D. H. Lawrence's View about Inspiration: A Critical Comparison with the Cases of the Romantics and Dylan Thomas

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1. Poets' Views about Inspiration in the Cases of Lawrence's Precursors and Successors

In this paper, we aim at seeing how D. H. Lawrence as a poet thinks about inspiration. It has been regarded as one of the most important factors in the process of poetry writing. For example, Octavio Paz, a modern Mexican poet, insists that a certain factor other than the poet is involved in the act of poetry writing:

The act of writing poems looms up before us like a knot of opposing forces, in which our voice and the other voice are entwined and confused. The contours grow dim: our thinking is imperceptibly transformed into something that we cannot control completely; and our ego gives place to an unnamed pronoun, which is not totally a you or a he. (143)

As seen in Paz's remark, many poets tend to privilege inspiration as "the other voice" or "an unnamed pronoun." However, easy absolutization of it may lead to negation of the "ego" or the self of a poet. Then, how does Lawrence deal with this contradictory relation between inspiration and the subjectivity of a poet?

Before examining some of Lawrencean poems and prose, we would like to have a brief look at the views about inspiration of the Romantic poets as his precursors (Section1.1) and Dylan Thomas as one of his successors (Section1.2).

1.1 The Romantics' Views about Inspiration

Tony Pinkney, who has analyzed Lawrencean novels from the viewpoint of modernism, concludes that Lawrence's "long battle with 'classiosity' throughout his career" characterizes his prose works (163), but as for poetry, it is rather the battle with Romanticism that is key to his creation.

The English Romantics of the nineteenth century are the most influential precursors of Lawrence. Generally speaking, they consider inspiration as something that only chosen poets with great sensitivity and intellect can receive. They often consecrate it as a staple and absolute factor in the act of poetry writing.

Meanwhile, they put only secondary weight on the poets' subjective working to textualize it into
poems. From the viewpoint of Percy Bysshe Shelley, one of the so-called second-generation Romantics, poems are generated beyond the control of mind, consciousness, and spirit of a poet:

Poetry, as has been said, in this respect differs from logic, that it is not subject to the control of the active powers of the mind, and that its birth and recurrence has no necessary connexion with consciousness or will. (138)

The poet's subjective and conscious working is regarded as just "a fading coal" as shown in the extract below:

A man cannot say, "I will compose a poetry." The greatest poet even cannot say it: for the mind in creation is as a fading coal, which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness...but when composition begins, inspiration is already on the decline, and the most glorious poetry that has ever been communicated to the world is probably a feeble shadow of the original conception of the Poet. (135)

What we should recognize here is temporariness of inspiration, which is described as something being "already on the decline" at the very moment when a poem starts to be written. In order to manage to seize this faint and easily perishing inspiration in a purer form, Shelley is willing to blow out "a fading coal" or the poet's subjectivity.

Self-negation by a poet is also seen in 'Ode to a Nightingale' (Poems of JK 523-532) written by John Keats, another second-generation Romantic. In this poem, paralysis or numbness of the poet's mind is consistently stressed:

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk. (1-4)

It should be noted that the poet's "sense" becomes numb and falls into oblivion ("Lethe") as if he had drunk some narcotic drug. It seems clear that this "drowsy numbness" of consciousness is a prerequisite condition for Keats receiving inspiration. As seen in Harold Bloom's remark that Keats "has yielded his being too readily to that of the bird. And he welcomes this dangerous vertigo" (Keats 8), consumption of the poet's
subjectivity is rather "welcomed" by Keats who seeks for an encounter with a nightingale, a symbol of inspiration:

Forlorn! The very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!

Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music... Do I wake or sleep? (71-72, 79-80)

As mentioned above, inspiration is essentially transient; and similarly, the experience given by it never lasts long, however ecstatic and epiphany-like it may be. Keats, who should have flown high in the sky of imagination guided by a nightingale, is excluded from the celestial realm with his own words "Forlorn!" as a turning point, and finally falls back to the terrestrial reality.

After the strategy of minimizing his self-consciousness has ended in failure, Keats seems to obtain some chance to think over consciously how a poet should get along with inspiration. As Harold Bloom notes, Keats is "left pondering the contraries: are the act and state of creation a heightening or merely an evasion of the state of experience?" (Keats 13). However, the poet does not choose to pursue this crucial pondering; instead of it, he moves into an ambiguous interrogative: "Do I wake or sleep?" Thus, he cunningly avoids "a battle with identity" (Thomas Weiskel 50-51) and a grope for some ideal relationship between the subjectivity of a poet and inspiration.

As briefly shown above, Keats and Shelley have a general tendency to be willing to abandon the consciousness or subjectivity of a poet, respecting the absoluteness and dignity of inspiration. Meanwhile, William Wordsworth, one of the first-generation Romantics, tries to put a poet and inspiration in a more balanced relationship. Borrowing key words of the Romantics, Keats and Shelley pursue "sublime" experiences beyond individual poets, but Wordsworth pursues "egotistical sublime" experiences based on the poet's own self-consciousness.

Let us take the poem, 'I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud', which is also known as 'Daffodil,' as an example. According to the diary-like essay called Journal, which is written by Dorothy, the poet's sister, they are said to have been "in the woods beyond Gowbarrow Park" and seen "a few daffodils close to the water side."

As seen in this record, the sight of daffodils is of course an actual one, but as many critics mention, it is, at the same time, some illusionary and divine vision brought by inspiration. What we should recognize here is that this vision of daffodils, though it can be given by inspiration, does not pass quickly, but is
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steadily fixed in the poet's textual world. For Wordsworth, inspiration is something that can be played back many times in his own recollection even after a long time span:

For oft when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude,
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the Daffodils. (13-18)

One of the factors making it possible for Wordsworth to redefine inspiration not as something ephemeral but as something lasting and reproducible may lie in his rhetorical strategy to internalize inspiration. Our attention should be paid to the fact that he has set an "inward eye" within himself. By this rhetorical device, he makes inspiration, which essentially originates externally, united with the poet's self and self-consciousness. In this poem, inspiration becomes truly meaningful and effective not when it suddenly visits the poet but when it is captured, internalized, unified, aged, and recollected by him at "the hour of possession" (Thomas Weiskel 53).

While Keats and Shelley somewhat intentionally exaggerate the image of a poet as some passive and "transparent" receiver of inspiration, Wordsworth holds the notion of a poet as an independent controller of it, which may remind us of Dylan Thomas, another Romantic poet appearing in the twentieth century.

1.2 Dylan Thomas' View about Inspiration

Concerning literary successors of Lawrence, we could name a few poets. However, we will limit ourselves to discussing just one case, i.e. Dylan Thomas. Thomas is a modern poet born in 1914, but unlike other modernist poets in those days, he has a strong predisposition to Romanticism, which he seems to inherit immediately from Lawrence. Comparison of Lawrence with Thomas might give us a clearer picture of each poet, though it has hardly been attempted except for several studies, for example, by Helen Sword who refers to Thomas in her analysis of Lawrence's 'The Ship of Death' (132) and by Shin'ichiro Ishikawa who compares the images of darkness appearing in the poems by Lawrence and Thomas ('Light and Darkness' 55-66). In this Section 1.2, we will briefly survey Thomas's view about inspiration with an aim to compare it with Lawrence's.

Like the Romantic poets of the nineteenth century, Thomas admits the great value of inspiration for a poet. However, Thomas, as a man living in the modern age dependent on science and technology, says, in
his poem 'No, Pigeon, I'm Too Wise' (*DT: The Poems* 234), that the chance of an encounter with inspiration has become much less frequent than before:

No, pigeon, I'm too wise;
No sky for me that carries
Its shining clouds for you;
Sky has not loved me much,
And if it did, who should I have
To wing my shoulders and my feet?
There's no way.
Ah, nightingale, my voice
Could never touch your spinning notes,
Nor be so clear. (1-10)

In the poem quoted above, the poet mentions his encounter with a "pigeon" or "nightingale," which traditionally symbolizes inspiration, but he is not given any ecstatic or illusionary experiences by those symbolic birds. Thomas, as a modern poet, is "too wise" or too self-conscious to blind himself to his own subjective function of mind.

It is true that Thomas has had some blessed moments of encountering inspiration, but it is too ephemeral and fragile for him. In the poem 'When Your Furious Motion' (*DT: The Poems* 232), the poet writes:

When your furious motion is steadied,
And your clamour stopped,
And when the bright wheel of your turning voice is stilled,
Your step will remain about to fall.
So will your voice vibrate
And its edge cut the surface,
So, then, will the dark cloth of your hair
Flow uneasily behind you. (1-8)

As implied in the words such as "furious motion," "clamour" or "bright wheel," the images given by inspiration are truly strong, dynamic, and lustrous at the very moment when they appear for the first time.
However, as soon as they reach the poet, they start to "vibrate" with uncertainty, then gradually deteriorate and finally disappear. The "dark cloth of hair" flowing behind the poet, which seems to be within our reach, but is actually out of it, may symbolize the enlarged gap between the poet and inspiration flowing away into some faint remnant of memory.

