exist at all, it must feed upon the truth of facts, and yet to

exist on its highest level, it must pursue the truth of interpretation" (xvi). That is to say, biographies should be based on facts in a certain individual's life, and biographers should be faithful to the facts they collected as the primary sources of their works, but they also have to possess a gift to interpret these facts truthfully and creatively just as novelists deal with their subjects. However, for biographers, it is extremely a difficult task to balance the two opposite elements, that is, facts and creativity. Kendall calls a biography: "a half rainbow, half stone" (xvi). Because the experiences biographers describe in their works do not exist in their internal world, but they are happenings outside of their private world, to transform the facts into their creative works, the biographers have to acquire enormous creative power of interpretation.

In Bynner's case, however, the basic required assumption for a biography, its need to be *factual*, can be blurred owing to the lack of evidence for his episodes. As Nadel argues, a biographer "transforms his chronicle to story through the process of emplotment." During that process, however, "the suppression or subordination of certain events" occurs (8). Just as a novelist does, a biographer tries to find the main theme of his/her creative work first. In Bynner's case, it is the way how a "genius" deals with his own life and art. Then Bynner picks up the events and episodes which are likely to fit into his own concept of a genius, and molds the sources into a piece of creative work. The pieces of information may possibly contain facts, yet in the process of, or on the way to *connecting* or *arranging* them, imagination adds some new elements to them. That means they are not necessarily reported in a chronological order, or some crucial facts in the subject's life are omitted to fit more perfectly into the biographer's concept of his subject and the main theme of his work. As discussed in the previous chapter, the episode of the orphans quite relentlessly exhibits Lawrence's irritable, self-centered nature, but since Bynner had already become familiar with Lawrence's tenderness during his

hospitalization by the time he wrote this memoir, he purposely hid the "truth" of Lawrence's nature when narrating that episode. In the earlier chapter, he hides the "truth" for the purpose of dramatically exposing the author's internal self in the later chapters. This can be recognized as Bynner's tactic to induce the readers to accept his vision of a "genius".

Bynner's memoir, however, seems complicated and tricky when we face his too insistent account of the "facts" on which Lawrence's novels are based. Bynner himself arranges and reorders actual events in the subject's life to suit his creative purpose, not presenting enough factual evidence. Nevertheless, he points out the incongruities between the scenes and experiences depicted in Lawrence's works, and seems to severely criticize the characterization Lawrence made in them. *The Plumed Serpent* especially becomes the target of his criticism. He points out how the experiences of Kate and Owen are different from the actual events that Lawrence and Bynner encountered in Mexico. For example, concerning the first chapter, "Beginnings of a Bull-fight," Bynner insists that the bull-fight scene of *The Plumed Serpent* greatly differs from the one they actually experienced during their stay in Mexico. He argues that this discrepancy originates from the weakness and irritability in Lawrence's nature and his intention to cover up that weakness behind his characters. To clarify this point, Bynner thus interprets the characterization of Kate Leslie and Owen Rhys in his memoir:

> It at once became evident that the protagonist, Kate Leslie, was a fusion of himself [Lawrence] and Frieda, the hand the hand of Frieda but the voice the voice of Lawrence, that Owen Rhys, her cousin, was I and that Owen's friend, Bud Villiers, was Johnson. My belief then and that he had intended our continuing to play rather ignominious American roles throughout the novel but that, having come to know and like us better, he mercilessly let us out

> of it.
>
> ……………………………………………….
>
> Lawrence in the book reversed his own life-flow sufficiently to transfer to the Frieda half of Kate his own emotion and actions at the bullfight. It is the woman, Kate, who cries out her disgust and rises and leaves, with unchivalrous Owen failing to accompany her. Though it had been Lawrence who initiated and arranged attendance at the *corrida*, when Kate says in the book, "I'm not very keen on going," Owen replies, "Oh, but why not? I don't believe in them on principle, but we've never seen one, so we shall have to go." (1953, 57–58)

Bynner argues that it was Lawrence who first insisted on going to see the bullfight yet felt disgusted with its violence and bloodiness and could not see it through. Frieda, on the other hand, calmly saw through the bullfight. When he describes Kate as "the hand the hand of Frieda but the voice the voice of Lawrence," Bynner means that Kate's courageous attitude and dignity, which sometimes overwhelms Owen and Villiers, comes from Frieda, but Kate's inner self, her indecisiveness and fear of Mexico and its people, is surely the reflection of Lawrence. That is, he indicates that Lawrence tries to wrap his fear of Mexicans in Kate's/Frieda's courageous and dignified attitude. Bynner also argues that Lawrence reversely employs the episode to turn Kate into a brave heroine while he depicts Owen, who is modeled on Bynner, as an inconsiderate and shallow American. Kate finally agrees to go to the bullfight only because of Owen's insistent request. Yet Bynner considers that "it would have been a feat to overcome Lawrence" (58). Here, he means that if Kate were Lawrence, Owen/Bynner could not forcibly make her go see the bullfight against her will. Here he implies that Lawrence attempts to make Kate's words and actions consistent while in reality his deeds were full of discrepancy and

confusion. The disgust Lawrence felt at the arena is clearly transferred into Kate, but her show of disgust with the bullfight reflects Frieda's solidness and bravery.

The eighth chapter of *Journey with Genius*, titled "The Bullfight," describes the actual happenings Bynner witnessed at the bullfight scene. In Bynner's narration, Lawrence is portrayed as nothing but a coward who cannot face the brutality of its atmosphere and the Mexican spectators. The crowd of spectators, looking like "a single mass monster," irritated all four of Bynner, Johnson, the Lawrences, yet Lawrence's reaction was exceptional: He "whispered" to Bynner, "I begin to feel sick" of the scene. "Look at their faces. The eyes don't seem hard, or the mouths. It's that cruel dent of relish above the nostril" (48). These are the words Lawrence used to describe the spectators' faces, and if they were quoted exactly as he said, it would undoubtedly reveal Lawrence's fear of their brutality and fearlessness. Then, when the hats and orange peels "began flying," and a shoe "landed in Lawrence's lap," he became increasingly impatient and insisted that they all should immediately leave the arena (49).

When a huge bull appeared on the arena and faced his enemies, the horsemen and toreros, the animal defiantly rushed toward them. During the bull's fight, Lawrence apparently sided with him, criticizing the toreros as "dastardly" (50). Bynner's depiction of the bullfight scene is quite picturesque and sympathetic toward the bull, which seems to reflect Lawrence's gaze upon the cornered animal. Bynner could then detect that "the teasing of the beast, the deliberate baiting and angering had made him (Lawrence) as tense as the animal, with whom he was almost identifying himself" (50). Here, why does Bynner suggest that Lawrence identified himself with the tormented bull which was kept "starved and in the dark," so when the animal reached the ring, "he's angry but can't see" (50)? In fact, even though that portrayal of Lawrence includes a sign of his cowardice and fear when he avoids looking at the bull, his compassionate

feeling toward the animal does not merely originate from his fear. Lawrence found in the bull's desperate fight a total aloneness and loneliness, which can be compared to an artist's inner struggle. Bynner's subsequent quotation from Lawrence's own words further clarifies this point:

> "... He's the only one among them with heart or brain. He despises them, but he knows what they are; he knows that he's done for. The toreador jumped the fence to get away from the bull; the bull jumped the fence to get away from the lot of them. They let the toreador get away. Why don't they let the bull get away?" he exhorted us. "Why don't they respect his intelligence and bow to him instead of to those nincompoops in the box? He's not the brute; they're the brutes. He abhors them and so do I. But he can't get away and I can. Let's get away." He was on his feet. None of us stirred to follow him. He sat down again. (50)

Lawrence shows his own profound feeling of alienation in his description of the suffering animal. Frieda is apparently fascinated with and curious about the unaccustomed scene of the bull fight, saying "The bull is beautiful, Lorenzo" (49), and Bynner and Johnson, as described in the quotation above, even though they admit the bullfight's brutality and the spectators' rudeness, do not seem to have any intention of leaving the exciting exhibition. Bynner explains to Lawrence that he wants to stay "to know what we're talking about when we say we don't like it" (50). In this group, only Lawrence cannot see through the fight because of his fear of the brutal fighting scene and sympathy with the animal, while the others, even his wife, enjoy watching the spectacle without hesitation. Curiously enough, Lawrence personifies the bull, describing him as a creature with

intelligence and far superior to Mexican horsemen and toreros. Therefore, Lawrence, feeling disgusted with Bynner, Johnson, and Frieda, calls them "as bloodthirsty as the rest of them" (50). Lawrence thus transforms his fear into his sense of superiority: At least, he is much more sophisticated than these "brutes," that is, the spectators who shamelessly enjoy the bloody battle.

This bull, however, suddenly turns into a "brute," having totally abandoned his grace and "intelligence," and begins to fiercely attack the blindfolded horse. During the bull's violent attack, Lawrence cries to him, "Stop it," but the horse's belly was mercilessly ripped out and it was instantly killed, with "his contents out on the ground" (Bynner 1953, 51). This bloody attack, then, completely breaks Lawrence's nerve. The bull's bravery and intelligence turns out to be excessive brutality. Lawrence then vehemently deplores the spectators' satisfaction with the bloody show in Spanish, and heads for the exit. Frieda then follows him. Bynner and Johnson also feel revolted by the bloody show, but they stay perhaps to avoid facing Lawrence's outburst. Lawrence's actions seem immature and impulsive, yet this incident, fictionalized and dramatized through the author's imagination, is to symbolically embellish the opening of *The Plumed Serpent.*

2. Kate Leslie—the Reflection of Lawrence

According to James Kraft,[1] the "faults" and weakness of Bynner's biography lie in "its length" and "too-insistent making of points" (104). Kraft does not actually clarify in which part of Bynner's memoir he has found a lack of evidence or distortion of truth. Nevertheless, more significantly, Kraft emphasizes Bynner's "too-insistent" attitude toward Lawrence's description of Kate Leslie at the bullfight. Bynner's argument

focuses on how Lawrence idealizes the heroine as his alter ego. Kate and Lawrence share a considerable number of characteristics. Lawrence was forty years old when he wrote this novel, just as Kate is. Moreover, as Alastair Niven says, Lawrence "was torn between abandoning Europe for ever by settling amongst an unsophisticated community, or returning there where he knew his cultural roots would always be" just as Kate is in the novel (69) . The bullfight Kate experiences at the beginning of the novel symbolizes her repulsion towards the "unsophisticated community," and this feeling in a way remains even after she decides to stay in Mexico. Therefore, Bynner's attempt to discuss the fictional and factual elements of this scene clarifies Lawrence's intention in creating Kate as his self-portrait.

In the middle of the bullfight, Kate decides to leave the arena, disgusted with the grotesqueness and extreme brutality of the fight. This action creates "a very hostile attitude in the audience" because "to leave the bull-fight is a national insult" (*Plumed Serpent* 19). Kate's action embarrasses her American cousin, Owen, but he can do nothing to stop her. Then, it begins to rain in the novel, while in the actual incident, Bynner tells us, Lawrence was not caught in any rain when he left the bull-fighting place. This observation would surely seem "too-insistent" and trivial, but in Bynner's opinion, the rain strengthens and prominently dramatizes Kate's predicament and aloneness (58). It also underlines the embarrassed feeling and helplessness of Owen who can do nothing but let Kate go back to the hotel by herself. In this scene, Owen appears much less heroic and courageous than Kate, but it does not simply mean that Lawrence's intention lies in ridiculing Bynner by describing Owen as a helpless being. On the other hand, the rain also plays a significant part in making Kate and Don Cipriano acquainted in the following scene. It is also possible to view the rain as a means to justify Kate's strong determination to leave the arena, but considering the connection to the next

scene, it would be more sensible to see the rain as an effective device to give Kate and Cipriano a chance to meet each other. Moreover, as a novelist, Lawrence transforms the facts into a fiction employing his creative mind. In that process, he molds the facts into the reflection of his inner truth, so he does not necessarily repeat the actual incident in his novel. Nonetheless, Bynner seems to ignore this basis and continues his investigation.

Paul Murray Kendall argues that, by connecting "his own experience and his imagination," the writer of fiction "creates a world, to which he attempts to give the illusion of reality." The biographer, on the other hand, employing and assembling "imperfectly recorded" experiences and facts, "recreates a world, to which he attempts to give something of the reality of illusion" (Kendall 8). Here Kendall suggests that, in essence, writers of fiction and biographers share the same traits. Both of them create an imaginative world inspired by actual incidents. Even though biographers recount the life of actual people, the actual incidents alone are not enough to communicate the truth in their subjects' life. Because the facts biographers have assembled for their works may not be perfect, to make the subjects look "real" as human beings to the readers, they need to fill the "imperfect" part of the actual experiences. Consequently the biographers, with the aid of their interpretative ability, need to create the "reality" supported by "illusion." Likewise, even though the readers of fiction are well aware that the incidents in a fiction invariably include the author's imagination and recreation of the actual incidents, they expect the fictional characters look "real" to them. The writers in both categories, therefore, struggle to balance the relation between facts and fiction in their works.

Leon Edel argues that novelists' tactics even include their pretenses of writing biographies or autobiographies as exemplified in the method of *Daniel Defoe* and Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield* (184)[2]. In this case, the author *pretends* to be the biographer of his main characters. For

example, Dickens narrates a life story of David Copperfield as if he were a person in the real world. All the readers surely recognize that David Copperfield is a fictional character, but nobody would be offended by the author's pretense. In the case of Lawrence's works, even though most of his fictions do not have a pretense of an autobiography or a biography, many readers would expect to see "autobiographical" elements in his works such as *Sons and Lovers*. On the other hand, the readers will not feel insulted even if they find some inconsistency between the fictional elements and the author's actual experiences.

Edel also points out that a biography should be distinguished from a branch of fiction because "it deals in provable and palpable fact, or in speculation about these facts after the manner of criticism." Edel then adds that "the most competent biographers seek a narrative technique suitable to the subject matter" (185). Here Edel suggests that, unlike works of fiction, biographies ought to deal with facts supported by evidence, and the biographers ought to discuss and contemplate on the sources in their own insight. Then, the biographers' narrative technique should also reflect the facts they collected as the primary sources of their subjects. The form of *Journey with Genius* may be partly untrue to this assumption of Edel because Bynner's criticism of Lawrence's values and ideas is not fully supported by factual evidence. Because of this narrative style and technique, Bynner and Lawrence in *Journey with Genius* would seem to be more like the characters in a novel.

As discussed in Chapter II, Bynner's narrative technique is unconventional in its ignoring of chronological order and the visibility of the biographer's presence throughout the work. Yet what if we assume that Bynner employs this technique because it is "suitable" to his subject matter? Bynner, as we saw in Chapter II, points out Lawrence's tendency to employ his own voice, often diminishing his characters'. Can Bynner's narrative technique, which makes the biographer's presence quite visible,

be seen as an imitation of Lawrence's narrative? Bynner's lengthy narration and "too-insistent" making of points in the bullfight scene, in a way, would seem similar to Lawrence's narrative style in the opening episode of the bullfight in *The Plumed Serpent*. The two writers' insistence can be found in different places and points, however, their styles and approaches to their subject matters would seem quite close to each other. Bynner, by thus adopting and imitating Lawrence's narrative style, possibly attempts to create a biography in the form of fiction.

It is possible to say, then, that Bynner aims to clarify and exemplify how a novelist should transfer his actual experiences into his fiction by revealing how Lawrence had actually transformed facts into fiction. Bynner's criticisms of Lawrence's transformation of real experiences, therefore, can be seen otherwise. According to Bynner, Lawrence not only dignifies Kate/Lawrence by portraying Owen/Bynner as a helpless person, he also omits some actual experiences after the bullfight to make Kate appear more courageous and dignified than the other characters. His point, however, rather lies in clarifying how profoundly the "bullfight" and its subsequent experience affected Lawrence the writer. Even though he showed a strong feeling of disgust toward the bullfight, Lawrence, in a way, was also caught by the scene. That is why he symbolically employed the scene at the beginning of *The Plumed Serpent*, and in fact, the bullfight's primitiveness and cruelty are the very elements which lead Kate, as the incarnation of Lawrence, both to reject and accept Mexico, its people, and in the end, the new religion, Quetzalcoatl.

When he refers to a scene where "the Pole and his Mexican friend" visit Owen and Villiers in their hotel, Bynner seems to severely attack Lawrence's distortion of the truth in *The Plumed Serpent* (58). According to Lawrence's book, the "Pole" says to Kate, "Ah, Miss Leslie, you missed the best part of it. –You missed all the fun!" (28), to which Kate replies "I don't want to hear. I don't want you to speak to me. I don't want to know you"

(29). Then Kate "looked at him once, then turned her back, sat down again, and took a pitahaya from the fruit plate" (29) as if nothing happened. Yet, as Bynner thus indicates, Lawrence totally omits the following conversation between the Pole and the Mexican, "their onslaught as to fox hunting," in his novel. In Lawrence's real life, the Pole and the Mexican did not stop talking, and even though Lawrence must have felt disgusted with them beyond control, unlike Kate, he could not silence them. Bynner insists, then, that Lawrence distorted and *corrected* the reality—his own helplessness—to make the actions of Kate/Lawrence appear more dignified and courageous (58). A close examination of this scene in the novel, just after Kate's rejection of the Pole's insolence, will clarify his point:

> The fellow went green, and stood a moment speechless.
>
> 'Oh, all right!" he said mechanically, turning away to the Spaniard who spoke American.
>
> 'Well—see you later!' said Owen rather hurriedly, and he went back to his seat at Kate's table.
>
> The two strange fellows sat at another table. Kate ate her cactus fruit in silence, and waited for her coffee. By this time she was not so angry, she was quite calm. And even Villiers hid his joy in a new sensation under a manner of complete quiet composure.
>
> When coffee came she looked at the two men at the other table, and at the two men at her own table.
>
> 'I've had enough of *canaille*, of any sort,' she said.
>
> 'Oh, I understand, perfectly,' said Owen.
>
> (*Plumed Serpent* 29)

In this scene, Kate's grandeur and calmness overwhelm the Pole to the point of making him "speechless." Because of Kate's strong will to reject

the Pole, Bynner and Villiers feel embarrassed since they can do nothing but drive him away to his own table. Kate's calmness and dignity also silence the two men at her table. Compared to her, the other men seem rather ridiculous and quite helpless. Therefore, Bynner's suggestion that Lawrence deliberately omitted the Pole's talk to glorify Kate/Lawrence can probably ring true. However, when we assume that, fiction does not necessarily repeat facts but a writer of fiction can transform them into something else according to his/her intention and imagination, Bynner's apparent ignoring of this premise does not seem a suitable attitude for a writer to discuss a work of another writer.

On the other hand, Bynner also points out that it is anybody's weakness to "improve his own role in remembrance and record of events," so Lawrence's correction of the facts in his work is quite understandable (59). Yet is this really all of Lawrence's intention in describing Kate as a more courageous and dignified being than himself? Actually, her reaction toward the bulls and toreadors in the arena reflects Lawrence's own. She sees the bullfight as "just a performance of human beings torturing animals, with those common fellows showing off" (*Plumed Serpent* 26), and identifies herself with the bull, saying, "Oh, I wish I could be a bull, just for five minutes" (*Plumed Serpent* 26). In the same way, Bynner's anecdote clarifies Lawrence's sympathy with the bull and horse. Therefore, Lawrence and Kate share a feeling of detestation toward the toreadors. Kate also questions the toreadors' showing off their "manliness," and says she is thankful of having been born as one of the women "who know poltroonery and dirty-mindedness" when they see them (*Plumed Serpent* 26). In this situation, Kate's being the only woman among the group is quite significant. While she detests the men's "strange perversity" in withstanding and even welcoming "the squalid, repulsive things" (26), she also has to struggle with her aloneness and loneliness surrounded by that

male perversity and brutality. In fact, she even finds some difficulty in communicating with Owen and Villiers because of her "womanness":

> She felt, moreover, that they both hated her first because she was a woman. It was all right so long as she fell in with them in every way. But the moment she stood out against them in the least, they hated her mechanically for the very fact that she was a woman. They hated her womanness.
>
> And in this Mexico, with its great under-drift of squalor and heavy, reptile-like evil, it was hard for her to bear up. (*Plumed Serpent* 28)

As described in this part, Kate feels alienated from her companions owing to her being a woman. The bullfight has been unbearable to her while the other men have obviously found, or have *tried* to find, some significance and pleasure in the scene. Kate's aloneness is the exact reflection of Lawrence's at the bullfight arena. Lawrence also sees himself as a sacrificial figure in the bull. As examined earlier, Bynner observes that Lawrence in the arena of the bullfight was "identifying himself with" the bull, seeing him as "the only one among them with heart or brain" (1953, 50), and thus praises the animal and despises the horsemen who deliberately tease him. Here, Lawrence compares himself to the bull because, just like bull, he is "the only one" who is sensitive and compassionate enough to understand the animal's predicament among the spectators. His sense of superiority, both intellectually and spiritually, also makes him an alienated being just like the bull in the fighting scene. Likewise, Kate sees her own solitary struggle with her fear of Mexico and its men in the sacrificed animal. Her disgust with the bullfight makes her decide to immediately leave the arena, but, remembering the body of the brutally killed horse, she can hardly pass through the excited crowd. She then senses the same

brutality and grotesqueness in the crowd as she sees in the bullfight. Kate is "afraid more of the repulsiveness than of anything" but she feels that "the one thing she must do was to keep her head" (*Plumed Serpent* 21). Her dignity and composure, then, is the means of evading and escaping from this inherent fear.

To clarify this point, we should examine Kate's condition just after she intimidates and overwhelms the other men at the dinner table in a dignified manner. When she retires to her room, she can hardly sleep, facing the silence and "the strange, grisly fear that so often creeps out on to the darkness of a Mexican night" (*Plumed Serpent* 29). In front of the men, she hides her fearful feelings and loneliness because she detects the men's veiled hatred toward her "womanness," but when she is left alone, she can do nothing but plunge herself deeply in her anxiety. Significantly, this fear originates from her being both a woman and a foreigner, and it remains throughout the novel, and finally this same fear makes her transform into a sacrificial being to Cipriano/Huitzilopochtli. In this sense, the grandeur and dignity Kate shows to the Pole, Owen and Villiers at a dinner table rather indicates her inner struggle with the unconquerable fear than her self-glorification. Kate *needs to* compose herself in front of foreigners and men because she knows that nobody will understand her fear, and Bynner's argument seems to ignore this crucial point.

While he points out the difference between the actual incidents and Lawrence's fiction in great detail, however, Bynner misrepresents some episodes of the novel in his memoir. Bynner reports that, in the actual incident, "the Pole" first spoke to Lawrence, and then "his Mexican friend" started a conversation on "fox hunting[3]" (1953, 58). He points out that Lawrence omits the talk on "fox hunting," but employs the first part of the conversation between the Pole and "his Mexican friend" as it actually happened. Bynner describes how Lawrence uses the expression, "his Mexican friend," in the novel, but in truth, in *The Plumed Serpent*,

Lawrence refers to the person as a "Spaniard who spoke American" who walks into the hotel dining room with the Pole and starts talking about the bullfight, which was silenced by Kate's rejection of the topic. Considering Bynner's particular insistence on details, it is difficult for us to see that Bynner confuses "Spaniard" with "Mexican" in his memory. The readers who are familiar with both works would notice Bynner's distortion of the truth immediately. It is possible to take it as his simple mistake, yet considering his insistence on details, it would be more sensible to view it as his deliberate scheme to turn this biography into a fiction. This scheme includes his aim to blur the boundary between a biography and a fiction, and thus Bynner attempts to create a more dramatic figure of Lawrence. This includes his message that, as a creative artist, he also possesses a license to transform his actual experiences into fictional ones even in a biography supposedly based on facts, so it can be interpreted as his challenge as an artist.

Bynner's insistent attempts to make points about Lawrence's work can be interpreted as much more complicated than mere verbal attacks. He argues that "Lawrence's sudden curt dismissing of people never, I believe, seemed a weakness to him but rather a genuine sign and resolute gesture of superiority" (59), and of course, the purpose of Lawrence's "gesture of superiority" is not merely self-glorification. Lawrence's dramatization in the portrait of Kate paradoxically reveals and underlines her helplessness and alienation from the others. Bynner's depiction of Lawrence also exposes the author's internal split and the solitary struggles of a "genius." Moreover, Bynner's deliberate misuse of "Mexicans" and "Spaniards" can be seen as an attempt to make fun of his own self. He aims to present the process in which an author employs the actual in the fictional. Through the act of fictionalization, the author underlines and dramatizes the characters' inner struggle more vividly. In the end, Bynner the point-maker seems more ridiculous compared to Lawrence's efforts to

draw out Kate's grand solitary battle with her life. Therefore, even though Bynner seems to ridicule Lawrence in his meticulous description, actually he ridicules himself more by that, and so it is his own way of drawing out the "genius" in Lawrence.

3. The Relation between Imagination and Fact in Fiction

As examined in the previous parts, Bynner's memoir poses a fundamental question concerning the relation between fact and fiction in a biography. In Kendall's argument, "the 'fictionalized' biography simulates life but does not respect the materials at hand." On the other hand, "the fact-crammed" biography respects "the materials at hand but does not simulate a life" (15). "The fact-crammed" biography is a work filled with the factual evidence of the subject's life, yet the biographer does not fully employ his creative mind. Nor does he aim to seek the fundamental "truth" in the subject's life because he fails to identify himself with the subject. "The fictionalized biography," on the other hand, is not necessarily supported by enough factual evidence, but the biographer, by intensely employing his creative mind, often identifies himself with the subject. Bynner's memoir is obviously a "fictionalized biography" according to the previous argument. In the sense that Bynner shows the writer's creating process by revealing how Lawrence distorted the actual experiences into fiction, he "simulates" the genius's life. Moreover, his "simulation" is greatly supported by his privilege of being Lawrence's close friend.[4] The readers can experience how the childish outburst of Lawrence at the bull-fight arena can be transformed into the fierce agony of the tragic heroine, Kate Leslie in *The Plumed Serpent*. In this sense, Bynner's insistence on making trivial points in discussing Lawrence's novel implies his "respect" for the "materials at hand."

According to Nadel, a fact in a biography needs to have "an imaginative as well as referential dimension which the process of writing provides" (10). To explain, since biographers need to unify the moments and events in the subject's life into a pattern with a fixed theme and give them certain coherence, their point of view becomes far from objective and detached. Therefore, "objective biography is logically and artistically impossible" (Nadel 10). We should bear in our mind, then, that facts written in biographies do not simply repeat the ones in the subjects' life. By giving them the biographers' selective patterns, certain characteristics of the subjects become illuminated and underlined, which provide them with new dimensions. In that sense, facts in biographies can be "raised to the power of revelation" through the employment of the biographers' creativity (Kendall 15). That is, the biographers can employ the strength to transform simple facts into the sources of inspiration.