Inspiration is doubly incomplete for Thomas, for it rarely visits him, and even when it does, it is essentially temporal and destined to disappear quickly. Therefore, the poet tries to compensate its innate deficiency by exaggerating the subjectivity and self-consciousness of the poet as its controller. In the respect that the poet complements inspiration, he is apparently at a higher status than inspiration. In the poem 'I Have Come to Catch Your Voice' (**DT: The Poems** 231-32), Thomas writes:

> I have come to catch your voice,
> Your constructed notes going out of the throat
> With dry, mechanical gestures,
> To catch the shaft
> Although it is so straight and unbending;
> Then, when I open my mouth,
> The light will come in an unwavering line.
> Then to catch night
> Wading through her dark cave on ferocious wings.
> Oh, eagle-mouthed,
> I have come to pluck you,
> And take away your exotic plumage,
> Although your anger is not a slight thing,
> Take you into my own place
> Where the frost can never fall,
> Nor the petals of any flower drop.

In this poem, inspiration is compared to an eagle-like fierce bird with ferocious wings. Thomas does not obey it, but rather seeks to conquer it. By plucking it and taking away its plumage forcibly, he submits the bird to him and proves that he is superior to it.

Inspiration or vision brought by it may be epiphanic and valuable, but it is actually just "dry" and "mechanical" unless stabilized by the poet in the written text, which he calls his own place "where the frost can never fall, nor the petals of any flower drop." We need to notice that what makes inspiration lasting and

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perfect is the subjective control and self-conscious manipulation by the poet.

Thus, we have briefly surveyed how the Romantic poets as Lawrence's precursors and Dylan Thomas as his successor recognize the relationship between the subjectivity of a poet and inspiration. For each of them, inspiration is primarily something crucial and indispensable in the act of poetry writing, but concerning how it should be obtained and treated, there seems to exist some discrepancy in individual poets. For Keats and Shelley, it is mainly pursued at the sacrifice of the subjectivity of the poet: they seek to be more receptive to inspiration by willingly abandoning their egos and being empty or transparent. For Wordsworth, it is pursued not in the outer world but in the inner world of the poet: he sets up an "inward eye" to internalize it and tries to reconcile it with the self of the poet. However, in the case of Thomas, inspiration is sought for by exaggerating the superiority of the self of the poet over inspiration, in contrast to that of Keats and Shelley.

Then, how does Lawrence regard inspiration? In the following sections, we will take up some of his prose and poetical pieces in which his idea about inspiration can be observed, and make an attempt to clarify his own standpoint compared with his precursors or successor.

2. Lawrence's View about Inspiration Seen in His Prose

2.1 Letters

As for inspiration, Lawrence seems to vacillate between his precursors and successor. In his letters, we can find two seemingly ambiguous remarks:

I have always tried to get an emotion out in its own course, without altering it. It needs the finest instinct imaginable, much finer than the skill of the craftsmen.... Remember skilled verse is dead in fifty years.... (Letters 2: 61)

Why don't you always be yourself. Why go to France or anywhere else for your inspiration. If it doesn't come out of your own heart, real Amy Lowell, it is no good, however many colours it may have.... Why do you deny the bitterness in your nature, when you write poetry? Why do you take a pose? It causes you always to shirk your issues, and find a banal resolution at the end....

(Letters 2: 234-35)

In the first letter (To Edward Marsh, 18 August 1913), the poet exaggerates the need to be loyal to "an emotion" given by inspiration "without altering it," and adds that poetry based on the poet's too self-conscious manipulation or skills, however beautiful it may look, cannot be valued at all. In the second letter
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(To Amy Lowell, 18 November 1914), Lawrence advises Amy Lowell, one of his contemporary poets, not to "take a pose" consciously but to make her poem spontaneously "come out" of her own heart, and concludes that denying the genuine feeling in one's nature produces nothing but "a banal resolution."

It is true that these remarks are largely influenced by the Romantic view privileging inspiration and negating the conscious ego of a poet, but Lawrence does not necessarily follow it blindly. In the first example, he stresses the importance of "instinct," which certainly belongs to his self as Wordsworth's "inward eye" does. In addition, he regards his ability to receive inspiration and to get it out "in its own course" as his own "skill." In the second example, Lawrence does not forget to encourage Lowell to be herself and "real Amy Lowell." The poet shows her the importance of not losing one's subjectivity even in the process of poetry writing.

Lawrence's inclination to the Thomas-like belief in the subjectivity of a poet, which is ambiguously observed in the extracts above, takes a more concrete form in the letters shown below:

The editor of the English Review has accepted some of my Verses, and wants to put them into the English Review; the November issue. But you see they are all in the rough, and want revising, so this week and so on I am very hard at work, slogging verses into form.... (Letters 1: 137)

To write poetry one has to let oneself fuse in the current — but I dare not. This state of mind is more like a business man's, where he stands firm and keeps his eyes open, than an artist's, who lets go and loses himself. But I dare not let go just now. This strain makes me tired. (Letters 1: 488)

In the first letter (To Louie Burrows, 11 September 1909), the poet admits he is going to slog or be "very hard at work" in revising the first "rough" draft "into form." This remark shows that the poet is conscious of his own act of poetry writing as Dylan Thomas is. And in the second letter (To Arthur McLeod, 17 December 1912), Lawrence clearly negates his losing himself or being immersed in "the current" of supernatural inspiration, and even goes to the extent of comparing the work of the poet to that of "a business man."

Roughly summarizing the discussion, Lawrence seems to have a tendency to leave the Romantic view of putting absolute value on inspiration for a more modern Thomas-like view to be founded on the belief in the subjectivity of a poet. However, this direction is not necessarily clear-cut. As Sandra M. Gilbert says, "we do not find a steady, orderly growth in poetic strength throughout Lawrence's early period, but rather a seemingly chaotic search for 'self-achievement' in the course of which the young poet often experimented..."
simultaneously with a number of different styles and subjects" (20). The poet is actually not so much shifting determinately as vacillating indeterminately.

2.2 Preface to *Collected Poems*

When discussing Lawrence's view about inspiration, his preface to the two-volume *Collected Poems* published in 1928, which is now collected in *D. H. Lawrence: The Complete Poems* (hereafter *CP*) edited by Vivian de Sola Pinto and Warren Roberts, is well worth consideration. In this considerably long essay, he clearly admits that inspiration which he calls "a demon" has played a great role in his poetry writing, which implies that he has certainly inherited the Romantic theory to place inspiration as the core of the act of poetry writing.

When editing his own *Collected Poems*, the poet, who has become forty-two years old, tries to arrange the poems he wrote "as far as possible, in chronological order, the order in which they were written." Recollecting his earlier days, the poet writes as follows:

The first poems I ever wrote, if poems they were, was when I was nineteen: now twenty-three years ago. I remember perfectly the Sunday afternoon when I perpetrated those first two pieces: "To Guelder-Roses" and "To Campions"; in springtime, of course, and, as I say, in my twentieth year. Any young lady might have written them and been pleased with them; as I was pleased with them. But it was after that, when I was twenty, that my real demon would now and then get hold of me and shake more real poems out of me, making me uneasy. I never "liked" my real poems as I liked "To Guelder-Roses". (*CP* 27)

It is natural for us to interpret the "real demon" occasionally having got hold of young Lawrence as a metaphor for inspiration visiting him. Concerning the passage extracted above, Sandra M. Gilbert's summarization is helpful:

For one thing, the "young man" is clearly rather conventional in his tastes and talents ("any young lady might have written them") and his conventionality, of his youth, makes him "uneasy" in the presence of his own genius or "demon." We may define as the "demon," on the other hand, the one who "shakes out" the "real poems," that creative self within the self ("not I, but the wind") that wells up into the poet's consciousness as if out of nowhere. (21)

Lawrence's concept of skill involved the ability, first, to attend, and second, avoiding what he
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saw as the manipulations of conventional craft... But the conventional young man, with his derivative tricks and his sentimentality, continually blocked the doorways of attention. (22-23)

Lawrence's remark and Sandra M. Gilbert's comment about it show us some of how he has regarded inspiration and the subjectivity of a poet. Then, it is explained more clearly in the unpublished draft of this preface (CP 849-52), which is transcribed directly from Lawrence's manuscript.

Now, we would like to examine the relationship between young Lawrence and inspiration based on the draft version:

And I remember the slightly self-conscious Sunday afternoon, when I was nineteen, and I "composed" my first two "poems"....

Then much more vaguely I remember subsequent half-furtive moments when I would absorbedly scribble at verse for an hour or so, and then run away from the act and the production as if it were secret sin.... In those early days—for I was very green and unsophisticated at twenty—I used to feel myself at times haunted by something, and a little guilty about it, as if it were an abnormality. Then the haunting would get the better of me, and the ghost would suddenly appear, in the shape of a usually rather incoherent poem. Nearly always I shunned the apparition once it had appeared. From the first, I was a little afraid of my real poems—not my "compositions," but the poems that had the ghost in them. They seemed to me to come from somewhere. I didn't quite know where, out of a me whom I didn't know and didn't want to know, and to say things I would much rather not have said: for choice. But there they were.... (CP 849)

According to the extract above, Lawrence's early poems are written and controlled by a ghost-like "something" coming from somewhere and haunting the poet. This proves that he is certainly in the Romantic framework privileging inspiration as a motivational power for poetry writing.