The theme of Bynner's biography is obviously the "genius" of Lawrence, and he offers his own interpretation of "genius," underlining the author's internal split and aloneness. Because he seems to have damaged the already established image of Lawrence the prophet, his memoir has been mostly undermined by critics. Yet his memoir poses a significant question as to why the distortion of truth can be a critical problem in a biography, not in a fiction. Harry T. Moore, referring to Jessie Chambers' protest against Lawrence's distortion of truth in *Sons and Lovers*, defends Lawrence's standing as a novelist. He argues that "what women said and did" was always part of Lawrence's "source material," and so Lawrence, as an author, possessed a right to transform the experiences into something more fitting to his purpose. Then Moore argues how the distortion of truth was sometimes essential to Lawrence:

> It was a necessary jump, for at this point Jessie's personal revelations, written in her youth while she was still close to the

> experience, give us a full and authentic account of her own feeling at the time. If these revelations seem to subtract from Lawrence's originality, one must bear in mind the difference between Jessie's contribution and Lawrence's achievement, abundantly demonstrated in the consideration of the passages quoted: she as a recorder gave him a sequence of remembered facts; he as an imaginative artist dramatically intensified them and made them into literature. (Moore 74-75)

In this argument, Moore defines Jessie as a narrator of the actual events in Lawrence's life. He suggests that, therefore, she needs to offer the "authentic account" of Lawrence's life events to the readers. On the other hand, Lawrence's status "as an imaginative artist" allows him to "intensify" the facts to make them into works of "literature." Moore's argument stands on the assumption that there exist two distinct groups: imaginative artists and unimaginative biographers. In his view, artists can freely dramatize and distort facts while biographers should remain accurate communicators of the truth. Yet how can we really distinguish imaginative artists from unimaginative writers and how can this be applied to Bynner's memoir? He is obviously both an artist and biographer.

Moore goes on to argue that, as a novelist, Lawrence "had no obligation to be literal" because "he was after all writing imaginatively." Then he adds that Lawrence "wrote with self-critical candour and without self-pity: no matter how much he may have illuminated his material by imaginative additions, his book ultimately gives the effect of essential truth" (72). Nevertheless, Bynner's memoir offers a possibility that a biographer, just like a novelist, can employ "imaginative additions" to the factual information to mold them into a piece of creative work. In the process of making facts into a life story, the facts need to go through the author's creative interpretation and observation. Facts themselves may

remain unchangeable, but the ways of interpreting them are countless. *Journey with Genius*, therefore, has made a significant contribution to the biographical study of Lawrence and the study of biographies in general in the sense that it offers a new possibility of elevating a biography's status to that of a work of literature.

Notes

1 James Kraft, besides his biography of Bynner, edited the letters and notes in his *The Works of Witter Bynner: Selected Poems.* They offer the most extensive source for the biographical study of Bynner. Yoshio Inoue's book also concisely summarizes Bynner's career as a poet and a biographer (201-202).

2 Edel develops a further extensive discussion of the novels which pretend to be biographies, and as its representative work, he thoroughly analyzes Virginia Woolf's *Orlando: A Biography*, in which Woolf follows "a very old tradition" of a novel that "pretends to be a biography and therefore to be telling the truth" (186). For the details of the discussion, refer to pp. 186-96. Nigel Hamilton also discusses the relation between fiction and biography in *Orlando* (161-62).

3 The expression, "fox-hunting," can be easily connected to Lawrence's short story *The Fox* (1920) for his readers. Therefore, it is easy to imagine that Bynner deliberately employed this connection in his memoir.

4 Yet Kendall points out that, since the beginning of the twentieth century, "life-relationship biography" such as memoirs and recollections has been in "the decline" because the age's preference of "research" to "recollections." He argues that one type of this "fallen" memoirs and recollections has been used as a vehicle by which "the friends of literary giants" express their frustrations "engendered by

the great man." He then names Murry's *Son of Woman* as an example of these "declining" biographies (125).

Chapter IV

Kate Leslie as Lawrence and Owen Rhys as Bynner
In *The Plumed Serpent*

The unfavorable criticisms of *The Plumed Serpent* have mostly focused their points on its description of Kate's transformation, the influence of the Mexican landscape and the mystic religious cult of Don Ramon and Cipriano on her. Additionally, the relationship among Kate, Cipriano, and Ramon has often been the main topic of the discussion. On the other hand, despite Bynner's insistence on the description of Owen modeled on Bynner himself, it would be hard to consider that this character plays a significant part in this novel. Owen, Kate's cousin, is a poet and a critic who lives in the United States, and he accompanies Kate during her trip to Mexico together with his young friend and secretary, Villiers. Curiously, however, Owen appears only in the earlier chapters and disappears thereafter. At the beginning of the fourth chapter, "To Stay or Not to Stay," the narrator abruptly announces his departure, "Owen had to return to the United States, and he asked Kate whether she wanted to stay on in Mexico" (*Plumed Serpent* 72), yet Owen himself does not even appear in this scene. In the fifth chapter, "The Lake," the narrator simply says, "Owen left" (*Plumed Serpent* 81) without any further comments. He does not even have a chance to speak after the middle part of the third chapter, "Fortieth Birthday." That is, Owen does not seem to play a significant part in Kate's actions nor does he contribute much to the plot's development.

If he disappears so early in this novel, what is Owen's contribution to the making of *The Plumed Serpent*? Does he remain a minor character who just happens to bring Kate to Mexico throughout the novel? Is his presence really insignificant for Kate's metamorphosis? Bynner ironically comments on Owen's early disappearance from the novel as Lawrence's

show of "mercy" (1953, 57), thus criticizing Lawrence's unsympathetic treatment of this character. In spite of Bynner's satirical comment on this character, however, Owen in fact plays a significant part in providing Kate with a turning point of her life. Owen, even unwillingly, contributes to Kate's spiritual development as a negative exemplum. In the first place, if Owen had not accompanied her to Mexico, Kate might have lost a chance to distance herself from the Americanism represented by Owen, that is, his pretentious socialism and his search for superficial enjoyment. In the sense that he unintentionally induces Kate to deny such values, he surely has changed the novel's course. It is quite understandable that Bynner rejects Owen, considering that the character is dishonorable and frivolous. If we change the viewpoint, however, because he symbolizes everything what Kate does not want to be, he contradictorily clarifies her purposes and visions.

Since Lawrence offers Owen essentially as the symbol of Americanism, he does not in any way employ this character as a means of personal attack on Bynner. As cousins and friends, Kate and Owen actually share considerable characteristics. Owen "was as nearly in hysterics as Kate" (*Plumed Serpent* 19) when he goes back to his seat in confusion after he sees Kate leaving the bullfight arena. The scene thus clarifies that Owen's disgust with the violence of the bullfight is as intense as Kate's. While Kate values Owen's "sensitiveness" and kindness, she also feels angry at his exceeding capacity of "tolerance, which he misunderstands as one of his greatest virtue. Even though Owen is depicted rather unsympathetically, it does not necessary signify that Lawrence's own judgment on Owen/Bynner is also disapproving. Accordingly, this chapter will examine how the relationship between Owen and Kate are portrayed in *The Plumed Serpent*, and how it relates to Kate's metamorphosis and the making of Bynner's memoir. If we consider that Kate's viewpoint reflects Lawrence's own, it is possible to say that Lawrence never belittles or dishonors

Bynner/Owen. This chapter also aims at clarifying how Lawrence as the author is reflected in Kate's relationship with Don Ramon and Cipriano, and her acceptance of the new religion, Quetzalcoatl.

1. The Mixed Criticisms of *The Plumed Serpent*

The Plumes Serpent can be placed in a unique position in Lawrence's career in the sense that it has been both highly acclaimed and severely underestimated. Even though some scholars on Lawrence and his acquaintances highly evaluated the book, it also bewildered the scholars who had favorably regarded his other works, including Harry T. Moore and F. R. Leavis. Lawrence himself called *The Plumed Serpent* an "extraordinary book" (*Letters V* 199)[1], "the one that means most to me" (*Letters V* 260),[2] the novel which "lies nearer my heart than any other work of mine" (*Letters V* 264)[3], "my most important thing so far" even though he also knew that the book would not "be easily popular" (*Letters V* 267)[4] because of its difficulty. Judging from his numerous references to this work's importance in his letters, *The Plumed Serpent* can be placed as one of Lawrence's most ambitious and significant works at least in the author's viewpoint. Nevertheless, the mixed criticisms of this work also mirror the author's own concern over this work's unpopularity and difficulty.

Among the favorable reviewers, Catherine Carswell considers *The Plumed Serpent* as "the most ambitious and the most impressive novel of our generation" (192). William York Tindall highly praises the work as "his best novel as well as the outstanding example of primitivism in our time" (113). The primitivism, in fact, is a significant keyword to comprehend this novel. Marianna Torgovnick argues that by the time of *The Plumed Serpent*, his sojourns in Mexico had made Lawrence associate

the primitive with "conventional ideas of masculinity" (159). She also considers that for Lawrence the primitive is "a potential alternative to Western Christianity's suspicion of sexuality" (160). She accordingly suggests that Don Ramon and Cipriano are the products of Lawrence's idealized image of masculinity directly linked with nature and life, which Western men have somehow lost. These scholars, consequently, highly esteem the powerfulness of Lawrence's message in this work. Tindall considers that the mystic world of Quetzalcoatl represents "the Utopia," which is "a more perfect refuge for Lawrence's fancy than the park of Lord Chatterley in which the glare of the neighboring pits disturbs the spiritual exercises of the refugees" (35). Tindall, in this argument, considers that Don Ramon, as the human-god, destroys the evil of materialism in his world of fantasy, and because it occurs mainly in his/Lawrence's fantasy, his/Lawrence's heroism and spirituality is not disturbed by reality. Mexican landscape and its primitivism contribute to the mystification of the novel's setting as well. Carswell considers that the novel offers "the theme of men in a modern world who become gods while yet remaining men" (184). As in her observation, Lawrence insists on the difficulty of changing and reorganizing the world for human beings by presenting the theme in his fantasy world. In summary, the viewpoints of those scholars are based on the assumption that *The Plumed Serpent* offers a fantasy only in which humans can attain the power to renovate the world. Lawrence's attempt to actualize the ideal world in which humans can be directly connected to nature is in itself quite a significant task as a novelist.

The unfavorable criticisms of *The Plumed Serpent* also tend to question the significance of Ramon's leadership in his religious reformation. Those critics seem to take the character and his actions more literally than figuratively. Moore, although he favorably evaluates Lawrence's works in general, names this novel "the most ambitious failure among all his novels." He finds the novel's weakness in the implausibility of its main theme—the

significance of true leadership in Mexico where Lawrence in reality "had found no true 'leader'" (1974, 503)[5]. As a result, he indicates, the novel remains unconvincing to most readers. F. R. Leavis further undermines the work, stating that it "gives the effect of his not being *fully* engaged" considering its monotonous and boring description of the rebirth of Quetzalcoatl as the symbol of salvation (70). Here Leavis argues that this boredom occurs chiefly because the author himself cannot really believe in what he says and "avoids the directness and obviousness of personal engagement" (68). Leavis hence defines the novel as much less ambitious and fulfilled than Lawrence's other works.

The scholars who disapprove of *The Plumed Serpent* find problems in its basic structure, setting, and plot as well. Graham Hough considers that its plot frequently "goes to pieces" (129). James C. Cowan argues that the work's plot totally lacks the "unity" (120). Eliseo Vivas criticizes the "silly" setting and situation of the novel (70). Mori Haruhide further clarifies these points when he states that the basic structure of this novel is confusing because the plot firstly follows the religious salvation of Mexican people through the Quetzalcoatl movement, then it abruptly focuses on the sexual relationship between Kate and Cipriano, placing the movement to the secondary. Ramon's characterization is not also convincing in the sense he has not solved his own marital problems and avoided confronting them, and yet he tries to save others through the religious cult. Therefore, the reality and myth of Ramon's personal life cannot coexist (Mori 473-5).

Moore, likewise, observes that the novel is "full of manifest contradictions." In his explanation, one of the contradictions arises when, in the twenty-fourth chapter, "Malintzi," Kate feels repulsive against "the natural *will*" represented by Ramon and Cipriano yet finally decides to stay in Mexico as Malintzi, the bride of Cipriano who turns into Huitzilopochitli, the Aztec god of war (504-505). According to him, the plot's weakness also lies in the inconsistency that, while Kate does not really witness certain

aspects of Quetzalcoatl revival, all of its actions are described through her consciousness (505). John Humma offers a similar viewpoint when he argues that the novel fails to "sustain a consistent imagery." He considers that Kate's "indecisiveness" leads the novel's central imagery into several different directions in the second half of the novel. He also argues that Ramon and Cipriano carry their ideas "to the extremes," and Ramon's "oratory and ideas" are too much repetitive, which makes the latter part of the novel simply "a bore" (213). In my view, however, those criticisms of the novel's plot and the characterization of Ramon and Cipriano mainly come from the critics' tendency to interpret this work only in a realistic level. If they construed them in a more figurative level, the significance of this work would reveal itself.

F. R. Leavis also observes that Kate's determination to stay in Mexico as the bride of the living Huitzilopochtli is unconvincing especially when it comes from her fear of facing the destiny of a woman who is approaching her old age, in his description, her "recoiling from the fate of the aging dominant woman" (71). In Leavis's viewpoint, Kate accepts her destiny of becoming Cipriano's wife mainly because she is afraid of getting aged and becoming one of the "grimalkins," a group of spiteful old women, with whom she has felt so disgusted. That is to say, being now forty years old, she accepts Cipriano and his faith in the new religion so as to escape from her inevitable lot as an aging woman. This decision of Kate, then, seems to change her into a more passive, sacrificial being than before. John Middleton Murry sees Kate's decision more critically as "the complete submission of the Woman to the pure Indian Cipriano." He adds that Lawrence's own relationship with women had remained unfulfilled, so he took his revenge on them, employing his imagination (320). In that sense, Kate is offered as a universal picture of women's negative aspects, but Murry seems to oversimplify Kate's characterization by thus describing her as a representative of all women.

H. M. Daleski offers a similar yet more negative perspective concerning the marriage between Kate and Cipriano. He argues that Lawrence, in his description of Kate's destiny, breaks down the "morality" which maintains his novel's balance and makes the incidents well related to each other, and her decision to remain in Mexico appears unrelated to her former deeds and statements:

> Kate is not only reduced to an abject acceptance of Cipriano; she is violated. That she should even have been brought to marry him, let alone to bow to his terms of marriage, is a willful defiance of verisimilitude. In the first place, there are numerous indications that she is actually in love with Ramon. (Daleski 252)

Daleski here suggests that Kate's marriage with Cipriano is immoral because it originates from her disappointment in love with Ramon. He cites their conversation in the last chapter as an evidence of Kate's hopeless devotion to Ramon (252): Kate says to Ramon, "You go ahead so grandly, one would not think you needed help: especially from a mere woman who—who after all is only the wife of your friend," to which he replies, "The wife of my friend!" and adds, "What could you be better?" Then Kate replied, "Of course," which was "more than equivocal" (*Plumed Serpent* 427). Daleski also argues that Kate originally finds Cipriano sexually unacceptable chiefly because of his "brown-skin" (252-53), and underlines her racist attitude and sense of superiority toward him. He thus hints at the improbability of their union.