Soon after having received inspiration, Lawrence starts to "scribble" letters and continues it for as long as an hour absent-mindedly as if he were haunted. This writing style of young Lawrence, which may remind us of the so-called automatic writing of William Blake, is quite similar to that of Keats and Shelley who have relinquished the subjectivity of the poet.

What interests us here is that young Lawrence is said to have been "slightly self-conscious" at the moment when he has received inspiration. Consciousness is generally thought to be an obstacle for the act of poetry writing, as shown in the remark by Horace Gregory:
In other words Lawrence could not sit down to write poetry with the feeling of conscious effort behind him. Consciousness always spoiled the game; it was consciousness that broke his union with the unseen forces of power, the life-flow backward into darkness, into oblivion.... Meanwhile, he had become conscious of his role as poet, and that consciousness was sure to destroy the perfect realization of his purpose. (110)

However, interestingly, the young poet does not wholly resist consciousness. Actually, he feels that the state of being haunted by inspiration and losing his own consciousness is "abnormal" and "guilty," and regards his production under complete control of inspiration as something "incoherent" and even "a secret sin."

While the poet values inspiration overall, he is acutely alert to the danger that it "gets the better of" him and forces him to say things he "would much rather not have said." Therefore, he dares to suspend his absorption in inspiration and tries to write not the "real poems" in which "the ghost" or inspiration is directly present, but some "composition" as a product of artificial distortion of the original image and vision brought by it.

Lawrence uses the verb "compose" to describe his manner of poetry writing in those earlier days. It may remind us of Shelley's words which we have seen above: "A man cannot say, 'I will compose a poetry.'" *Collins Cobuild English Dictionary for Advanced Learners* (Third Edition) defines the word as "If you compose something such as a letter, poem, or speech, you write it, often using a lot of concentration or skill" (italics mine). Young Lawrence tends to "compose," in other words, to write his poems dependent not so much on inspiration as on his own conscious skill and technique in manipulating it.

Lawrence summarizes that his earlier poems are not the "real poems" but just fake "compositions," though he never clarifies why and how they are fakes. However, taking into consideration the situation surrounding the young poet, we are led to assume that Lawrence regards his earlier works influenced too much by his concern about poetical form. As shown in the remark in the letter above: "But you see they are in the rough, and want revising, so this week and so on I am very hard at work, slogging verses into form," unlike a generally accepted image, Lawrence is concerned that his poem is deficient in form. This is also observed in the letter (To Edward Garnett, 19 January 1912):

Oh—it seems evident to me Heinemann doesn't want the verses very badly. Isn't he [an editor of Heinemann] a nuisance. It's because of their rotten form, I suppose. Still, he could find a few good ones—and he might let me know what he does want. I wish he'd give them me back.

*(Letters 1: 352)*

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The letter quoted above shows how seriously he cares about the "rotten form" of his poems and agonizes with himself over his being underestimated due to it.

Thus, young Lawrence seems to have had mixed feelings of love and hatred towards inspiration. He is highly receptive to inspiration and often enjoys ecstatic experience given by it, while he is hesitant about abandoning the subjectivity of a poet and writing poems reflecting inspiration. Having vacillated between two contradictory tendencies, he chooses to write artificially distorted "compositions." However, his writing style gradually changes as he matures and hopes more strongly to write simpler poems in which inspiration or his "ghost" directly appears.

In the following passage in the draft version of the preface, Lawrence notes as follows:

To this day, I still have the uneasy haunted feeling, and would rather not write most of the things I do write—including this note. Only now I know my demon better, and, after bitter years, respect him more than my other, milder and nicer self. Now I no longer like my "compositions." I once thought the poem Flapper a little masterpiece: when I was twenty: because the demon isn't in it. And I must have burnt many poems that had the demon fuming in them.... (CP 850)

While the Romantic poets, especially those in the so-called first generation who live considerably long, feel rusty in their sensitivity and receptivity for inspiration as they get older, Lawrence who has reached the "ripe age of forty-two" still receives it and feels "uneasy" and "haunted" as vividly as in his younger days.

At this stage, he is no longer afraid of his "ghost." After "bitter years" during which he had groped for a harmonized relationship between the subjectivity of a poet and inspiration, he seems to have acquired some desirable stance. Therefore, the poet now "knows" it better and "respects" it more highly than before.

What makes it possible for the poet to alter his former stance on inspiration is of course his maturity as a poet; however, we should recognize that it is supported by his rhetorical strategy to call inspiration "my demon" with the possessive first pronoun and refer to it with the personal pronoun "he."

Inspiration has controlled his precursory poets and suppressed their subjectivity as some superhuman power; however, it is degraded by personification ("he") to the same level as a human poet. Besides, it is dwarfed just as a belonging to the poet by the attachment of a personal pronoun ("my") to it. For Lawrence matured in age and thought, inspiration is something like his own inner urge. The vertical hierarchy between a poet and inspiration is thus cunningly turned upside down and he calls himself "milder and nicer self."

As mentioned above, when editing Collected Poems, the poet arranges included poems "in
chronological order, the order in which they were written." However, in point of fact, he also makes alteration to the form or content of some of them. When editing it, as Horace Gregory says, the poet seems to have become "troubled and a bit naive in trying to cover his lack of confidence in what he had just re-read" (111).

Lawrence continues his preface with somewhat excusatory remarks aimed at "palinode" over his "green and unsophisticated" days:

The poems to Miriam, at least the early ones like *Dog-Tired* and *Cherry-Robbers and Renascence* are not much changed. But some of the later ones had to be altered, where sometimes the hand of commonplace youth had been laid on the mouth of the demon. It is not for technique these poems are altered: it is to say the real say.

Other verses, those I call the imaginative or fictional, like *Love on the Farm* and *Wedding Morn*, I have sometimes changed, to get them into better form, and take out the dead bits. It took me many years to learn to play with the form of a poem: even if I can do it now. But it is only in the less immediate, the more fictional poems that the form has to be played with. The demon, when he's really there, makes his own form willy-nilly, and is unchangeable. (*CP* 850-51)

Firstly, the poet divides his poems into two groups: the fictional, narrative, and fanciful ones in which the "demon" or his inner impulse does not appear so clearly, and the biographical or personal ones in which it is overtly observed. As for the former type, he willingly admits having revised them on a stylistic or technical basis, but as for the latter ones, he exaggerates that his revision is aimed at regaining the "real say" he has suppressed because of the fear of being possessed by inspiration. This excuse, which is far from convincing, rather suggests that Lawrence still wavers between two kinds of artistic principles and stances on inspiration.

Before closing the section, we would like to mention the effect of his writing a preface like this. Adding extra prosaic comments to his poetical works which should be self-inclusive, like scribbling some notes in the margin of a page, inevitably encourages readers to doubt whether each of the works is really perfected by itself. Therefore, it leads to cut a kind of cleft in the closed structure of his works as a fiction. Though we cannot say whether it is intentional or not, his act of bearing the device eventually reveals the hidden shadiness of texts. This meta-poetical or rather meta-fictional situation is founded on the self-consciousness of the poet.
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3. Lawrence's View about Inspiration Seen in 'The Song of a Man Who Has Come Through'

As surveyed in the previous section, Lawrence fundamentally inherits the Romantic view of placing great importance on inspiration as the core of poetry writing; however, he never negates the ego of a poet as his precursors did, but rather seeks to acquire a proper balance between the subjectivity of a poet and inspiration.

For Lawrence, as Dallas Kenmare notices, the Muse as the origin of inspiration is "the artist's first, and perhaps in the last analysis, his only, true love," however, he often feels refused by the Muse to share her blessings and therefore seeks "a certain inner aloneness" (31). Lawrence's ambivalence towards inspiration is very similar to that of Dylan Thomas whom we have already mentioned.

His search for a balanced relation between the poet and inspiration is observed in some of his poetic works. Among those, we will take 'The Song of a Man Who Has Come Through' (CP 250, 'Song' hereafter) as an example.

As we will see in the next section, 'Song' tends to be interpreted as a biographical record of Lawrence, and presumably because of this, some critics like Holly A. Laird and Gail Porter Mandell, both of whom are known for their extensive studies on Lawrencian poems, slight or even neglect this excellent piece. However, if we take the viewpoint of meta-poetry into consideration, we realize that this is a most crucial piece in which the poet's thoughts on poetry writing are analogically or metaphorically expressed.

3.1 Previous Criticisms about 'Song'

'Song' is a piece included in his anthology titled Look! We Have Come Through! (Look! hereafter), which is collected and published in 1917 when the poet chooses to live his new life with Frieda von Richthofen Weekley, who divorces her husband to marry him. The original title of the anthology, Man and Woman or Poems of a Married Man (CP 990), implies that the whole of the anthology is initially intended as a kind of poetical autobiography.