If we accept those negative viewpoints on Kate-Cipriano relationship and her final decision to stay in Mexico, however, the novel's plot will be the considerably worn-out, deceitful one. If Kate's determination comes from her fear of becoming an aging, lonely woman or reactionary movement to a

lost love, her emotional struggle throughout the novel becomes quite meaningless. Given the mystic setting of this Mexican novel, however, Kate's actions should be construed more on a symbolic level. As expressed in the conversation between Kate and Ramon, she is obviously in love with Ramon as "a mere woman," and it is also clear that she does not find Cipriano sexually attractive, but she in the end accept the marriage with Cipriano as more than a usual male-female consummation. Her marriage, therefore, is rather a process of discarding her ego:

> It was strange, to be married to him. He made her go all vague and quiet, as if she sank away heavy and still, away from the surface of life, and lay deep in the underlife. The strange, heavy, *positive* passivity. For the first time in her life she felt absolutely at rest. And talk, and thought, had become trivial, superficial to her: as the ripples on the surface of the lake are as nothing, to the creatures that live away below in the unwavering deeps. (*Plumed Serpent* 421)

At this state of her married life, Kate forsakes her individuality and womanhood, and seeks for a total rest in her relationship with Cipriano. By this time, she has already abandoned temporary pleasure or satisfaction in her relationship with men. Their marriage is then the connection between the opposite elements—male and female, a European and an Indian, Christianity and Quetzalcoatl, the contemporary and the primitive. Lawrence seeks for the total agreement between those polarizations, which he cannot really achieve in the real world. The union between Kate and Cipriano, accordingly, is the realization of this ideal state of humans—the well balanced union of opposite elements.

This melding of the opposite elements is possibly achieved owing to Mexico as its fictional background because, as Torgovnick points out, in

Mexico, "the ideas of the primitive as the dangerous and the primitive as the idyllic" can coexist (169). This argument would explain the reason why Kate is both fascinated and disgusted with Mexico. Lawrence then finds a creative source of his utopia both in Mexico's danger and its picturesque landscape. This utopia exists chiefly in the author's imagination, and by taking it figuratively, the readers can possibly figure out his intention to create a fantasy world where people can be freed from their own ego. As Graham Hough clarifies, the novel's plot shows "Kate's progress from one mode of life to another" and the author "so successfully integrated the spirit of place and the development of character, or organized his scenes so completely to contribute to a general theme" (136). Hough insists that Kate's metamorphosis, the abandonment of her individuality and ego, can be achieved because its process has been supported by the mystic, illusory landscape of Mexico. In a way, she enters the mystic world of the ancient gods of the primitive religion where she can discard the fear of living in a modern, mechanical world. In that sense, the readers and critics ought to interpret Kate's metamorphosis and acceptance of the new religion as a sign of her progression.

2. The Formation of *The Plumed Serpent*

Bynner narrates in his memoir that the theme of *The Plumed Serpent* came to Lawrence when he and the Lawrences climbed the pyramids at Teotihuacan. There Lawrence encountered "the colored stone heads of the feathered snakes in one of the temple" (1953, 24)[6] and was both fascinated and intimidated by the statues. Bynner then hints that Lawrence found in these impressive statues his own image of God as a source of his creative work:

> Perhaps the germ of the novel's theme came to him then, his half-fascinated, half-frightened impulse to banish from Mexico the gods in human image and replace them with an animal, with this animal of all animals, this "snake of all snakes," this creature part snake and part bird, Mexico's natural god and in many ways his own. (Bynner 1953, 24)

Bynner does not really clarify how the image of this feathered serpent actually "frightened" Lawrence, but given his ambivalent attitude toward the bullfight scene and his admittance of "intelligence" in the bull itself, Lawrence possibly found a source of his creative imagination in the primitiveness of the animals' strength.

Lawrence, in his essay titled "Au Revoir U. S. A," which was written soon after the visit to Teotihuacan, thus describes his fascination with the grandness of the statues:

> It's a queer continent as much as I've seen of it. It's a fanged continent. It's got a rattle-snake coiled in its heart, has this democracy of the New World. It's a dangerous animal, once it lifts its head again. Meanwhile, the dove still nests in the coils of the rattlesnake, the stone coiled rattlesnake of Aztec eternity. The dove lays her eggs on his flat head.
>
> ……………………………………………………
>
> It's a queer continent. The anthropologists may make what prettiness they like out of myths. But come here, and you'll see that the gods bit. …
>
> I admit that I feel bewildered. There is always something a bit amiably comic about Chinese dragons and contortions. There's nothing amiably comic in these ancient monsters.

> They're dead in earnest about biting and writhing, snake-blooded birds. (Lawrence 1923, 2-3)

These words of Lawrence clarify that this encounter with the feathered snakes inspired him to write his "most important" work. Teotihuacan has been translated from the language of the Aztec people as "the dwelling place of the gods" and "the place where men become god" (Baldwin 23), and Lawrence surely found his own image of the primitive god in those "ancient monsters." These stone sculptures especially seem to impress and fascinate Lawrence. Those heads of the serpents seem to threaten the visitors but they also capture their hearts. When he refers to "the rattlesnake coiled in its heart," Lawrence probably finds Mexicans' spirit of fearlessness in it. That is to say, if one can be powerful and fearless enough to "bite" one's own heart, one has nothing more to be afraid of in this world. Moreover, Lawrence, facing the absolute strength of the primitive gods, finds himself quite helpless before them, which he transferred to the description of Kate in the novel.

Bynner, like many other scholars and critics of Lawrence, read *The Plumed Serpent* with "mixed reactions" (205) although he comprehended how Lawrence's visit to the shrine had inspired him to write the novel and how important this work had been to the author. He argues that this novel is basically intended to "justify" Lawrence's fear of Mexico and its people (1953, 205). In the eighteenth chapter of *Journey with Genius*, Bynner disapproves of Lawrence's attempt to consider "the feathered serpent" as a "low deity" (104). That was a direct quotation from Lawrence's comment upon visiting the Museum of the City of Mexico. Subsequently, Bynner judges that Lawrence "fails to see how that feathered serpent has guarded Mexico against the higher gods, the devouring gods of Europe" (104). Yet Lawrence's "failure" is apparently corrected in *The Plumed Serpent* because

he surely offers Quetzalcoatl as the only god who can possibly save the Mexicans from their predicament.

Bynner, on the other hand, does not perceive Lawrence's description of the Quetzalcoatl revival as the novel's positive element. He suggests that Lawrence's acceptance of the religion of Quetzalcoatl contains his deeply rooted terror and inferiority complex toward Mexicans' powerfulness, and that *The Plumed Serpent* exposes this fearfulness and inferiority complex of Lawrence:

> Finally *The Plumed Serpent* touches on its author's true perplexity concerning the natives. Though his faith was that life breeds a cross section of recognizably superior men, and that he was surely one of them, he was baffled by the level serenity and natural aristocracy of the Mexican. He was forever irritated that his own sharp personality could not impress the native, could not awe him, alienate him or apparently move him in any way. This was what kept Lawrence in a state of unrest toward Mexicans. Their occasional violence, outwardly hot but inwardly cold, was in some respects akin to his own violence but was based on a more solid dignity. He was at odds with their poise, their fearlessness, their fatalism. ....
>
> .... It was the Mexicans' calm assumption of equality with Englishmen, even of superiority to them, and was especially obnoxious, even frightening, when exhibited by curt officials. (1953, 207)

Bynner's suggestion here, that Lawrence was terrified of Mexicans' solid faith in violence to protect and sustain themselves, is surely applied to Kate. Lawrence's sense of superiority as a European is also reflected in Kate's

narrations. Therefore, just like Lawrence himself, Kate feels quite offended when she detects the Mexicans' "assumption of superiority" to Europeans. For her, Mexico means "the dark faced men in cotton clothes, and big hats; the peasants, peons, pelados, Indians," that is, the "mere natives" (*Plumed Serpent* 75) in contrast to her European heritage. Nevertheless, she simultaneously fears the Mexicans for their dauntlessness. They are "a people that lived without hope, and without care" (76), yet they are even indifferent to their hopelessness and live rather merrily and calmly. She, in fact, even finds something close to her Irish nature in the Mexicans, but in her view, they "did what the self-conscious and pretentious Irish rarely do, they touched her bowels with a strange fire of compassion" (*Plumed Serpent* 76).

At this point, her impressions of Mexicans seem quite contradictory and inconsistent. First, she feels superior to "the mere natives" for her white, Irish blood, but later, she confesses that she is attracted to their strength, which is not disturbed by the self-consciousness or pretension of white people. This ambivalence remains in Kate until the very end of the novel, but it is not merely the reflection of the author's "perplexity" facing the Mexicans. Kate gradually adapts herself into their fatalism, that is, to live dauntlessly in her hopelessness. In that sense, Kate is not simply a spokesperson for Lawrence, but rather represents the state of the author's wish-fulfillment.

In that sense, Bynner's attempt to define the characters in *The Plumed Serpent* as "the deliverers, in whose ranks Lawrence, their author-creator would like to be" (*Journey with Genius* 208) is quite appropriate. However, when he argues that, because such characters as Cipriano and Ramon function merely as the author's "wish-fulfilling marionettes," they are "flimsy" and "unlifelike" (208), Bynner seems to ignore a significant point. Lawrence's intention does not really lie in depicting lifelike characters. He rather attempts to create a fantasy world,

namely, a utopia, where people can abandon their personal ego and find a total rest and peace in their mind, which they cannot possibly achieve in the real world. Naturally, Lawrence's "wish" is mirrored in his characters, but it is, contrary to Bynner's view, his strong *wish* to abandon every wish he possesses.

Bynner's perspective is problematic in the sense that it invariably equates Kate's view with the author's own. The way Kate narrates the Quetzalcoatl movement shows the process of her spiritual development. She is confused because she is trying hard to abandon her old values and accept totally new values. Kate's confusion starts with her decision to remain in Mexico despite her profound fear of the country, sending Villiers back to the United States. She determines "not to be touched by any, any of the mechanical cog-wheel people," and wishes to "be left alone, not to be touched," and to "hide, and be hidden, and never really be spoken to" (*Plumed Serpent* 104). Soon after she thus makes up her mind, she writes a letter to Don Ramon to tell him that she is going to Sayula to look for a house. She still wishes to believe that "men are not machines" and so she decides to free herself from the "wrong contacts like agitators and socialism" (*Plumed Serpent* 104). Separating herself from Owen and Villiers, she tries to place her in a total aloneness in that fearful country. At this point, she sees herself as a victim of the mechanical world of false human contacts, and she attempts to cut herself off from the victimized state by staying in Mexico.

Some critics see that Kate's involvement with the Quetzalcoatl movement shows the process of making her into a victim of the violence represented by Don Ramon and Cipriano. Concerning this argument, Jad Smith thus argues about Kate's ambivalent attitude toward this religious movement:

> Kate herself, however, fails to achieve the objectivity made available to the reader by her perspective. In her mind, she repudiates the irrationalist blood philosophy advanced by the leaders of the movement because it requires her to give up her individual will, but she also ignores the best advice of her own conscience, which tells her to leave Mexico immediately lest she become victim to the very violence attendant on such irrationalism. (Smith 8)

Smith considers that, as she involves herself with the movement, Kate gradually loses her objective viewpoint, while the readers can maintain the "objectivity" she has lost. In my view, Lawrence surely shows to the readers Kate's unconscious wish to leave Mexico in the earlier part of the novel, however, she reaches her decision to stay in Mexico by her own will in the later part of the novel. In contrast with Smith's viewpoint, Kate does not really see herself as a victim of the men's violence. Kate finds a feeling common to Teresa, Ramon's wife, and herself. Both of them think it is better "to stand faithfully behind a really brave man, than to push forward into the ranks of cheap and obtrusive women." They share "a certain deep, ultimate faithfulness" in their partners (*Plumed Serpent* 405). At first, Kate sees Teresa as a much less intellectual person than herself and thus despises the woman, but as she accepts the religion, she begins to find the courage and dignity in that Mexican woman, which spiritually connects the two women.

Kate's "faithfulness" to Cipriano, then, shows her willingness to participate in the religious movement led by her husband/the living god, so she sees herself as far from a victim. Additionally, she begins to perceive the union with Cipriano as quite significant for her life as she comprehends its meaning. For her, it means "the fusion," that is, "the leap of the old, antediluvian blood-male into unison with her," which has turned this

marriage into something "more significant to her than all her past, her husbands and her children" (*Plumed Serpent* 415). The process of accepting the totally new sense of value must have involved a considerably "violent" change, yet Kate does not necessarily see Cipriano and Ramon as forcing violence on her, given her faith in the religion's significance.

Bynner argues that, in *The Plumed Serpent*, "most of the characters join the author in his attempt at a mystic cult" and "when Ramon talks, it is Lawrence" (213). However, when he thus describes the author's attempt, he fails to consider where Lawrence's viewpoint actually is placed in the novel. In contrast with Bynner's argument, Lawrence to some extent distances himself from the characters he created. Speaking of Ramon and Cipriano, Lawrence surely creates them as the embodiment of his wish for strength, yet he also maintains a certain distance from these characters. Moore's insight clarifies this point when he considers the relation between Lawrence's sexuality and maleness:

> … in Lawrence's celebration of maleness, he may have been the frail boy ("mardarse") forever seeking a wish fulfillment of strength. This was not compensation-by-identification – that is, Lawrence writing as from the point of view of physical gianthood, and by a process of introjection "becoming" the admired strongman – no, rather Lawrence could, in this hypothesis, keep his identity intact and yet mingle as it were with the strong, taking strength from them. As Cipriano, the brilliant, small-statured general in *The Plumed Serpent*, Lawrence could dream himself into an ideal leadership-friendship with the physically powerful Don Ramon, the ritual of whose new religion included a physical – again, *not* sexual – contact between men. (Moore 1974, 88)

As in Moore's argument, Lawrence's attempt to project himself into his characters is much more complicated than its surface. He surely entertains his idealized image of maleness which is mirrored in Ramon, but he never invariably identifies himself with the strong man. Rather, as in Moore's comment, he attempts to distance himself by observing the man as Cipriano. As seen in the relationship between Ramon and Cipriano, certain parts of Lawrence are surely projected into Ramon and Cipriano, but it is more appropriate to see his attempt to "join" his characters as the process of idealizing and reorganizing the reality, which has somehow failed him. Contrary to Bynner's argument, therefore, the characters in *The Plumed Serpent* do not altogether "join" the author, but Lawrence reacts to each of them differently.

3. The Role of Owen Rhys in *The Plumed Serpent*

We have examined how Kate's transformation has been reviewed and construed by various scholars and critics on Lawrence in the previous parts. Nonetheless, very little has been said about Owen Rhys, Kate's American cousin in *The Plumed Serpent*. Bynner himself considers this character and Villiers, who is considered to be modeled on Willard Johnson, as "rather ignominious American roles" (1953, 57). Bynner also refers to the early departure of Owen and Johnson from the novel's plot as "having come to know and like us better, he (Lawrence) mercifully let us out of it" (1953, 57). In spite of Bynner's negative view of this character, as examined before, Owen has considerably contributed to Kate's metamorphosis in a paradoxical sense.

Kate, an Irish woman of forty, divorced her first husband and was bereaved of her second husband, Joachim Leslie. She has two children with her first husband, but now they live with her father, and now she sees

herself useless to her children. Having nowhere to return to and no one to depend on, Kate, though not very willingly, decides to stay in Mexico in the end as the wife of Cipriano, and Owen actually has something to do with her decision. Kate, on her fortieth birthday[7], asks herself what has brought her to Mexico, but she cannot really clarify her motivation:

> It was no good Kate's wondering why she had come. Over in England, in Ireland, in Europe, she had heard the *consummatum est* of her own spirit. It was finished, in a kind of death agony. But still this heavy continent of dark-souled death was more than she could bear (*Plumed Serpent* 50)

Kate is in agony, not being able to decide whether she should belong to Europe or Mexico. Now being forty and alone, she feels that "the first half of her life was over" and it seems to her that the "bright page, with its flowers and its love and its stations of the Cross ended with a grave" (50). Nor can she find her place for belonging in the primitiveness of Mexico. She then reads a mysterious newspaper article: An enormous man suddenly emerged from a lake, and he told the villagers that the ancient God, Quetzalcóatl, has returned to the village. Reading this article, Kate realizes that she "must be born again" (59) , and determines to take a totally new way of living from that time on. The novel's plot accordingly clarifies that Kate's determination originates from the rejection of the "Americanism" represented by Owen, and the existence of the mysterious, ancient god functions as its inducement.

Yet Kate never distances Owen as an individual, but she rather strongly disagrees with the hedonism, which she derives from his casual remarks and everyday actions:

> At the same time, a wild and angry battle raged between her and

> the thing that *Owen* called Life: such as the bull-fight, the tea-parties, the enjoyment, the arts in their modern aspect of hate effusions. The powerful, degenerate thing called Life, wrapping one or other of its tentacles round her. (*Plumed Serpent* 59)

Owen thus gives Kate a chance to realize "the thing" that "he called Life" has been a fatal mistake, and she decides to forsake all the days she has spent with these enjoyments and "win this soft bloom of being" (59) . Accordingly, Lawrence does not necessarily incarnate Bynner into Owen, but he rather universalizes and generalizes the disposition which he can derive from Bynner, and employs it as Owen, the representative of Americanism, in his fictional world. Owen thus symbolizes all the negative aspects which Kate has to refuse, yet in a paradoxical sense, he considerably contributes to Kate's psychological transformation.

In the first place, in what respect is Owen dissatisfactory to Kate and what is "Life" represented by Owen? Her dissatisfaction with Owen in fact contains her more deeply rooted feelings for him. Curiously, Douglas W. Veitch finds a similarity between Owen and Kate's late husband, Joachim Leslie. According to him, both of them are "failures of the Christian idealistic imagination" (16). For her, Joachim is "a man who is fighting to *change* the world, to make it freer, more alive" and he fought "for Ireland, and for something he never quite realized" (*Plumed Serpent* 71). In principle, for his fight, Joachim resembles Cipriano and Ramon more closely than Owen, who tries eagerly to enjoy his social life. However, if we closely examine Kate's reference to Joachim and Owen, their similarity can be exposed. Joachim's last words to Kate reveal that, in a way, he and Owen symbolically play the same role to her:

> *Kate, perhaps I've let you down. Perhaps I haven't really*

> *helped Ireland. But I couldn't help myself. I feel as if I'd brought you to the doors of life, and was leaving you there. Kate, don't be disappointed in life because of me. I didn't really get anywhere. I haven't really got anywhere. I feel as if I'd made a mistake. But perhaps when I'm dead I shall be able to do more for you than I have done while I was alive. Say you'll never feel disappointed!* (*Plumed Serpent* 71)

Just as Joachim has brought his wife "to the doors of life," Owen, even unconsciously, has led Kate to Mexico and given her a chance for the change. Joachim predicts that he will be able to "do more" for Kate after his death. This state also reminds us of the bullfight scene in which Owen cannot stop Kate from leaving the arena in the heavy rain, and then Cipriano helps her go home. Likewise, Owen's departure from Mexico is to lead Kate's fate into a totally different direction. Significantly, just after Kate talks about her dead husband to Cipriano at the end of the third chapter, "Fortieth Birthday," the novel announces Owen's sudden departure at the very beginning of the fourth chapter, "To Stay or Not to Stay." These episodes symbolize that Joachim and Owen, who see themselves helpless for Kate and think they have somehow disappointed her, have entrusted her to a seemingly more supportive man, Cipriano. Accordingly, the two men paradoxically contribute themselves to make Cipriano's existence meaningful to Kate.

Moreover, both Owen and Joachim emotionally suffer from the gap between their principle and reality in life. Both of them, as in Kate's expression, are "fighting for something beyond the ordinary life" (*Plumed Serpent* 70). Joachim, following his ideal, had fought for Ireland, but on his deathbed, he regretted that he had not really saved Ireland or his wife from the predicament. A similar feeling of regret can also be seen in Owen's "despair of having lived in vain, or of not having *really* lived" which

would "make him rush like mechanical steel fillings to a magnet, towards any crowd in the street" (28). Kate admired Joachim for his noble cause while she cannot "respect" Owen's shallow socialism, but both of the men are afraid of living their life ordinarily and vainly. Therefore, they struggle to grasp something beyond their reach.

Quetzalcoatl (1923)[8], the earlier version of *The Plumed Serpent,* exposes Owen's suffering in a more detailed, sympathetic manner, so it would be worth examining for viewing him as an influential character for Kate:

> Kate felt rather angry with them both (*i.e.* Owen and Villiers). But poor Owen was really so remorseful, and rather bewildered by his confusion of emotions, that she had to relent towards him. He was really awfully kind. But also he was an American, and if he felt he was missing something, he was at once swept with the despair of having lived in vain. And the despair of having lived in vain made him pelt off to the first crowd he saw in the street, abandoning all his higher philosophic self, all his poetry, all his everything, and just craning his neck in one more frantic effort to *see*. To see all there was to be seen! Not to miss it! And then, after he'd seen something nasty, an old woman run over by a motorcar and bleeding on the floor, he'd return to Kate pale at the gills, sick, bewildered, daunted, and yet, yes, glad he'd seen it if it was there to be seen. (*Quetzalcoatl* 15)

Kate sees that Owen's "will" to "see all" comes from his "American" logic, yet Joachim, an Irish man, whom she had respected, had also been fighting with and suffering from his own "will" to save his country. Just as she felt sad and helpless about Joachim's having fought for Ireland "in vain," she

describes Owen's confused state of mind quite compassionately in her narration. Her comprehensive picture of Owen and her constant gaze upon him reveal itself how overwhelmingly she is concerned about him. Nevertheless, Kate cannot respect the Americanism represented by Owen, that is, his will to "see it all" no matter how disgusting it is. Likewise, although she felt deeply attached to Joachim, she could not really consider his fight as meaningful. She actually admits that he had fought for his cause "in vain."

Lawrence describes Owen more comprehensively and significantly in *Quetzalcoatl* than in *The Plumed Serpent.* Concerning the portrait of Owen, *Quetzalcoatl* seems to be a more significant work than *The Plumed Serpent*, but to show Kate's progression more clearly and convincingly, Lawrence needs to lessen Owen's presence in the revised version. That is to say, Kate needs to abandon the American value embodied by Owen to adapt herself to a totally new way of living. In the earlier version, Kate "wandered to avoid a home, a group, a family, a circle of friends," and "Owen was the same." Yet because "he was American, he unconsciously believed that the man who lived out of contact with the world missed life altogether. So, as a compromise, he rushed for all the little contacts" (*Quetzalcoatl* 32).

In the earlier version, it is clear that Kate associates her feelings with Owen's. At this point, Kate does not disapprove of his Americanism, but rather she considers that Americanism *forces* Owen to seek for "all the little contacts" with the world in spite of himself. Therefore, in her viewpoint, "his life had never even begun" (*Quetzalcoatl* 42). He seeks for amusement in his daily life, but in the depth, he is "hopelessly, helplessly indifferent to everything" (*Quetzalcoatl* 43). Kate's successive comments on his indifference, the "void," would clarify that Owen is in a way presented as her alter ego, the American version of Kate herself. Lawrence possibly has lessened the scenes between Owen and Kate in *The Plumed Serpent* to focus more closely on Kate's aloneness in Mexico. To be precise, as long as

Owen stays beside Kate as the reflection of herself, she continues avoiding any contact with others, and then she cannot commence her exploration on the new land and her relationship with Cipriano and Ramon. Contrary to Bynner's viewpoint, Owen plays quite a significant role both in *Quetzalcoatl* and *The Plumed Serpent.* However, in the sense that it compares the primitiveness of Mexico and its religion with Americanism on a symbolic level, *The Plumed Serpent* is probably truer to Lawrence's ambition to create an ideal world in his fantasy.

4. Lawrence/Kate and Bynner/Owen

As examined before, Kate's compassion and sympathy with Owen sometimes makes it difficult for her to accept him. This complicated relationship between Kate and Owen is also mirrored in Bynner's friendship with Lawrence. Referring to the rather negative role of Owen, Lawrence thus explains to Bynner, "I don't think it's unsympathetic—it only dislikes your spurious sort of happiness—the spurious side of it" (qtd. in Bynner 102). As clarified in these words of Lawrence, Owen assiduously exercises his "will" to provide himself with "happiness." Lawrence sees through that falseness of Bynner/Owen's attitude toward his own life, but he never denies Bynner's/Owen's personality on the whole. He rather embraces them sympathetically and compassionately.

Frederic W. Leighton compares the relationship between Lawrence and Bynner with "a cat playing with a mouse: Lawrence contemplating Owen and Owen eyeing Lawrence, each inwardly feeling himself the cat and outwardly posing as the mouse" (17). Lawrence and Bynner, as in Leighton's observation, alternatively play the roles of a cat and a mouse to each other. Just as Kate shows both compassion and disrespect for Owen, Lawrence points out Bynner's weakness for easily attainable "happiness"

and enjoyment while he displays profound concern over the friend/fellow writer. Considering the sympathetic gaze of Kate upon her American cousin, it may be difficult for the readers to define Owen's role simply as an inducement for Kate's metamorphosis. In addition, Lawrence does not really intend to classify his characters simply into the negative and the positive ones. He rather reflects the ever-changing, complicated feelings toward the others in his characters. In this sense, the seemingly belittled picture of Owen can be construed as Lawrence's tribute to his dear friend / fellow writer.

Notes

[1] See Lawrence's letter to Ida Rauh, dated January 16, 1925. (*Letters V* 199)

[2] See a letter to Blanche Knopf, dated June 5, 1925. In the same letter, Lawrence showed a fear of the book's being published because of its difference from his other works (*Letters V* 260). He gave similar comments on the novel in a letter to Edward McDonald, dated June 29, 1925 (*Letters V* 272), and a letter to Mollie Skinner, dated August 28, 1925 (*Letters V* 292).

[3] See a letter to George Conway, dated June 10, 1925. (*Letters V* 262-63)

[4] From a letter to Martin Secker, Lawrence's English publisher, dated June 18, 1925. In another letter to Secker (October 16, 1925), Lawrence employs almost the same expressions to describe the work, saying "I still say, this is the most important of all my novels" (*Letters V* 318). See also letters to Edward McDonald, dated October 26, 1925 (*Letters V* 323), to Anton Kippenberg dated November 2,

1925 (*Letters V* 332), and to Mabel Dodge Luhan dated January 16, 1926 (*Letters V* 379).

[5] Moore points out that the character Don Ramon was probably modeled on José Vasconcelos, the "one-time follower of the revolutionist Carranza and later Minister of Public Education under Obregon." He also suggests that Vasconcelos's attempt to liberate Mexico from North America's obsessive control though the strength of religion closely resembles that of Don Ramon (1951, 232). According to Bynner, once Lawrence was to meet Vasconcelos at the Hotel Monte Carlo in the spring of 1923. It was the meeting arranged by Bynner through his immediate superior, Bob Haberman. After the long waiting, because of an urgent business, it turned out that the Minister of Education could not receive the "honorable" guests and his secretary asked them to put off the meeting to the next day. Everyone but Lawrence agreed to the suggestion, but Lawrence, feeling that he had been insulted, immediately declined that offer (Bynner 185).