In the preface to Collected Poems published in 1928, the poet exaggerates that each of his earlier poems is purely "a biography of an emotional and inner life" of himself and notes as follows:

It seems to me that no poetry, not even the best, should be judged as if it existed in the absolute, in the vacuum of the absolute. Even the best poetry, when it is at all personal, needs the penumbra of its own time and place and circumstance to make it full and whole. (CP 28)

Moreover, in the foreword and argument attached to Look! (CP 191), the poet says as follows:
These poems should not be considered separately, as so many single pieces. They are intended as an essential story, or history, or confession, unfolding one from the other in organic development, the whole revealing the intrinsic experience of a man during the crisis of manhood, when he marries and comes into himself. The period covered is, roughly the sixth luster of a man's life. (Foreword)

After much struggling and loss in love and in the world of man, the protagonist throws in his lot with a woman who is already married. Together they go into another country, she perforce leaving her children behind. The conflict of love and hate goes on between the man and the woman, and between these two and the world around them, till it reaches some sort of conclusion, they transcend into some condition of blessedness. (Argument)

The remarks by the poet himself have greatly influenced previous criticism. It is basically dependent on the researchers' somewhat journalistic "interest in the personal and private life" of Lawrence (translation mine, Haruhide Mori 1), and it has a tendency to see him as a "poet without a mask" (Vivian de Sola Pinto 1-12). Thus, many critics often consecrate him and swallow what he says.

Greatly influenced by the poet's own directions, Look! has come to be accepted as "a record of his early years with Frieda," "an epithalamium, a celebration of love and marriage" (Keith Sagar, Introduction 14), "a biographical document" by which it survives (Graham Hough 200), "a poignant record of the poet's major experience with love" (Glenn Hughes 119), "his autobiography" (Holly A. Laird 50), or something in which "he chronicles the early years of his tumultuous relationship with Frieda" (Helen Sword 124).

This interpretational bias is also observed in the evaluation of 'Song.' For example, Masakazu Kurikoma designates the poem as a love song at "the very moment of accomplishment of the union" between Lawrence and Frieda (translation mine, 221). A. Banerjee, an editor of an anthology of modern poetry works, makes a similar comment: "This is basically a love poem in which the poet says that if he can allow himself to be permeated by the life-force ('the wind'), he and his beloved can establish a happy, 'wonderful' relationship between themselves" (Modern English Poetry 136).

It may be true that Lawrence as an author initially intends Look! and 'Song' to be his autobiography. However, as shown in modern literary theory, our interpretation should not necessarily be bound rigidly by the author's intention. Michel Foucault, in his famous essay "What Is an Author?" discloses the hidden fragility in the concept of "author" and "authority" and invalidates the privilege of an author as a Romantic illusion. William K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley, in their book The Verbal Icon, refer to "intentional fallacy," namely, inappropriateness of reading a given text by the intention of its author. As Stanley Fish
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expounds in his reader-response theory, a literary text is essentially open for "polysemy" or plural signification. Therefore its interpretation should be entrusted to the "community of interpretation" including us the readers.

Considering these critical viewpoints, we would like to re-examine whether 'Song' is really just a biography. This attempt would make us conscious of the fact that A. Banerjee has carefully added the adverb "basically" when defining the piece as a biographical love poem. Actually, 'Song' seems to contain a certain element which cannot be summarized simply as a biography.

Some critics try to interpret 'Song' not only as his biography but also as an example of his creative theory. Herbert Read mentions, "Instead of the immediate, instant self we have the conscious, rhetorical self of the volume" of Look! (202). Gail Porter Mandell examines the biographical chronology in Look! and concludes, "thematic and mystic concerns dominate chronology, even though Lawrence explicitly identifies in the note to Collected Poems only his chronological structure of experience" (16). Fiona Becket regards Look! as "accomplished autobiographical reflection and poetic abstraction" (82). Douglas A. Mackey says that 'Song' is a "celebration of fulfillment in love" in the context of Look!, and at the same time "a statement on the nature of creativity" (22). Tom Marshall also regards 'Song' as "a statement of both of his way of life and of his aesthetic" (84). Other critics like Sandra M. Gilbert (105-108), Ross C. Murfin (46-57), and Jillian de Vries-Mason (65-66) tend to focus on the latter element, or the poet's creative theory expressed in the poem.

Paying appropriate attention to these previous studies, we will try to reread 'Song' as a kind of metapoetry in which the poet's thoughts on the relationship between inspiration and the subjectivity of a poet is metaphorically expressed.

3.2 The Wind as a Metaphor

'Song' begins with a famous phrase "Not I, not I, but the wind." It is later partially altered and used as the title of the biography of Lawrence, Not I but the Wind, written by Frieda Lawrence. As this fact shows, the image of the wind appearing in 'Song' primarily refers to the "life-force" which the poet has obtained through his passionate love for Frieda. However, in literary history, the image of the wind has often been regarded as a metaphor symbolizing inspiration.

It is the Romantic poets of the nineteenth century who have especially privileged the image of the "correspondent breeze" (M. H. Abrams 37-54). The Romantics often compare the visiting of inspiration to the blowing of the wind (Manji Kobayashi 162-203). As introduced in the beginning section, Shelley, in his essay, describes inspiration as "some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind" (italics mine). He also refers to its almighty power with the image of the wind in his poem, 'Ode to the West Wind.' William
Wordsworth begins his biographical long poem, *The Prelude* with the lines: "Oh there is blessing in this gentle breeze, / That blows from the green fields and from the clouds / And from the sky; it beats against my cheek," (The 1805 Version in Thirteen Books 1-3).

These examples showing the symbolic closeness between the wind and inspiration corroborate our attempt of a meta-poetical reading of 'Song,' because they suggest that Lawrence's 'Song' could be his rhetorical fight against the Romantics.

3.3 'Song' as an Agon against the Romantics

When reading 'Song,' we need to pay attention to the delicate relationship between Lawrence and the Romantics as his precursors, for he has a kind of "ambivalence of love and hatred" towards them, as Masanori Yoshida points out in his essay comparing Lawrence with Wordsworth (translation mine, 48).

Lawrence's "ambivalence" may be explained most clearly by adopting Harold Bloom's critical concept known as "the anxiety of influence." According to Bloom, all the poets in the modern age are under the anxiety of being influenced by others, especially their precursory poets:

For every poet begins (however "unconsciously") by rebelling more strongly against the consciousness of death's necessity than all other men and women do. The young citizen of poetry, or ephobe as Athens would have called him, is already the anti-natural or antithetical man, and from his start as a poet he quests for an impossible object, as his precursor quested before him. That this quest encompasses necessarily the diminishment of poetry seems to me an inevitable realization, one that accurate literary history must sustain. (*Anxiety* 10)

Young poets called "ephobe," who spring into existence "belatedly" after the great writers such as William Shakespeare and the Romantics, for example, are inevitably faced with the anxiety that all literary possibilities have already been explored, nothing has been left for them, and therefore all of their creation is just a duplication of the greater works written by their "precursors."

The sense that nothing has been left for him is certainly observed in the writings of Lawrence, whom Bloom calls one of "the great deniers of influence" (56). In the essay, "A Spiritual Record: A Review of A Second Contemporary Verse Anthology" carried in the *New York Evening Post Literary Review* (29 September 1923), Lawrence comments as follows:

Our consciousness is pot-bound. Our ideas, our emotions, our experiences are all pot-bound. For us there is nothing new under the sun. What there is to know, we know it already, and
experience adds little. The girl who is going to fall in love knows all about it beforehand from books and the movies. She knows what she wants and she wants what she knows. Like candy. It is still nice to eat candy. But the spiritual record of eating candy is a rather thin noise.

There is nothing new under the sun, once the consciousness becomes pot-bound. And this is what ails all art today.... *(Phoenix 325)*

According to Harold Bloom, among these youngsters, genuinely "strong poets" alone can challenge their precursors by daring to "misread" their texts. They try to secure their own uniqueness, justice and *raison d'être* by showily correcting what they regard as "defects" of precursors, which, as a matter of fact, they have intentionally and deliberately insisted to exist. In this sense, 'Song' can be a record of Lawrence's tough "agon" of "revisionism" against the Romantics existing at the core of his anxiety of influence.

3.4 The Relation between Inspiration and the Subjectivity of a Poet Seen in 'Song'

As seen in the first section, the Romantic poets like Keats and Shelley tend to be willing to degrade the subjectivity of a poet in order to be more transparent or receptive for inspiration as the absolute core of poetry writing. The famous beginning line of 'Song' seems to be under the strong influence of the Romantic view:

> Not I, not I, but the wind that blows through me!
> A fine wind is blowing the new direction of Time. (1-2)

The beginning four syllables ("Not I, not I"), which repeat a quick shift from a choked short vowel in "Not" to an open double vowel in "I," imitate the wind of inspiration which has strongly blown to the Romantic poets. As seen in the comment by Tom Marshall: "Lawrence employs the old Romantic metaphor of the wind of inspiration" (110), this beginning line calls the Romantic wind into Lawrenean text.

In the sentence, the wind is placed in the position of an actor dominating the intransitive verb "blow," and its importance is syntactically exaggerated. Meanwhile, the first pronoun "I" seeming to refer to the poet is negated twice and its status is degraded. The power gap between the wind of inspiration and the poet reminds us of persistent self-negation by Keats and Shelley, which may seem to imply Lawrence's subordination to his precursors' rhetorical framework.

This view is shared by almost all of the critics who see some meta-poetical element in this piece. Douglas A. Mackey points out, "it is not he [the poet] who acts, but it [the wind]" (22). Jillian de Vries-Mason, defining the piece as a Lawrenean "poetical credo," insists that the poet's "self is clearly set
against...the wind, which he wants to attend to," and the poet wishes "to obliterate his ego and be a medium...through which poetical truth is conveyed," and to acquire "transparency and wind-like quality" (65). Holly A. Laird says that the poet makes an effort at "surrendering himself to 'not I, but the wind'" (95). Keith Sagar notes that this piece reflects the poet's "condition of submitting wholly to it [the wind]" (48). Tom Marshall concludes that it is "the duty of the prophetic artist to be the wind's conscious instrument, to realize the new order in his life and his art" (110).

Sandra M. Gilbert is representative of these critics. Exaggerating the similarity between Lawrence and the Romantics, she insists that he has the sense: "the poet must be skillfully passive" and "the poem is a selfless act of pure attention," in other words, the sense which Wordsworth calls "wise passiveness" and Keats calls "negative capability" (12). Then, she summarizes 'Song' as an expression of his "submission to this unknown force of life" or the wind of creativity (105).

However, we must say that these previous views are too superficial, for simply following the precursors' framework does not make it possible for Lawrence to overcome his anxiety of influence. Here our attention should be paid to the fact that he secretly puts phonological stress on the words "I" and "me," and tries to rehabilitate the suppressed subjectivity of the poet. This creates a kind of gap or tortuousness between syntax and phonology of the text. Although they usually function in a harmony, in this case, syntax concerning negation of the poet's self is cunningly betrayed by phonology rescinding its attempt.

The observations above reveal that Lawrence's privileging the wind and degrading the subjectivity of a poet, which characterizes the first line of the 'Song,' is actually just a superficial pretence to imitate the Romantics. This may partly explain the reason why the wind, which should have been privileged, disappears before long after line three. As soon as Lawrence introduces the Romantic wind of inspiration into his text by the technique of "pastiche," he transforms it into his own "fine" (or rather "finer") wind "blowing in the new direction of Time." Thus, the poet misreads the Romantic framework to degrade the poet's self.

Redefinition of the wind and reevaluation of the relation between the subjectivity of a poet and inspiration is the very "new direction" to take for young Lawrence. He is struggling here to "come through" the agony of misreading and to cut himself away from his anxiety of influence with a sharp "chisel" and "wedge," as suggested in the following section of the poem.

Now let us pay closer attention to the tense of the verb "blow" appearing in lines one and two. It is present tense in line one ("blows"), but immediately changes into the present progressive in line two ("is blowing"), which implies that the time distance between the poet and the wind is drastically shortened, and finally both of them are located at the same juncture on the timeline.

Lawrence's emphasis on simultaneousness between the poet and inspiration can also be understood as
a part of his rhetorical strategy to misread the Romantics as his precursors. As suggested in a famous episode concerning Samuel Taylor Coleridge's writing of his mysterious ballad 'Kubra Khan,' the Romantics generally commence their poetry writing after inspiration has gone, desperately chasing its fading remnants.

For Lawrence, however, the wind of inspiration is never limited only to the moment when it appears. As surveyed in the Section 2.2, even after a long interval, it is always present and can be captured at any time as vividly as when it first appears. Under the pretence to follow his precursors out of display, he inverts the Romantic wind, and fills the gap in time and power between the poet and inspiration, so as to harmonize them in a balanced way. On the importance of the present time in Lawrencean poems, Barbara Hardy notes that the poet "finds reminiscent and retrospective art repulsive, and tries to write in the present tense" (27).

Then, the text of 'Song' goes as follows:

If only I let it bear me, carry me, if only it carry me!
If only I am sensitive, subtle, oh, delicate, a winged gift!
If only, most lovely of all, I yield myself and am borrowed
By the fine, fine wind that takes its course through the chaos of the world
Like a fine, an exquisite chisel, a wedge-blade inserted; (3-7)

The lines quoted above refer to the image of a poet carried by the wind, but they bring almost automatically a passage from Shelley's masterpiece, 'Ode to the West Wind' ('Ode' hereafter), into our intertextual net of association. Below is an extract from Part Four of the poem:

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

As then, when to outstrip thy stiey speed
Scarce seem'd a vision — I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed! ('Ode,' 43-45, 50-54)
Thus, Shelley's 'Ode,' which M.H. Abrams says is "addressed directly to the wind, in the form of a sustained invocation and petition" and is an eminent example of the Romantic "correspondent breeze" (43), slips into Lawrence's text and is encoded as a "hypogram" or a hidden key text to decode it.

In a sense, Lawrence's 'Song' is a "palimpsest" or parchment, on which people have repeatedly written and erased so many times that the erased letters see through dimly those presently written. Just like this ancient paper, we can see various fragments from 'Ode' behind the text of 'Song.' In that it ceaselessly calls to other texts in the intertextual network, it can be "a mosaic" or "a texture of quotations" which, Julia Kristeva insists, is the nature inherent in poetical language.

Though interplay between Lawrence's 'Song' and Shelley's 'Ode' seems to be the most important topic to be discussed, surprisingly little attention has been given to this viewpoint, except for the study of Ross C. Murfin (46-57). Murfin points out that Lawrence is "working inside the predecessor's terms" and he "at once identifies and contrasts his wind with Shelley's." He concludes, "Shelley becomes almost a metonymy [metonym] for the absent subject, the less-than-fine old winds" (46-47) that are ineffective for making modern people "come through" the chaotic world and taking them to a new realm.

Murfin's remark, which exaggerates that Lawrence does not follow Shelley's wind blindly, is noteworthy. It helps us to attempt to read 'Song' as Lawrence's agon against the Romantics. However, his study is not necessarily satisfying, for he does not draw a sufficiently detailed comparison between the two texts of Lawrence and Shelly.

Therefore, we will try to compare them carefully in order to clarify the relation between Lawrence and Shelley. Placing Shelley's text and Lawrence's text side by side, we realize that they look very alike. However, what matters here is not so much similarity as difference. For, as expounded in Bloom's theory of antithetical criticism, Lawrence as a young poet needs to be different from his precursors in order to secure his uniqueness. Thus, Lawrence smashes his own oppositional reading against Shelley's text, seeking to be set free from his anxiety of influence. Our critical comparison between two texts focuses mainly on four viewpoints.

Firstly, we consider the humanity of the textual participants. In Shelley's text, inspiration is called with a second person pronoun "thou" and given an impersonate status; while, a poet "I" is said to be like a "dead leaf," and it is deprived of both its humanness (as in "leaf") and its life (as in "dead"). In Lawrence's text, however, a Shelleyan gap of powers in the relationship between inspiration and the subjectivity of a poet is not observed.

Secondly, verbal transitivity is examined. In Shelley's case, the wind of inspiration is syntactically put in the position of an actor governing the transitive verb ("thou mightest bear [a dead leaf]"). Meanwhile, "I" connoting the subjectivity of a poet leads stative linking "be" verbs ("I were a dead leaf," "I were a swift
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cloud") or intransitive verbs having negative meanings ("I ne'er have striven," "I fall upon the thorns of life," and "I bleed"). It also sometimes becomes a passive object of the transitive verbs governed by others ("lift me").

In Lawrence's case, the wind of inspiration governs as an actor five transitive verbs ("bear me," "carry me," "carry me," "borrowed [borrow me]," and "takes its course"), but "I" also leads two transitive verbs ("let it," and "yield myself") together with one linking verb and one passive voice verbal phrase ("I am," "I...am borrowed by"). Especially, our concern is attracted by Lawrence's two phrases: "I let it bear me," and "I yield myself and am borrowed / By the...wind." From a linguistic viewpoint, these sentences are somewhat deviant: the former should be "It [The wind] bears me," and the latter "The wind yields me and borrows me." By use of the particular wording, Lawrence seems to exaggerate that the wind's bearing him or his submission to the wind is a fact controlled subjectively by him as an actor of the transitive verb.

M. L. Rosenthal notes on this part: "the language is feminine, almost passive. But the next lines show that such yielding will prepare him for the purest maleness...." (223). Though he actually refers to the love between both sexes in the biographical framework of interpretation, his remark that the poet's apparent passiveness may be pretense is noteworthy for our reading.

These observations may illuminate the delicate difference between Shelley and Lawrence. Shelley, based on a typical Romantic way of thought, clearly privileges inspiration and degrades the self of a poet just as something panting beneath inspiration's power. For Shelley, who writes "Make me thy lyre as the forest is" in a later part of 'Ode' and suggests the image of an Aeolian harp making a harmonious sound without any human intervention, a poet should be willing to abandon his subjectivity and seek to be transparent or nothing to inspiration as an absolute authority. Meanwhile, Lawrence, objecting to Shelleyan hierarchical structurization between inspiration and the subjectivity of a poet, tries to raise and reinstate the long suppressed self of a poet.