[6] Neil Baldwin explains that the temple of Quetzalcoatl at Teotihuacan was built from A.D. 150 to 250, and it was "the last temple to have been built at Teotihuacan by what is now believed to have been its last great ruler" (25). That was the place Bynner and the Lawrences visited, the "heads" they saw there were its "monumental" stone sculptures which display "exactly 365 heads," "celebrating the passage of time" (Baldwin 25).

[7] In *Quetzalcoatl* (1923), the earlier version of *The Plumed Serpent*, Kate's age is indicated as thirty-eight: "She was a woman of thirty-eight. She wanted to be left in peace, not forced into close contact with anything or anybody" (31). The change of Kate's age probably reflects Lawrence's own age. He was thirty-eight when he wrote the earlier version, and forty at the time of writing *The Plumed Serpent*. Curiously, even though Kate's loss of youth is indicated in the earlier

version, it is all the more underlined in the latter version, naming the third chapter "Fortieth Birthday," which begins with her strong self-consciousness of her age: "Kate woke up one morning, aged forty. She did not hide the fact from herself, but she kept it dark from the others" (49).

[8] In his letter to Arthur Knopf (May 4, 1925), Lawrence writes that Arthur Barmby, a Yorkshireman who ran the New York publishing office at that time, disapproved of the title "Quetzalcoatl" and suggested that Lawrence should use its English translation. Lawrence wonders why one must really "discard such a fascinating word." He stated that the title had been "stuck" in his mind "for two years" and felt very much attached to it (*Letters V* 250). In a letter to Secker (June 18, 1925), Lawrence reveals that Knof was also "horrified" at the title (*Letters V* 267). For similar comments, see also *Letters V*, p. 254, 256, 263.

Chapter V

Bynner as a Critic of Lawrence's Works And Lawrence as an Author

Bynner describes Lawrence's intense fear of Mexico and its people in *Journey with Genius* and how it has been projected into Kate in *The Plumed Serpent*, but it is relatively unknown that he has already portrayed such a frightened, feeble side of Lawrence in his earlier works. For example, one of his poems, titled "A Foreigner" which is included in the collection of his poems, *Indian Earth* (1929), exposes the genius's latent fear of Mexicans' inherent vitality and calmness. Bynner also analyzes various works of Lawrence in his memoir including *The Rainbow* (1915), *Women in Love* (1920), *The Lost Girl* (1920), *Kangaroo* (1923), *The Plumed Serpent, Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928), and his poems. Because Bynner seems to talk more about Lawrence's works than the incidents and experiences of his life, *Journey with Genius* can be categorized more as a work of literary criticism than a biography in its later part. Instead of examining the works analytically, however, Bynner rather attempts to reconstruct Lawrence as the embodiment of a "genius." Probably the problem of his analyses lies in his tendency to invariably equate Lawrence's characters with the author himself without referring to the necessity of fictionalization of facts in creative works in general. This situation can possibly make his work insufficient as a work of literary criticism. Nonetheless, it is more appropriate to see the form of the memoir's latter part, that of literary criticism, as a means of masking Bynner's sympathy and compassion toward his fellow writer.

Bynner's stance both as a biographer and a critic yet again poses a fundamental question as to the significance of biographies and the roles of biographers. Paul Murray Kendall argues that "the highest biographical art is the concealment of the biographer" so as to make the readers focus on the life of

his subject matter (12). In his argument, Kendall points out that a biographer's intrusion into his subject's life disturbs or destroys the readers' wish to share his vision of that life. In Bynner's case, however, he hardly "conceals" his own point of view when he narrates the life of Lawrence because of his stance both as a critic and biographer. His position as a friend and fellow writer of Lawrence, in addition, makes his presence quite conspicuous in the biography. Bynner repeatedly criticizes Lawrence's tendency to "interrupt" and intrude into his characters with his own speech and opinions, but as a biographer, he likewise "interrupts" his own description of the subject's life by recurrently adding his comments and opinions to it.

As discussed earlier, however, it is more accurate to say that Bynner's biography is essentially intended to change the concept of biography itself. Bynner is a poet and a critic as well as a biographer, and he fittingly employs these three stances in the making of *Journey with Genius*. Bynner's memoir has often been harshly criticized and undervalued mainly because he destroys the already established image of Lawrence as a "prophet," one of the greatest and the most innovative English writers of our time. Those unfavorable criticisms also relate to Bynner's treatment of time in his memoir. Kendall insists that, when we read a biography of a distinguished person, we are willing "to begin with the child and live a life along with him into greatness" (135). Here Kendall argues that a reader of a biography wishes to simulate the life of a great being through a biographer's skillful narration. On the contrary, Bynner's memoir starts with destroying the image of a great poet and novelist, and then freely moves forward to his reflections and recollections on his subject. In the first place, Bynner contradicts the readers' wish to "begin with" the subject's infancy and follow his life from there.

Bynner thus seems to insist that a biographer does not necessarily follow the chronological order when he narrates his subject's life story. Leon Edel gives an insightful comment on this subject when he discusses the relationship between Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry James, his biography's chief

subjects:

> Instead of chronicling little episodes and encounters piecemeal, as mere anecdotes, I recreate two personalities in their relationship to one another and in particular the significance of the old man to the younger. By weaving backward and forward in time and even dipping into the future, which to us, as readers, is after all entirely of the past, I reckon with time as it really exists, as something fluid and irregular and with memory, as something alive and flickering and evanescent. I refuse to be fettered by the clock and the calendar. I neither depart from my documents nor do I disparage them. Ultimately I, as the biographer, must paint the portrait and I can paint it only from the angle of vision I have, and from my time and its relation to the time that I seek to recover. (200-201)

The relationship between the subjects of Edel's biography closely resembles that of Bynner and Lawrence. Just as Edel portrays the relationship between two significant literary figures, Emerson and James, Bynner describes that between Lawrence and himself, and he also plays the roles of a biographer and a narrator, just like Edel himself. Namely, Bynner is both a biographer and his biography's subject. This stance makes the biography's organization quite complicated. Moreover, just as Edel underlines the "significance" of Emerson to James, Bynner focuses on the point how Lawrence has influenced him both as a writer and an individual. Because of this purpose, he needs to offer his own reflections on Lawrence's life to the readers, which often goes "backward and forward in time." Bynner essentially attempts to recollect bits and fragments of Lawrence in his memory, and mold them into one particular image of a literary genius. In that sense, he "paints" the portrait of Lawrence from his own vision, and it is this vision, not the criticisms of Lawrence's works,

he wishes to show the readers above anything else.

Additionally, in the process of portraying the relation between Lawrence and himself, Bynner aims at clarifying how he reacts, or *ought to react* to Lawrence as another writer, and consequently, he also needs to function as a critic of Lawrence's works to show his own reactions to the readers. Owing to these roles, his memoir takes a quite unconventional method. That unconventionality, as a result, creates an innovative work which contains a biography, fiction, and literary criticism in one book. We have examined how Bynner has fictionalized Lawrence's biographical facts in his memoir in the previous chapters, and this chapter, consequently, aims at focusing Bynner as a critic on Lawrence's works and clarifying how it has influenced his relationship with Lawrence as a genius.

1. The Portrait of Lawrence as a "Foreigner"

Bynner's insistent description of Lawrence's fear of Mexicans has often frustrated and bewildered the critics and scholars of Lawrence. Yoshio Inoue argues that Bynner's memoir focuses on Lawrence's extreme terror of Mexico and its people (207-08), adding that Bynner's negative criticism mainly comes from his ignorance of the antagonistic relationship between Europeans and Mexicans during the time of Lawrence's stay in Mexico (209). Inoue considers that, being an American, Bynner totally fails to understand Lawrence's fear of being a European traveler in Mexico (208). As Inoue points out, Bynner has seen through Lawrence's unconquerable fear and irritation, but it does not come from his ignorance of, or failure to understand Lawrence's position of being a European in Mexico. To clarify this point, Bynner had already pointed out that Lawrence's deeply rooted fear originated from his being a foreigner in Mexico in one of his poems, which was written long before he published *Journey with Genius*[1]:

A Foreigner

Chapala still remembers the foreigner
Who came with a pale red beard and pale blue eyes
And a pale white skin that covered a dark soul;
They remember the night when he thought he saw a hand
Reach through a broken window and fumble at a lock;
They remember a tree on the beach where he used to sit
And ask the burros questions about peace;
They remember him walking, walking away from something.
(Bynner 1978, 129)

In this poem, Bynner surely offers an unfavorable portrait of Lawrence just as he does in *Journey with Genius*. Bynner refers to the way Lawrence is described in his own poem as "uncomplimentary," which he can compare with "the ignominious figure Lawrence was planning" for him as Owen in *The Plumed Serpent*." He then describes the attempts of both Lawrence and himself to portray each other unfavorably in their works as their "open battle" (Bynner 1953, 183). Even if he does not reveal it, the readers who are familiar with Lawrence's works could easily identify the poem's subject with the author, judging from such descriptions as "a pale red beard" and "pale blue eyes." In addition, Bynner's portrait of Lawrence as a person extremely terrified of Mexicans would make the author a feeble being. In that sense, Lawrence and Bynner surely seem to criticize and attack each other in their works.

Nevertheless, as examined in Chapter IV, Lawrence does not really intend to degrade Bynner as Owen in his novel, but attempts to elicit his suffering caused by being an American and a writer. Likewise, the seemingly negative portrait of Lawrence who runs away from the terror of Mexico and its people would, in fact, reveal Bynner's concealed attachment to the genius. In

short, even though they seem to criticize each other in their works, this "open battle" can be also seen as a sign of their friendship and comradeship.

Contrary to Inoue's argument, however, Bynner was not totally unaware of the dangerous circumstances in Mexico at the time of his and Lawrence's sojourn. In *Journey with Genius*, quoting one of the letters to his mother, Bynner thus clarifies the causes of Lawrence's extreme terror of Mexicans:

> Lawrence was shocked to see Mexicans give murderers the same sort of admiration an Anglo-Saxon gives soldiers; and yet he had to admit that the difference between the two kinds of killers consists only in the difference between personal and national motives. To a Mexican a personal motive seems clearer cut and better justified than a motive of state; and you would have thought that Lawrence, with his faith in the rightness of action rising direct from the individual blood stream, might have sympathized with their preference. The Mexican here has learned individualism the hard way. … It is a gay grim game of individualism. This directness of individualism should, I repeat, have appealed to Lawrence; but their blood streams were too different from his. The natural man could, after all, be too natural. (1953, 182)

Bynner quotes this part of his letter just before he introduces the poem, "A Foreigner," in *Journey with Genius*. In his attempt to parallelize the letter and poem in his memoir in this way lies Bynner's creative strategy. The letter gives ample reasons for Lawrence to fear the Mexicans. Lawrence shows a certain feeling of respect for the Mexicans' preference for "personal" motives" to "national" ones because he believes that their spontaneous actions come from their "blood stream," that is, the source of their vital energy. Yet their extreme brutality cannot be easily acceptable to him, and of course, he must consider the case in which that he, as a foreigner, becomes the target of their "personal motives." In addition, just before he quotes the passage from his own letter,

Bynner introduces some "tales of violence," in one of which a local butcher had killed one of his customers and left his severed head on the shop's counter, suspecting his wife's "too much interest" in that customer. Then, Lawrence later found that the butcher's sentence was actually no more than six months, which made him astounded and extremely furious.

If the readers examined the poem, "A Foreigner," with Bynner's preceding comments and letter, they would no longer see Lawrence's fear of Mexicans as unreasonable and groundless. Even though he seemingly ridicules Lawrence's terror in the poem, Bynner in fact underlines Lawrence's predicament in which he had to confront the danger of living in Mexico as a foreigner. It even seems that, by paralleling his ironical picture of Lawrence and the reality of murder cases in Mexico, Bynner aims at ridiculing himself, who cannot accept his friend's fear fairly and reasonably, in his own poem. In fact, a close examination of this poem would reveal that Bynner is well aware of Lawrence's dangerous situation in Mexico. Lawrence stayed in Mexico because he thought he had found in that country and its landscape a source of his creative energy, yet the inhabitants' bloodiness itself could not help disgusting the author. What Bynner insists on here, accordingly, is Lawrence's total aloneness in Mexico. Because Lawrence detects "something" that separates himself from the Mexicans, he tries to "walk away" from them and the country itself.

In Bynner's perspective, Lawrence's rejection of making contacts with others leads to his failure to "write lifelike dialogue" and consequently, he "could not finally hear any voice but his own" (1953, 312). That is, since he cannot blend himself with others, the author has no choice but to look inward. Because he wants to, or thinks he *ought to*, depend on his instinct and intuition, he refuses to contemplate the things he sees outwardly. Concerning this stance, Bynner states that Lawrence "should have known the Chinese" because the Chinese painter, who just continues sitting in front of what he sees, rearranges his "inner seeing," but he never denies what he sees (1953, 311-12).

Bynner also says that he does not understand why Lawrence did not look for the source of his creativity in "the ancients" of China. He insists that, if Lawrence had been familiar with "the classic Chinese tradition of a remote past," he would have found there "a perfect society of men had lived with natural goodness, with natural leaders and natural followers bound in balanced and happy relationship" (1953, 234). He also defines "the real Chinaman" as a man "who lives the life of a man of adult reason with the heart of a child" and the "Chinese spirit" as a spirit of "perpetual youth" (qtd. in Kraft 45). In Bynner's view, then, the ancient China would have been an ideal place for Lawrence to find true heroes of his dream, who can pursue and struggle for their ideals with the purity of their heart and their vital force directly connected with nature. Therefore, Bynner regrets that Lawrence had not really attempted to connect himself to ancient China and its spirit.

In summary, Bynner indicates that Lawrence fails to connect his inner self with the outward, which makes him unable to connect with the outer world. Bynner's negative criticisms of Lawrence's works, therefore, are all based on this assumption. In this connotation, the word "a foreigner," that is to say, an outsider anywhere in the world, can be seen as a vital keyword to comprehend Lawrence and his works, because in his latent refusal of human contacts lies his consciousness of being a superior being, that is, "a genius."