Thirdly, we would like to examine the metaphor for a poet. As seen above, in Shelley's case, a poet is compared to "a deaf leaf," "a wave to pant" and "a swift cloud," none of which has its own substance, subjectivity, and consciousness. However, Lawrence states that a poet is essentially "sensitive, subtle," and "delicate," and compares him to "a winged gift" and "a fine, an exquisite chisel, a wedge-blade" with the arrogance of Dylan Thomas, who describes the poet on the "ferocious wing." Lawrence compares the poet borrowed by the wind to a lender and inspiration to a borrower. Unlike Shelley who invalidates the subjectivity of a poet, Lawrence attaches the images and metaphors having positive connotations to the poet with an aim to recover his status.

Fourthly, the modality of the sentence is considered. In Shelley's text, the sentence of prayer ("If I were...") is written in the subjunctive mood, while in Lawrence's text, the sentence ("If only I let..." or "If
only I am...") is in the indicative mood. From a grammatical viewpoint, the subjunctive mood is used when there is little possibility of realization; and the indicative mood when there is a possibility. Lawrence's use of the indicative mood seems to reflect his confidence in the realization of his prayer. For Shelley leaving everything to inspiration, realization of his prayer is purely at the mercy of it, but for Lawrence reinstating the self of a poet, it is regarded as something that he enables by his will.

Close comparison between the two texts leads us to recognize a kind of duality hidden in Lawrence's text. In 'Song,' the poet exaggerates yielding to inspiration, but it is just a deliberate show at a surface level. At a deeper level, he turns the Romantic framework upside-down, and tries to revolt against it. It is clear that this dualism is a result of his strategy of misreading his precursors.

However, most of the previous studies have overlooked this crucial interpretational crux. For example, Tom Marshall interprets the lines in this way: "If only he can yield himself with subtlety and delicacy to his emotions...these emotions will suggest their own proper form" (86). Barbara Hardy confuses Lawrence with the Romantics and says that Lawrence has a general tendency to reject or try to reject self-consciousness (27).

Now, let us leave the comparison of Lawrence and Shelley and come back again to the lines of 'Song.' It continues as below:

If only I am keen and hard like the sheer tip of a wedge
Driven by invisible blows,
The rock will split, we shall come at the wonder, we shall find the Hesperides.

Oh, for the wonder that bubbles into my soul,
I would be a good fountain, a good well-head,
Would blur no whisper, spoil no expression. (8-13)

Lawrence shows his hope to be "like the sheer tip of a wedge" again. As briefly mentioned above, the images of "chisel" and "wedge" symbolize the poet's subjective decision to cut himself from his precursors and his anxiety of influence. Shelley compares the wind of inspiration to "breath," while Lawrence compares it to a hammer, which undoubtedly implies, "his wind can seem at once harder and more effectual" (Ross C. Murfin 47).

Then, we see a magnificent vision of an enormous hard "rock" split into pieces with a wedge driven by the wind of inspiration. There are some possibilities as to the interpretation of the "rock" image. For instance, Douglas A. Mackey regards it as a symbol of "the obstructions to ultimate realization of self"
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(22). However, we would like to read these lines as a scene of Lawrence's accomplishment of his strategy to split the "rock" or the influence of predominant precursors.

What attracts our attention is that the wind is said not to be seen ("invisible blows") here. It may be somewhat ironical that exaggeration of invisibility of the wind is observed in the text of Lawrence who tries to invert the Romantics, because they have attributed problems in the eighteenth century to the Enlightenment theory of trusting too much what is materially visible and have valued the mystery or invisibility of things. It should be noted that Lawrence's stance on the Romantics is essentially dual.

Thus, the poet is to see the wonder at "the Hesperides." In the Greek myth, the word "Hesperides" usually refers to the daughters of Hesperus (Vesper or Venus). But the Hesperides refers to the "Paradise of Hesperides," where the daughters and the dragon named Ladon take care of the golden apple which Gaea, the goddess of the Earth, has given as a gift of marriage to Zeus and Hera. Douglas A. Mackey considers "the Hesperides" and the Eden appearing in Lawrencean poems as "the hidden levels of consciousness" or "the absolute within himself" to which the poet desires to get back (22). But we would rather like to interpret the lines as a scene where the poet, having "come through" his agon, is about to approach the golden apple symbolizing the truth of poetry writing.

Concerning the wonder seen at the Hesperides, the poet insists that it "bubbles into my soul," and says he will be "a fountain" and "a well head" to make the wonders and miracles well. As shown in the preface to the Collected Poems where he calls inspiration "my demon" and internalizes it, Lawrence connects the poetical truth to his interior self. It seems antithetical to Shelley and Keats who put inspiration in some ideal sphere far from them, and somewhat similar to Wordsworth who sets the "inner eye" within himself. We see here again the poet's delicate dual stance on the Romantics.

Incidentally, in the manuscript, not "wonder" but "word" is originally used in line eleven (CP 994). Sandra M. Gilbert enunciates her opinion that Lawrence is "in a tradition of visionary attention rather than craftsmanly discipline." She adds, he prefers wonder which "inheres in knowledge of the unknown" to word which "simply involves the formulation of that knowledge" and he values "the mystery of such paradoxical knowledge" more than "the mastery of its formulation in language" (106). However, Gilbert's interpretation to regard Lawrence as a Blake-like "visionary" is not satisfying for us. Rather we should find out the poet's deliberate consideration to distance him from the precursors behind this verbal alteration. For, if the line were something like "Oh, for the word that bubbles into my soul," it would be too close to the Romantic absolutism of inspiration.

Barely having established his own "new direction of Time" as a poet, Lawrence says that he "would blur no whisper, spoil no expression." This declaration seems to be closely linked to the poet's abhorrence of the prefabricated clichés. He is acutely aware of the possibility that dependence on clichés leads to
"blur" his minutest message and to "spoil" his vivid expression.

In the essay titled "Poetry of the Present," written as a preface to his American Edition of New Poems published in 1918, and in his letter (To Catherine Carswell, 11 January 1916), he mentions as follows:

Whitman pruned away his clichés—perhaps his clichés of rhythm as well as of phrase. And this is about all we can do, deliberately, with free verse. We can get rid of the stereotyped movements and the old hackneyed associations of sound or sense. We can break down those artificial conduits and canals through which we do so love to force our utterance. We can break the stiff neck of habit.... (CP 184)

The essence of poetry with us in this age of stark and unlovely actualities is a stark directness, without a shadow of a lie, or a shadow of deflection anywhere. Everything can go, but this stark, bare, rocky directness of statement, this alone makes poetry, today.... (Letters 2: 503)

Clichés or "stereotyped" and "hackneyed" expressions veil poetical objects. It intervenes as a medium ("conduits" or "canals") between the poet and objects, and finally isolates him from them. Being aware of this potential danger, Lawrence seeks "a stark directness" in his expression and in the relationship between the poet and objects.

Interestingly, this anti-cliché view of Lawrence is also observed in the cases of his precursors and his successor. In the oft-quoted preface to Lyrical Ballads, William Wordsworth points out the need to abolish the so-called "poetic diction" and to write poems in easy and simple language. Dylan Thomas also says in his letter to Trevor Hughes, "each bright and naked object is shrouded around with a thick, peasoup mist of associations; no single word in all our poetical vocabulary is a virgin word, ready for our first love, willing to be what we make it" (Collected Letters 93).

It is known that Lawrence regards Shelley and Keats as the poets of "the beginning" or "the end," and separates himself from them by saying that they aim for something that is "far off," while he aims for something that is "at hand" (CP 181-82). For the poet respecting the momentary sparkle of the fluid present instant, exquisitely finalized cliché seems to leave no room for expressing it. This makes him grope for his own "new direction" in expression. As Tom Marshall says, he sorely needs "a new expression" to convey some "tremendous unknown forces" which cannot be conveyed by his precursors' mechanical conventions or expressions (85).

Now let us examine the ending lines of 'Song.'
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What is the knocking?
What is the knocking at the door in the night?
It is somebody wants to do us harm.

No, no, it is the three strange angels.
Admit them, admit them. (14-18)

In the final section, the poet suddenly hears some "knocking," which makes him uncertain and worried about being harmed by the intruders. Therefore, he hesitates at first to admit the strangers, who might be "the destructive unknown" (Sandra M. Gilbert 106).

Concerning these lines, M. L. Rosenthal insists that they show "a state of responsiveness and readiness" and they "bring sexual connotations into play" (223), but his interpretation is too biographical. We should rather notice the poet's own words in his essay titled "Life," where he says, holding the image of "the Holy Ghost" in his mind: "Do I fear the strange approach of the creative unknown to my door? I fear it only with pain and with unspeakable joy" (Phoenix 698). His remark suggests that the "knocking" strangers symbolize some new "creative approach" to his poetry writing, which he has just acquired as "a new direction of Time" by completing the agon against the Romantics. For him, they are the embodiment of "the force of mystery that he fears but also desires to admit into his poetry" (Helen Sword 127).

The ending section of 'Song' may remind us of a short piece by Dylan Thomas, who expresses a similar anxiety accompanying the decision to admit the unknown into his poetical world:

Ears in the turrets hear
Hands grumble on the door,
Eyes in the gables see
The fingers at the locks.
Shall I unbolt or stay
Alone till the day I die
Unseen by stranger-eyes
In this white house?
Hands, hold you poison or grapes? (DT: The Poems 62)

Some unknown "hands" reach the door of the "turret" into which Thomas as a poet has withdrawn. However, he is uncertain of whether what the "hands" hold is a beneficial "grape" or a harmful "poison," so
he hesitates to "unbolt" the door.

In the case of Thomas, the poet's final decision is not clearly mentioned, while in the case of Lawrence, he decides to admit the "three angels" into his textual world. Most of the previous studies regard this decision as the poet's acquisition of "wholeness." Explaining that the angels are a "part of the 'condition of blessedness,'" Sandra M. Gilbert concludes that he has integrated "the unknown into him" (107).

It is noteworthy that the poet's acceptance of the angels, who come from some external realm, could be a kind of trigger to shift his attention from the interior, where he has so far pursued his inner agon of misreading, to the exterior. Thus, he comes to try to describe various objects surrounding him in his following anthology titled *Birds, Beasts and Flowers*. We will discuss this topic on another occasion.

What we would like to mention here is the wind's transformation. In 'Song,' Lawrence initially introduces the Romantic wind of inspiration into his text. It seems to disappear soon from the surface of the text, but actually, it has continued to blow with consistently transforming. It has changed into "an underground stream" to make the wonder bubble as suggested by Douglas A. Mackey (22). Then, it is changing into the breathes or voices of some unknown persons speaking: "What is the knocking?" or "No, no, it is the three strange angels," here in the ending of the poem narrated so far in the monologue. This intermittent transformation of the wind is also undoubtedly a result of Lawrence's persistent strategy of misreading.

Michael Bell, on Lawrencian novels, comments that new "narrative ontology" reflects a new "representation of different 'worlds'" (226). His comment is also true in this case. The text's acquisition of a new voice seems more meaningful when we notice the metaphorical function of the three angels in Genesis, where they predict the miracle of conception to old Abraham and Sarah. As suggested in this divine angelic message, not only the old couple but also the poet's text are to be blessed with a new life/voice.

Thus, the poet or "a man who has come through" transforms Shelleyan wind and recycles it to his advantage so as to guarantee his texts' dialogistic or polyphonic richness and uniqueness.

Gail Porter Mandell points out two factors coexisting in *Look!* One is "the old world (and the old self that it has produced) that is only gradually passing away" and the other is "the process of individual renewal through the destruction of the old self" (80). Although the critic rather refers to the poet's desire to leave Europe, in other words, to leave "his native territory for stranger lands—'terra incognita'"(Fiona Becket 82), Mandell's observation is also applied to our interpretation of 'Song.' Lawrence's old dwelling on his precursors passes away, and through the process of renewal, he acquires a "new direction of Time" to follow and a new independent self as a poet.
4. Lawrence's View about Inspiration Seen in Last Poems

Lawrence's fundamental direction lies in rehabilitating the subjectivity of a poet which is suppressed by the Romantics and in achieving a certain balance between inspiration and it. This seems to be consistent throughout his career as a poet. In this section, we will examine some of the poems included in his Last Poems, which is published in 1932 after his death.

As mentioned by many critics, in Last Poems, there is a thematic "section" (Holly A. Laird 229) consisting of poems referring to the substance of God, such as 'Demiurge,' 'The Work of Creation,' 'Bodiless God,' 'The Body of God,' 'Maximums,' 'The Man of Tyre,' 'They Say the Sea is Loveless,' 'Whales Weep Not!' and so on. Interestingly, the image of God seen in these pieces can also be interpreted as that of inspiration.

A poem referring to God's Creation is examined in the Section 4.1; and three other poems seeming to mention God's Incarnation or the dualism of God's flesh and soul are analyzed in the Section 4.2. Finally, in the Section 4.3, we will attempt to make some summarizing remark about our discussion.

4.1 Inspiration and God's Creation

Firstly, we will examine 'The Work of Creation' (CP 690). Although the meta-poetical element tends to appear indirectly in Lawrencean poems, the poet talks considerably openly about his own creation of poems by comparing it to the image of God's creation of the world:

The mystery of creation is the divine urge of creation,
but it is a great, strange urge, it is not a Mind.
Even an artist knows that his work was never in his mind,
he could never have thought it before it happened. (1-4)

In the beginning lines of the poem, Lawrence follows the traditional Romantic view to privilege inspiration. He insists that poetry is not an artificial artifact produced by the "Mind" of the poet but embodiment of "a great, strange urge" or some spontaneous flow of "divine" and "strange" energy. The image of "urge," which seems to refer to inspiration, is in fact obscure and puzzling, but it is because the poet as a creator "knows little enough of the real sources of his inspiration, and of 'how' the poem is written" (Dallas Kenmare 31).

As Jillian de Vries-Mason says, the poet alleges "spontaneity of the creative art" (175) here; and as Sandra M. Gilbert says, he "manifests himself not in being, not in static pre-planned order, but in becoming, in the energetic flow and struggle that underlies being" (274).
The poet's willing negation of himself in the process of poetry writing is clearly embodied in the lines: "his work was never in his mind" and "he could never have thought it before it happened." For him, poetry "happens" spontaneously and irrelevantly to him. It is free and independent from "an ideal mental conception" and "the idea-making and idealizing" of the poet (M. J. Lockwood 177). The fact that there are no transitive active verbs conveying the subjective will of the narrator in the quoted part, except in the negated phrase of "never have thought," reflects the poet's self negation. The poem continues as follows:

A strange ache possessed him, and he entered the struggle,
and out of the struggle with his material, in the spell of the urge
his work took place, it came to pass, it stood up and saluted his mind. (5-7)

The poet describes his experience of receiving inspiration here. As seen in his preface to Collected Poems, he has been able to receive it throughout his life as vividly as in his younger days. Actually, he still considers it as his "demon" or "ghost" possessing and overwhelming him "in the spell."

At a surface level of text, Lawrence seems to be in complete servitude to inspiration with following the Romantic way of thought loyally, but at its deeper level, he is secretly pursuing his rhetorical strategy to lift up the suppressed subjectivity of a poet.

We would like to mention the three facts which have been overlooked in previous studies. The first is that Lawrence rehabilitates the poet's "mind" in line seven ("it [his work]...saluted his mind."), which he should have negated in line two ("it [the mystery of creation] is not a Mind"). The second is that he admits the need of the poet's "struggle with his material" in the process of poetry writing. In addition, the third is that he defines the act of creating a poem clearly as "his work."

It is true that the "urge" of inspiration is indispensable in poetry writing, but it can be embodied only when textualized by a poet, which may be somewhat similar to the concept of Dylan Thomas. Therefore, for Lawrence, the subjectivity of a poet should be equally valued with inspiration. Neither of them can be solely privileged. Incidentally, it is noteworthy that the poet negates the capitalized "Mind" in line two, and accepts the small-letter "mind" in line seven. Although he seeks to rehabilitate the poet's mind, he deliberately avoids privileging it too easily.

If we reconsider Lawrence in comparison with the Romantics and Dylan Thomas, we would recognize that Lawrence keeps a certain distance both from his precursors who privilege inspiration and from his successor who privileges the subjectivity of a poet. This moderation may seem too commonplace, but it is a necessary conclusion for the poet who avoids perfection and consummateness so as to seize the present fluidity at hand.
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As expounded in modern criticism, the act of privileging or centering some value is less certain and reliable than it appears, because centering a given element in some structure leads to banishing other elements to its outskirts, which gradually empties the structure and finally comes to "discenter" the element located at the center of void and invalidated structure. Being free from this kind of ironical self-contradiction, Lawrence's strategy of moderation is certainly worth being called an unique and "new direction of Time."

Then, in the following lines of the poem, Lawrence compares inspiration to God, who, Holly A. Laird explains, "is nothing other than the 'urge' of procreative desire" (224). God has been regarded transcendental and absolute, but the poet insists that he is not necessarily perfect by himself:

God is a great urge, wonderful, mysterious, magnificent
but he knows nothing before-hand.
His urge takes shape in the flesh, and lo!
it is creation! God looks himself on it in wonder, for the first time.
Lo! there is a creature, formed! How strange!
Let me think about it! Let me form an idea! (8-13)

As seen in a series of adjectives of "great," "wonderful," "mysterious," and "magnificent" in line eight, the poet superficially glorifies God as an "urge" of inspiration. However, at the same time, he limits his absoluteness by saying that he "knows nothing." The God as a formless "urge" cannot exist unless he "takes shape in the flesh" with incarnation. This refers to the fact that inspiration which has been absolutized by the Romantics, as a matter of fact, needs to be given shape in the body of language by the poet's act of textualization.

For Lawrence, a poem or "a creature" is not something given solely by external inspiration in a ready-made way; rather it is a product by the "mind" of the poet continuing to "think about it," trying to "form an idea" to be expressed, and pursuing a "struggle with material" of language. The poet develops his ideas and creates his poems "not only after writing this but in the very act of writing" (Holly A. Laird 224). In this sense, a poem, an idea, and the act of writing can be inseparable from each other just as a dance and a dancer are.

In the beginning lines, the poem should have put greater value on inspiration, but here in the ending lines, it seems to place the poet's act of writing at the core of everything. It is evident that this cunning inversion of the traditional view about inspiration is a variation of Lawrence's strategy to misread the precursors, which we have closely examined in his 'Song'.