2. The "Dark" Side of Lawrence in Bynner's Eyes

Bynner discusses Lawrence's works, and he always places his discussions' focal point in the author's self-contradiction. In the fortieth chapter, titled "Dark Gods," he argues how Lawrence's religious faith creates a paradox and consequently disharmonizes the relationships among his characters. As examined in the previous chapter, Bynner points out that Lawrence often intrudes into his characters and disrupts their conversations through his own

"chatter", and Bynner finds one of its causes in his faith in "dark gods."

In Bynner's view, Lawrence felt that he had finally reached "an end of his wandering, a ready-made colony," having found "the plumed serpent alive, the natural aristocrat, the dark god existent in the living blood stream," all of which are the signs of human vital force, among the Indians and landscape in Mexico (Bynner 1953, 259). Lawrence had wandered around, seeking for an ideal place in which humans can directly connect with nature untainted by civilization. Hence he thought he could have evaded European culture, civilization and socialism just as Kate in *The Plumed Serpent* did. Bynner then indicates that Lawrence was rather skeptical about "the doings of mind and spirit," and found "the vocation of the body" more dependable, and so he denied both Jehovah and Jesus, "gods of mind and spirit" (1953, 260). The denial of Christianity, then, was undoubtedly the chief motivation of Lawrence's long "wandering."

Bynner, however, finds a vital contradiction in Lawrence's belief in the "gods of body," namely, pantheistic divinities. The Gods do not attempt to spiritually guide humans but justify whatever human bodies naturally do. Lawrence describes the Gods as "dark"[2] because they reside in humans' minds unconsciously. That is, they are not consciously guided by human mind and spirit. Yet Bynner wonders why Lawrence, with his particular attachment to the body, was not really interested in the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of Christ's body. Bynner then points out Lawrence's failure to clarify the precise meaning of "body" in any religious belief (1953, 261), and hence criticizes the ambiguity of Lawrence's belief in the ancient gods. Nevertheless, in my view, Lawrence intentionally leaves his religion ambiguous especially in his works so as to allow the readers to exercise their own imagination when they encounter the mystic ancient religion as exemplified in *The Plumed Serpent*. In the first place, it is even doubtful whether an author ought to shed light on his religious belief in his creative works.

Bynner also argues that, while he refuses to theorize religion, Lawrence

still seeks "theory," in his assumption that the ancient, primitive gods are dominant existences which rule over the earth and human beings (1953, 262). Bynner then implies that Lawrence's theorization of the primitive gods emerges, in spite of his attempt to negate theory, in Lawrence's words in *Kangaroo* (1923). Bynner does not really clarify in which part of the novel Lawrence's theorization of the ancient gods occurs, but it can be detected in Kangaroo's denial of "the principle of eternity" of Christianity. Kangaroo states that "'The Ten Commandments which Moses heard' were the very voice of life. But the tablets of stone he engraved them on are millstones round our necks. Commandments should fade as flowers do" (113), and he thus disapproves of human beings' desire to seek permanency in their religions. Therefore, even though he has "the greatest admiration for the Roman Catholic Church, as an institution," Kangaroo still needs to believe in "something more flexible, and a power less formal and dogmatic; more generous" (112). Yet he also claims that any human being needs "a father," that is, "a suffering Saviour," who "uses his authority in the name of living life, and who is absolutely stern against anti-life" because a human being needs to "be relieved from this terrible responsibility of governing himself when he doesn't know what he wants, and has no aim towards which to govern himself." Then, Kangaroo adds that "I offer my consciousness, which hears the voice; and I offer my mind and my will, for the battle against every obstacle to respond to the voices of life" to the God (113). Bynner considers Kangaroo's statement as the evidence of Lawrence's inclination toward "theory" owing to the character's search for a "more flexible" deity than Christianity.

This image of the "God" as the bearer of the absolute power, and Kangaroo's willingness to "offer" himself to it presented in this part, can be also applied to *The Plumed Serpent* in which Kate finally agrees to participate in the religion of Quetzalcoatl as the wife of the stronger Cipriano. Lawrence's wish to mingle with the stronger, controlling being itself, in Bynner's viewpoint, reveals the author's wish to depend upon theory. Bynner furthers this

argument, stating that "Like other Europeans, who have hoped to replace a dead with a live theology, Lawrence had followed his hungry spirit toward America's Red Indians, who might be finding heaven on earth" (1953, 263). He thus points out that in essence, Christianity and Lawrence's faith in the ancient Gods are very similar to each other in the sense that both are trying to theorize the meanings of the gods, giving them the absolute power to govern humans.

Here, however, we ought to reconsider how Bynner defines the concept of "theory" in his argument about Lawrence's works. Even though Bynner often equates Kate's view with Lawrence's, we ought to see them separately considering Lawrence's theorization of religion. In the case of Kate, her wish to seek a new faith in Mexico and mingle herself into a greater being emerges quite spontaneously and instinctively rather than theoretically. She fails to analyze the significance of Quetzalcoatl religion rationally and contemplatively. She even finds the religion's cruelty and irrationality repulsive, yet she somehow feels that she must yield herself to it, and she can never clarify her motivation to participate in the mystic religious practices conducted by Don Ramon and Cipriano. Her reactions to the new religion, then, do not seem theoretical.

On the other hand, Lawrence seems to justify Ramon's struggle to seek for a new religion. Ramon tries to persuade his son who utterly rejects the religion of Quetzalcoatl by stating that the heaven in which his son believes is "very far—and very empty," and he insists that "the hearts of men are the very middle of the sky" and God and Paradise live "inside the hearts of living men and women" to which "the souls of the dead come to rest" (*Plumed Serpent* 355). We can detect Lawrence's theorization of the religion in this attempt to persuade others to accept it. In fact, Ramon's speeches on the necessity of the new religion seem to be a series of lectures on which he insistently emphasizes its goodness and strength. In this sense, Lawrence, as in Bynner's viewpoint, surely attempts to theorize the meaning of the God.

3. Bynner's Criticism of Sexuality and Love in Lawrence's Works

Bynner consistently criticizes Lawrence's tendency to value the body and deny the spirit, pointing out the unbalance and contradiction between them. As examined in the previous part, Bynner is skeptical about the religious faith manifested in *The Plumed Serpent*, yet he assumes a much more critical attitude toward the description of sexuality in Lawrence's works. Bynner insists that, contrary to Lawrence's celebration of the body, it is "less the body than the spirit which determines" the sex and "without spiritual inclination, all the sex in the world does nobody much good" (1953, 270). He argues that this simplification of sex makes Lawrence's works and his characters unsubstantial and lifeless. Since the author sheds a special light on his "sexual prima donnas of both sexes," the other characters turn into monotonous figures, blending themselves into the background of the "prima donnas." In addition, even the couple at the center stage soon become "depersonalized into bright-painted puppets of sex" (1953, 270), so they lose their own voice, mingling it with Lawrence's own. In his viewpoint, since Lawrence employs his characters essentially as the spokesmen of his "theory" on sex and devalues their spirit, his characters lack individuality. In this sense, Bynner seems to oversimplify Lawrence's attitude toward the body. Just as we see it in the relationship between Christianity and the ancient gods in his mind, however, Lawrence does not totally discard the mind and spirit. What Lawrence tries to *deny* is the *denial* of the body and sex as unclean and shameful which he has seen in European culture and Christian doctrines. Because of that purpose, he feels he *must* underline the importance of the body.

Bynner's criticism, however, not only focuses on the description of sex in Lawrence's works but also on the relationship between the body and spirit in the author's own life. Bynner argues that in Lawrence, the bodily part and spiritual part are completely separated from each other, which creates a self-contradiction and internal split in his mind: "My surmise persists that at

times Lawrence had doubts as to the complete dignity of sex and therefore he longed to set it apart from his spiritual or mental responsibility and to remain always a young blood, happily accountable only to animal nature" (1953, 272). In Bynner's observation, this inconsistency and contradiction occur because Lawrence persuades himself to accept sex as dignified in his theory, but he is not very successful in actualizing it in his life.

Nevertheless, Bynner appears to defend Lawrence's tendency to locate sex at the centre of his works when he says that sex had always "remained to him an element at least as sacred as spirit," so the act of evading it "as a natural, proper, clean and noble function" repelled him (1953, 275). Moreover, Bynner seems to be skeptical about the effects of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* when he states that "I am afraid that more people have merely laughed at *Lady Chatterley*, or been bored by it, than have been shocked," yet he also insists that that boredom originates from Lawrence's "high seriousness" (1953, 277). Bynner hence suggests that Lawrence's "seriousness" in picturing sex has often been misconstrued by the public and his successors.

Bynner admits that Lawrence's "pioneering feat" opened a way for his successors to freely discuss sex in works of literature, but his earnest attitude toward sex has been mostly neglected or undervalued. In Bynner's viewpoint, although Lawrence openly wrote about sex "because he felt it clean," the others wrote about it "because they feel it unclean" (1953, 277). This comment reveals itself Bynner's genuine feeling of pity toward Lawrence. *Lady Chatterley's Lover* may look ridiculous and boring to many readers and critics because they do not comprehend the author's "serious" motivation. They cannot really imagine that one can write so honestly about sex. Accordingly, his view on sex differentiates and separates Lawrence from the public and even from the fellow writers. Nonetheless, Bynner, unlike those people, seems to insist that in this uniqueness of vision Lawrence's genius truly lies.

4. Common Sense and Intellect in Lawrence —the Portrait of a Genius—

Bynner basically aims at eliciting Lawrence's underlying stance as a writer and an artist and explaining how it alienates him from others. His numerous criticisms of Lawrence's works do not really intend to assess their literary values, but focus on the point how the "genius" of Lawrence has been created and developed. More precisely, Lawrence has inspired Bynner to define in his own way what a "genius" is really like. In short, Lawrence is also the main character recreated and reconstructed through Bynner's artistic vision.

Bynner, in the thirty-sixth chapter of *Journey with Genius*, titled "Would-Be Aristocrat," defines Lawrence as "the aristocrat by choice" (228), which becomes the basis of his portrait of Lawrence. In this chapter, Bynner cites a passage from Lawrence's "Autobiographical Sketch," in which the author writes about his failure to contact with people: "I don't feel there is any very cordial or fundamental contact between me and society, or me and other people. There is a breach. And my contact is with something that is non-human, non-vocal" (qtd. in Bynner 1953, 229). At this point, he insists that Lawrence chooses to become an aristocrat, an intellectually superior being, so as to fill the discrepancy between the society and himself, and the others and himself. Because he finds Mexicans' response is contrary to his expectation and thus unsatisfactory, he transforms them into satisfactory beings in his works. He then intrudes himself into those Mexican characters, exercising the creator's absolute power. In Bynner's observation, all of these attempts of Lawrence are to recover his sense of superiority crushed in his real life. Bynner's argument again appears to be an over-simplification of Lawrence's motive as a creative artist. Yet this is only the beginning of Bynner's analysis of Lawrence's complicated situation as a "genius."

Bynner's observation on Lawrence begins to appear more sympathetic when he argues about the contradiction between Lawrence's inclination toward

intellect and his belief in humans' animalistic instinct:

> Lawrence often felt that no one is eventually great as a mere thinker, because mortal thought decays and is gone in the cleansing course of time. .... He used to nod occasional assent to my belief that finally only common sense persists with purity and force. And common sense is anybody's possession against all proud pretensions of the intellect. ... And yet, though Lawrence exclaimed, declaimed, proclaimed against merely cerebral processes, he constantly seemed—more in his books than in conversation—to depend upon a prop of theory to hold up common sense. For all his distrust of intellect, for all his trust in common sense or "horse sense," his mind craved and his tongue drummed incessant theory. (1953, 242-43)

Bynner, in this argument, points out the conflicting feelings in Lawrence: his faith in intellect and common sense cannot possibly coexist with his disbelief in intelligence or theoretical abilities. According to Bynner, however, Lawrence paradoxically relies more on theories than his instincts to support his belief in common sense. He also argues that, although Lawrence constantly presents his faith in animalistic instinct, he in fact attempts to intellectualize this animalistic instinct, seeing himself as a superior, gifted being. Nevertheless, although Bynner's argument can be seemingly construed as a harsh criticism of Lawrence, this contradiction actually draws out Lawrence's outstanding ability as a writer. That is, it shows the genius's enormous, almost tragic efforts to intentionally isolate himself from ordinary people and to thus maintain his position as a leading literary figure.

Bynner also claims that Lawrence suffers from this contradiction because he "could not blend past and future into the present" and "could not blend intellect and emotion, pity and terror, freedom and control, any of the opposites"

(304). This failure of Lawrence to "blend" the opposites can be connected to his sense of superiority pointed out by Bynner. More to the point, Lawrence seems to suffer from his inability to "blend," but in actuality he refuses to "blend" into the others to sustain himself as a loftier being both intellectually and intuitively.

In Bynner's perspective, this division between intellect and instinct in Lawrence makes the dialogue in his works a "monologue" because the conversations are "inside himself and with himself" and he never cares for the "exchange between actual personalities but only between personalities inside one man" (312). It is not only Bynner that criticizes Lawrence's sense of superiority and rejection of communication with others. Idella Purnell[3], in her essay titled "Black Magic," highly evaluates Lawrence's collection of poems, *Birds, Beasts, and Flowers*. She compares Lawrence's attempt to give new meanings to fruits, flowers, and animals without crushing their "forms" to "black magic" (19). She argues that Lawrence's "black magic" has "chemicalized" these natural objects into "something new" while he maintains their "tradition and custom." As a result, the poet makes us "discover that all the essential meanings we have always held so familiar, we have always taken for granted, have disappeared" (19), and thus gives them totally new significances. Like Bynner, Purnell pictures Lawrence's portrait as a genius for his exceptional gift to transform the already established images of things into something quite extraordinary. Yet she also feels a little offended by Lawrence's assertion of superiority: perhaps much more than Bynner. She finds "the loyal British subject" in Lawrence's attempt to belittle socialists and democrats: "Hark, hark, the dogs do bark, it's the socialists in town" and when he asserts that "a hibiscus is more than a man" (21). She disagrees with this attempt by Lawrence to differentiate people according to their politics. In her view, Lawrence has made a fatal mistake with that attempt because "underneath your separate swaggers, you, aristocrat, and they, democrats, socialists, are men" and "the true inside meaning of that never changes, no

matter what it may assume as an outward form" (21). She thus wishes Lawrence to employ the same insight as he describes flowers and animals when he refers to humans.