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The Work of Creation' is highly self-referential and perhaps exceptionally a meta-poetical work, which is typically seen in line twelve: "Lo! there is a creature, formed!" The text directly orders us the readers to pay attention to itself as a formed creature.

4.2 Inspiration and God's Incarnation

Though not as directly as in 'The Work of Creation', the poet's similar thoughts are also expressed in three poems we will see in this section. They appear to deal with the topic of God's incarnation and the dualism of flesh and soul, but they potentially refer to the poet's unique view about inspiration.

Firstly, we would like to pay attention to 'Bodiless God' (CP 691). The whole of the poem is quoted below:

Everything that has beauty has a body, and is a body;
everything that has being has being in the flesh:
and dreams are only drawn from the bodies that are.

And God?

Unless God has a body, how can he have a voice
and emotions, and desires, and strength, glory or honour?

For God, even the rarest God, is supposed to love us
and wish us to be this that and the other.
And he is supposed to be mighty and glorious.

The poet, who repeatedly mentions the importance of "body" and "flesh" to make God incarnated, simultaneously suggests the importance of language and text to make inspiration embodied. The "voice," "emotions," "desires," "strength," "glory," and "honor" of God can be actualized only through his body. This is an analogy to the fact that the whole of inspiration can be realized only through the poet's act of poetry writing.

It may attract our attention that the poet, who has also called inspiration "my demon" in the preface to Collected Poems, admits the dreams to be "drawn from the bodies" here, because this seems a variation of his Wordsworth-like tactics to internalize inspiration. By exaggerating the inseparability between dream and body, or thought and thinker, he defines inspiration and the subjectivity of a poet as two things mutually inseparable.

Secondly, we will have a look at 'The Body of God' (CP 691), in which God's need to be embodied is
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more clearly expressed:

God is the great urge that has not yet found a body
but urges towards incarnation with the great creative urge.

And becomes at last a clove carnation: lo! that is god!
and becomes at last Helen, or Ninon: any lovely and generous woman
at her best and her most beautiful, being god, made manifest,
any clear and fearless man being god, very god.

There is no god
apart from poppies and the flying fish,
men singing songs, and women brushing their hair in the sun.
The lovely things are god that has come to pass, like Jesus came.
The rest, the undiscoverable, is the demi-urge.

God, who is compared to an "urge" as in 'The Work of Creation,' may be potentially "great." However, he does not have a body and is "undiscoverable" for us; therefore, he is just a "demi-urge" unless embodied. Tom Marshall notes, "Jesus was not Jesus till he was born from a womb, ate soup and bread, and became a unique individual with 'a body and with needs, and a lovely spirit'" (198). This is why God is intrinsically inclined to his "incarnation" or "creation." In this piece, God's need to be incarnated is also interpreted as inspiration's need to be textualized.

Ross C. Murfin says that this poem describes "a realm in which godliness is sensed physically, seen in embodied form" (234). His remark seems to say that God can be incarnated in various forms and appear as a small-letter "god" everywhere around us in a pantheistic way. Concerning Lawrence's use of the capitalized God and the small-letter god, Takeo Iida offers that the poet believes both in the Christian God and in pagan gods, and concludes, "in this poem 'God' and 'gods' cohabit harmoniously" (translation mine, 115).

This view of regarding the world as a composite of numerous gods is a part of the pantheistic thought of the poet who says: "A great rock is god. I can touch it. It is undeniable. It is god.... Everything is a 'thing' and every 'thing' acts and has effect.... And all this is god" (Apocalypse 84). As Graham Hough suggests, the poet clearly displays his animistic doctrine here: "God, then, is the whole natural order seen in the mode of reverence and delight" or "every part of the universe is a manifestation of God" (223). It should be noted
that he inherits it from the Romantics who value "To see a world in a grain of sand / Eternity in a wild flower" (William Blake, 'Auguries of Innocence').

Jillian de Vries-Mason comments that the imagination of God and the poet should be "essentially sensory, and never abstract" (173). Actually, in this poem, a "god" becomes various kinds of things which we can "sense" and "touch" at a concrete level: a wild flower, a fish, a character in a myth, a man or a woman. This cataloguing clearly reflects the poet's belief: "the whole universe is the body of God" and "we are all thoughts in his mind" (Douglas A. Mackey 117-18).

And it should also be noted that Lawrence slips the image of "men singing songs" into the list of these incarnated gods, which suggests that he tries to consecrate a poet "singing songs" as an equivalence to God or inspiration. This is a variation of Lawrence's rhetorical tactics to achieve a balance between the subjectivity of a poet and inspiration.

Finally, we will examine 'Maximus' (CP 692). Tom Marshall regards this piece as one of the "very personal re-creations of Greek myth" and says, "the poet has gone farther than before into a world of pure vision" (196). Actually, this poem is something like an abstract allegory or fable, but we can certainly see the poet's speculation on the substance of inspiration here again.

The poem describes an encounter between the narrator and God, which we can also interpret as one between the poet and inspiration.

God is older than the sun and moon
and the eye cannot behold him
nor voice describe him.

But a naked man, a stranger, leaned on the gate
with his cloak over his arm, waiting to be asked in.
So I called him: Come in, if you will !—
He came in slowly, and sat down by the hearth.
I said to him: And what is your name ?—
He looked at me without answer, but such a loveliness
entered me, I smiled to myself, saying: He is God !
So he said: Hermes !

God is older than the sun and moon
and the eye cannot behold him
nor the voice describe him:

and still, this is the God Hermes, sitting by my hearth.

God, who is said to precede even "the sun and the moon," is potentially transcendental. However, as a formless "urge," it can be perceived neither visually ("the eye cannot behold him") nor verbally ("nor voice describe him"), therefore it needs to be embodied or incarnated. Thus, God tentatively takes the form of "a naked man" here. As Sandra M. Gilbert says, God can be at once "the urge toward incarnation" and "the incarnation," in other words, "the process" and "the product," or "the job of creation" and "that which is created" (275, 278).

After some hesitation, the narrator decides to admit into his house a mysterious man who is leaning on the gate and "waiting to be asked in." On seeing the man sitting "by the hearth," the narrator is filled with an unexplainable feeling of "loveliness" and he intuitively understands that this naked man is God. The narrator's mixed feelings of hesitation and ecstasy, which reflect the poet's dual stance on inspiration, may be reminiscent of the feeling of the poet having dared to admit "the three angels" in 'Song.'

Then, the naked man calls himself Hermes. As widely known, Hermes (Mercury in the Roman mythology) is the son of Zeus and Maia. As a surrogate of Zeus, he rules transportation, commerce, invention, plot, theft, science, speech and literature. In addition, as a guide or "psychopomp," he takes spirits of the dead to Hades. Taking this mythological background into consideration, it seems more evident that in this poem the naked man calling himself Hermes symbolizes inspiration, which functions as a messenger, rules poetry, and takes a poet from the actual world to the imaginative one.

Our attention should be given to Lawrence's way of describing God and the narrator. God is described as a fragile naked man seeking humbly to be accepted by the narrator. God is deemed to be dependent on the narrator, while the narrator is shown to be dominant as the owner of the house and as a host to God. This hierarchical structuring seems to be based on the poet's strategy to invert the Romantic framework privileging inspiration and suppressing the subjectivity of a poet.

Of course, as discussed above, the poet tries to lift up the status of a poet to make it comparable to inspiration, but he has no intention to make it absolute, which is suggested in the last scene of the poem where the naked man as a guest sits comfortably by the narrator as the host in the same room. This equality in the status and power between the naked man and the narrator shows a subtle balance between inspiration and the poet. Lawrence has consistently pursued it in his poetry writing to secure his own uniqueness and overcome his "anxiety of influence" from his precursors. As seen in the first section, Shelley compares the subjectivity of a poet to just "a fading coal" given "transitory brightness" by the wind of inspiration, while in this Lawrencean poem, it burns brightly in a "hearth" to warm both the narrator and the naked man.
4.3 A Bridge between Inspiration and the Subjectivity of a Poet

In this paper, we have surveyed Lawrence's view about inspiration, comparing it to the cases of the Romantics as his precursors and Dylan Thomas as one of his successors. The former, as typically seen in the works of Keats and Shelley, tend to privilege inspiration and negate the subjectivity of a poet to be more receptive for it; and the latter, in contrast, tends to glorify the ego of a poet as something supplementing defects of inspiration.

In order to misread and invert his precursors, Lawrence often tries to exaggerate the importance of the subjectivity of a poet which has been undervalued by the Romantics. However, he is never inclined to privilege it as something absolute. The poet's aim lies in acquiring a kind of bridge or balance between inspiration and a poet.

It is noteworthy that Lawrence carefully keeps a certain distance both from his precursors and successor. Lawrence avoids choosing a winner between a poet and inspiration. This approach may seem somewhat noncommittal, but it can actually be a sufficiently new, unique, and effective one, because it can be free from the blind belief in binary opposition or dichotomic framework. Thus, Lawrence, who has barely "come through" his inner agon of misreading his precursors, establishes his own "new direction of Time" as a modern Romantic poet.

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