Bynner and Purnell both argue about Lawrence's sense of superiority to others, yet while Purnell's rejection of Lawrence's belittlement of socialists and democrats remains consistent, Bynner's argument about his sense of superiority can be interpreted both favorably and unfavorably. Probably this difference relates to the fact that Bynner had been a closer friend and observer of Lawrence. In numerous places in his memoir, he indicates that Lawrence's assertion of superiority originates from his failure to cordially mingle with other people, and essentially in that aloneness, he finds the author's genius. In Bynner's observation, Lawrence can only create "monologues" in his characters owing to his being a "genius," a totally alienated being from the ordinary. Because he cannot achieve mutuality in his relationship with the others in real life, he also fails to create that state in his works. Nevertheless, Bynner defines that alienation of Lawrence as an unmistakable sign of genius and in that sense, as a fellow writer, he shows a profound feeling of sympathy for the author's solitary battle of creation.

Notes

[1] This poem was written in 1923, after Lawrence left Mexico and just before Bynner's departure from Mexico. Bynner also quotes this poem in *Journey with Genius*, in which he states that Lawrence "never referred" to the poem "though he saw it later in *Indian Earth*, a volume dedicated to him" (182). Judging from the way he writes about Lawrence's dismissal of this poem, he obviously expected to receive some comments on, or reactions to it from Lawrence.

[2] Lawrence also refers to Gods' image as "dark" in Richard's words in *Kangaroo*. He says to Kangaroo that God "enters us from the below, not from above" by which he means He enters humans "not through the spirit" but "from the lower self, the dark self, the phallic self" (135). Bynner's naming this chapter "Dark Gods," then, probably comes from the expressions Lawrence used in this novel. Curiously, Idella Purnell (later Mrs. Remington Stone) also describes Lawrence's insight into natural objects in *Birds, Beasts, and Flowers* as "dark": "Mr. Lawrence has closed his eyes to look at these objects, and so has seen them in the ancient dark and the ancient light within himself" (20).

[3] Idella Purnell was Bynner's former student in poetry at the University of California, Berkeley, who was living in Guadalajara at the time of the Lawrences' stay in Mexico. At that time, she was publishing a verse magazine called *Palms*. She and her father then spent a few days together with the Lawrences, Bynner and Johnson in Guadalajara, being "eager for advice and help" from Lawrence and Bynner (Bynner 1953, 81). Purnell recollects that, at her initial meeting with the Lawrences, she was shocked to see that the author was "so thin, so fragile and nervous quick, and with such a flaming red beard, and such intense, sparkling, large mischievous blue eyes" and seemed "neat almost to obsession and frail" while Frieda was "very large and motherly" and her laugh was "generous and violent". Later, she was also shocked to see that this seemingly frail and amiable author could be easily irritated, and that he often aimed his irritation and frustration at his wife (Bynner 1953, 84).

Conclusion

Bynner and Lawrence: Autobiographers, Poets, and a Novelist

As discussed in the previous chapters, even though Bynner emphasized Lawrence's profound fear of Mexicans, his primal intention is not eliciting the author's feeble side. By writing *Journey with Genius*, Bynner expects the readers to identify Lawrence's characters with the author himself. When writing about Kate in *The Plumed Serpent*, for instance, Bynner aims at revealing how Lawrence idealizes Kate into a courageous being so as to conceal his own fear of the Mexicans. Bynner's portrait of Lawrence seems a mere reflection of his personal feelings on Lawrence as one of his close friends. Since he writes it as a form of biography, however, his description of Lawrence would bewilder the readers. The readers tend to see Lawrence's actions and words depicted in a biography as facts, so they would feel perplexed when they are caught between the two opposite images of the writer: the public image of Lawrence as a "prophet" and "a priest of love," and Bynner's portrait of him as a feeble, easily irritable man. Yet, if we consider that Bynner also views Lawrence's struggle with his fear sympathetically and compassionately at times, we can hardly define it as his malice. Bynner, in addition, does not fully support his less favorable description of Lawrence with enough evidences, which makes the readers frustrated. However, isn't it possible to consider that, in his presentation of the opposite elements—fiction and fact, genius and pettiness, and sympathy and malice—Bynner's true motivation lies. As examined in the previous chapters, Bynner considers that Lawrence's "genius" primarily resides in his self-contradiction, that is, his sense of superiority and fear of isolation, so the seemingly contradictory, ambivalent style of Bynner's memoir is actually the reflection of Lawrence's life.

Bynner, a poet who possessed an exceptionally thorough knowledge of Chinese poetry, is well known for his translation of a Chinese classic, a selection of the T'ang poets[1]. He also helped Ezra Pound publish his first American book of Poetry in 1910 (Kraft 1). Considering such a literary background of Bynner, it is possible to assume that he expects his readers to value the extensiveness of the imagery his poems can provide with them. Nevertheless, the lengthy, persistent style of *Journey with Genius* would seem contrary to the style of his poems. This writing style possibly aims at imitating that of Lawrence's fictions.

As discussed earlier, Lawrence does not actually belittle and negate Bynner's life style by describing Owen, but presents him as a generalized image of Americans in his viewpoint. That is, he employs Owen as a symbol of Americanism, and the readers who are not familiar with the relationship between Lawrence and Bynner do not directly connect Owen with Bynner. Even if some readers know much about the connection between Lawrence and Bynner, they possibly see Owen as a fictional character based on a real person. On the other hand, in Bynner's memoir and poems, Lawrence himself appears as their subject matters, and because the readers cannot help identifying them with the author himself, it would be hard for them to judge how much fictionalization occurs in his portraits of Lawrence. Yet both writers create their fictional characters inspired by actual people and mold them into the representatives of certain aspects of the human being.

Bynner's memoir and Lawrence's fictions can be suitable texts to consider the difference between fiction and biography. Bynner fictionalizes the real person in the form of a biography to make it fit into his image of a "genius" while Lawrence attempts to see himself objectively in the form of a fiction, namely, by transforming himself into fictional characters. In that sense, Lawrence writes his autobiographies in the form

of a fiction. Bynner gives us a significant insight as to this aspect of Lawrence's fictions in *Journey with Genius*:

> A great deal of the time when he thought he was talking about himself, he was talking about what mother or virgin or wife felt him to be. He was not so much looking at them through his eyes as at himself through theirs. In his later years he did not much enjoy seeing people objectively and so saw human life less and less except in some image of himself and, as often as not, through the eyes of others as he imagined their seeing him. Perhaps he was right that all life exists in one man. But he was not any egoist. He was the one egoist. (291)

This comment of Bynner makes it clear that Lawrence had always described himself as his works' subjects, but he had done that from many different perspectives. When he sees the other people, Lawrence actually looks at himself mirrored in them. Just as many biographers describe Lawrence in their works, Lawrence created many different versions of his autobiography in his works. In the sense that he only writes about himself, as Bynner points out, he is an "egoist," but because that egocentrism creates the works of his "genius," he is "the egoist" who ought to be celebrated for his solitary battle of creation.

Bynner's memoir of Lawrence can be even seen partly as his autobiography in the sense that he emphasizes his personal relationship with Lawrence and how it had influenced his life as a writer. As Max Saunders claims, "we are familiar with the idea that all creative writing must be autobiographical in some way. You don't have to have actually turned into an insect to be able to write 'Metamorphosis'; but you probably have to have felt alienation, or abjection" (8). If we apply Saunder's view to Bynner's memoir, we can possibly explain his ambivalent attitude toward

Lawrence as his subject matter. Even though Bynner cannot accept certain aspects of Lawrence, he sees the reflection of his own self in Lawrence. He repeatedly underlines Lawrence's fear of having a close relationship with others, but he is also terrified of intimacy. Their relationship sometimes caused difficulty because of their common traits. James Kraft's observation of Lawrence and Bynner would clarify this point:

> If Lawrence saw Bynner as too gregarious, as hiding a fear of intimacy in a light-hearted manner, Bynner saw Lawrence as a man equally afraid of intimacy, as hiding behind his severe criticism of Frieda and much of the world he met. The intensity of what Lawrence and Bynner felt was very great, too great to allow them to relax together. Each had been understood and challenged in a dimension that was deep and important. (Kraft 54)

As Kraft describes their relationship, their common fear of intimacy at times distanced them from each other. They could not openly and cordially talk about each other in their real life because each of them detected their own fear in the other. Consequently, both of them attempted to clarify the meaning of their relationship and their own fear of intimacy mainly in their creative writing. In this sense, the two writers also try to analyze themselves by portraying each other.

If we were to find such autobiographical elements in both Lawrence's and Bynner's works, we would not necessarily consider that *Journey with Genius* contains Bynner's malicious criticisms of Lawrence. Moore condemns the delayed publication of Bynner's memoir as a sign of his malice, quoting Lawrence's own words: "Bynner's delayed sting would not have surprised Lawrence, who in 1926 wrote to Mrs. Luhan that Bynner was 'a sort of belated mosquito'" (453). Yet Moore, in saying this, totally

ignores the complexity of the relationship between Lawrence and Bynner. In that letter Moore quotes here, it seems that Lawrence in fact longs for Bynner's companionship, saying, "Sometimes I wish things were a little more convivial. But one has to take life as one finds it, and the kind of conviviality one *does* get doesn't help much. I wouldn't worry about Bynner—he's a belated sort of mosquito" (*Letters V* 580). If we interpret the "mosquito" part of Lawrence's comment on Bynner paralleling it with his preceding expressions, we can rather see Lawrence's feeling of attachment to Bynner. In these words, Lawrence expresses the fact that he needs Bynner's "conviviality."

As for the belated publication of Bynner's memoir, it possibly indicates that he needed much time to thoroughly understand Lawrence, his work, and the significance of their relationship. If, as Moore points out, Bynner had really been a "Lawrence hater," he would not have spent such a long time to create his memoir. If he had intended to use his works as a means of revenge on Lawrence, he would have done that much earlier. Comparing *Journey with Genius* with *Cake* (1926), a short play about Mabel Dodge Luhan, would clarify this point. Mabel Luhan is the person who separated Willard Johnson, his secretary and then lover, from Bynner by taking him as her own secretary. Bynner accordingly wrote this play as a revenge on her (Kraft 55)[2]. He "revenged" himself on Luhan only a few years after that malicious act of Luhan was conducted, so it would be difficult for us to imagine, however "belated" Bynner could be, he needed twenty years to complete the revenge on Lawrence by writing his memoir.

As discussed in the previous chapter, *Journey with Genius* is not Bynner's first work on Lawrence. In the three of his poems included in the volume titled *Indian Earth* (1929), "D. H. Lawrence," "Lorenzo," and "A Foreigner," he employs Lawrence as their subjects. Particularly "Lorenzo" is noteworthy because it works as an indication of Bynner's admiration for Lawrence's gift and way of living:

Lorenzo

I had not known that there could be
Men like Lorenzo and like me,
Both in the world and both so right
That the world is dark and the world is light.
I had not thought that anyone
Would choose the dark for dwelling on,
Would dig and delve for the bitterest roots
Of sweetest and suavest fruits.
I never had presumed to doubt
That now and then the light went out;
But I had not known that there could be
Men like Lorenzo and like me
Both in the world and both so right
That the world is dark and the world is light.
I had not guessed that joy could be
Selected for an enemy. (qtd. in Kraft, 54–55)

In *Journey with Genius*, Bynner seems to insist on pointing out the difference between the real state of Lawrence and the heroic characters of his creation. In this poem, on the other hand, he indicates that both the writer's fictional world and his real life can function as an indication of human truth. Moreover, Bynner as the poem's speaker accepts both Lawrence's and his own viewpoint as righteous when he states that "the world is dark and the world is light," and when he says, "I had not guessed that joy could be / Selected for an enemy," he admits and accepts Lawrence's self-contradiction with a feeling of admiration. The portrait of Lawrence in Bynner might contradict the public image of the "genius," however, Bynner

has added another aspect of Lawrence as a genius to the world just as Lawrence has created numerous different versions of himself in his works.

Considering that Bynner was inspired by Lawrence the author to create a symbol of "genius" as another writer, it would be difficult to construe his memoir as a means of personal attack. He offers *Journey with Genius* as "recollections and reflections" on Lawrence, which implies that, even though it took much time for him to really comprehend the author, he could not have ended his life without writing about Lawrence in such great detail. The ambivalence and indecisiveness of Bynner's writing style can be seen as the very reflection of Lawrence both as an author and a person.

Notes

[1] Bynner translated three hundred T'ang poems from the texts of Dr. Kiang Kang-hu, a renowned and distinguished scholar on Chinese poetry and also a social activist whose liberal views drove him to leave China. He and Bynner met in Berkeley in 1919, where both of them taught poetry. They worked together on the translation of the Chinese poems there and in China, and the anthology has been served as a significant achievement "in its accurate and sensitive rendering of poems thought of as Chinese classics and very difficult to translate" (Kraft 44).

[2] Mabel Luhan became upset with the fact that Bynner did not invite her when the Lawrences visited New Mexico for the first time in September, 1922 (53). Mabel then vindictively accused Bynner of "having brought homosexuality to New Mexico," which motivated Bynner to write the play *Cake* (Kraft 55). The play portrays Mabel as an "emasculator, goddess of wealth, and deceiver of both men and herself." In spite of its primary purpose, however, Bynner's play on Mabel is "elaborately stylized, a spoof that has many brilliant qualities," which can be

defined as "high camp" according to Kraft (55). For the detail of their quarrel, also refer to Inoue 213, Cline 37-38, Rudnick 244-245.

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