Pathetic Fallacy and Prophetic Fiction in *The White Peacock*[1]

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(1)

The first novel of a novelist should not be passed unremarked if you try to investigate him, because the novel contains all of the cardinal factors that he will develop in his later works. We can say this of *The White Peacock*, D. H. Lawrence's first novel, though there may be something "hinted at and dropped"[2] afterwards. For example, the characters emerging in *The White Peacock* have been pointed out as prototypes of those often found in Lawrence's later works. Above all, Annable has attracted a great deal of attention as a prototype of Mellors, a gamekeeper, who is the character Lawrence presents as his ideal male in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*; so have Lettie and Lady Christabel, prototypes of "the most interesting"[3] women, who appear over and over, let us say, as Helena in *The Trespasser*, or Hermione in *Women in Love*; or Leslie, a prototype of the "Industrial Magnate," who reappears as a much bigger figure as Gerald in *Women in Love* or Clifford in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*; or Cyril, who seems to me the most important and interesting figure in *The White Peacock* as a prototype of the author's mouthpiece-like characters.

It can be said that characters usually have been focused on and

taken up as subjects of studies of novels, because they are most conspicuous and glaringly noticeable. But we must not overlook the fact that characters always stand out clearly against their backgrounds—human landscapes or natural landscapes. These landscapes are no less important than characters in order to understand what Lawrence tries to create in his novels.

Particularly in *The White Peacock* there are numerous descriptions of natural objects and landscapes such as flowers, birds, woods and ponds, and they form a dominant note in the novel. Of course, many humanized landscapes are also depicted, but most of them are not so impressive. These natural landscapes have been already discussed so much that they are now understood as one of the chief factors, which Lawrence will develop and enlarge afterwards.

But now, once more, we have to ask why Lawrence presented so many natural objects in his first novel. To answer it briefly, Lawrence, we can say, loved nature so deeply that he could not restrain his passion for declaring his love for natural objects. Or, we can suppose that Lawrence, as a young romantic poet, thought it fair and proper to present a lot of descriptions of flowers, birds, woods and other natural objects, because his predecessors showed their love for nature and chanted innumerable hymns of praise of nature.

As a matter of fact, Lawrence did not lose his love for nature all his life, and kept on presenting natural objects and landscapes in his novels. However, we cannot say definitely that the same kind of descriptions of natural landscapes in *The White Peacock* will be repeatedly given, for example, in *The Rainbow*. At the stage of *The Rainbow*, some descriptions distinctive of *The White Peacock* were

already dropped, and other kinds of descriptions were given. It is well known that Lawrence tried to represent newly-conceived characters in *The Rainbow*.[4] Then, I should say that Lawrence tried to represent natural landscapes radically different from those he represented in the past, because he had to reconstruct the backgrounds in keeping with the newly-conceived characters.

Here, as a preliminary to the study of Lawrence's descriptions of natural landscapes, I will start an investigation of *The White Peacock*.

(2)

First, I would like to take up a passage already quoted and explained by G. Hough as "expressing the spirit of a place and a season."[5]

> I was born in September, and love it best of all the months. There is no heat, no hurry, no thirst and weariness in corn harvest as there is in the hay. If the season is late, as is usual with us, then mid-September sees the corn still standing in stook. The mornings come slowly. The earth is like a woman married and fading; she does not leap up with a laugh for the first fresh kiss of dawn, but slowly, quietly, unexpectantly lies watching the waking of each new day. The blue mist, like memory in the eyes of a neglected wife, never goes from the wooded hill, and only at noon creeps from the near hedges. There is no bird to put a song in the throat of Morning; only the crow's voice speaks during the day. Perhaps there is the regular breathing hush of the scythe—even the fretful jar of the mowing-machine. But next day, in the morning, all is still again. The lying corn is wet, and when you have bound it, and lift the heavy sheaf to make the stook, the tresses of oats wreathe round each other and droop mournfully.[6]

Hough praises young Lawrence's descriptions, which "bring together the life of nature and the life of man," while he criticizes "the metaphors of woman" as "a little juvenile, a little selfconsciously decorative."[7] Hough's remarks are pertinent, and his indication of the merging of "the life of nature and the life of man" seems very suggestive because it points out a unique trait of Lawrence's descriptions of nature. Lawrence represents natural objects by fusing human elements into them.

For example, Hough explains, ". . . the crow *speaks*, the earth *lies watching*, and the absence of pure human hurry and weariness in the work of harvesting is equated with the calm and stillness of the season itself."[8] It is obvious that Lawrence describes natural objects as if they were human, and implies that the calm atmosphere in the field in September is closely related with human working. And Hough praises these kinds of expressions as "a beautiful example of a kind of writing which starts with the individual sensibility, and then, instead of exploiting an egotistical pathetic fallacy, submerges the individual completely in the object of contemplation."[9] In fact, in Lawrence's later works, we frequently meet a kind of writing which represents states in which nature and the human are completely merged. However, if we take into consideration that this novel was written in the earliest stage of Lawrence's career, it seems that Hough's praise may possibly be caused by his over-reading. In particular, such an expression as "the crow *speaks*, the earth *lies watching*" can be regarded as a merely personified expression of natural objects, which is often found in the works of juvenile apprentices strongly infected by their romantic predecessors.

Now, I am going to discuss the "pathetic fallacy" in *The White Peacock*, for Hough does not admit that there is "pathetic fallacy" in the above passage. Hough seems to want to say as follows: September is the month when the narrator (or the author) was born, then naturally he forms some ardent attachment to the month, and therefore, he is likely to make an error of representing natural objects of September with personally biased emotions. And yet, he is far from falling into such an error. He throws away his personal sentiments and succeeds in expressing the merged state of nature and the human.

We can agree with Hough's interpretation if we understand the meaning of "pathetic fallacy" only as the author's personal attachment to natural objects. In fact, Hough cautiously prevents us from misunderstanding his opinion by adding the adjective "egotistical"; however, the subject of "pathetic fallacy" seems to me to open up a broader problem, because Ruskin's original discussion about "pathetic fallacy" makes us feel that he intended to distinguish between two types of poets by making clear differences in their descriptions of natural objects. And, I think, Ruskin's discussion will give us some suggestions of how to understand characteristics of Lawrence's descriptions of nature.

In his essay "Of the Pathetic Fallacy," Ruskin tries to examine "the difference between the ordinary, proper, and true appearances of things to us; and the extraordinary, or false appearances, when we are under the influence of emotion, or contemplative fancy; false appearances, I say, as being entirely unconnected with any real power or character in the object, and only imputed to it by us."[10] And he takes up, as an example, a line by O. W. Holmes: "The spendthrift crocus, bursting

through the mould/ Naked and shivering, with his cup of gold." On these lines Ruskin comments as follows:

> This is very beautiful, and yet very untrue. The crocus is not a spendthrift, but a hardy plant; its yellow is not gold, but saffron. How is it that we enjoy so much the having it put into our heads that it is anything else than a plain crocus?
>
> It is an important question. For, throughout our past reasonings about art, we have always found that nothing could be good or useful, or ultimately pleasurable, which was untrue. But here is something pleasurable in written poetry, which is nevertheless *un*true. And what is more, if we think over our favourite poetry, we shall find it full of this kind of fallacy, and that we like it all the more for being so.[11]

Ruskin characterizes "this kind of fallacy" as the "pathetic fallacy." Surely his explanation about "the crocus" is very persuasive, and we feel inclined to give our full consent to his reasonings. But, when he starts saying, "we shall find the greatest poets do not often admit this kind of falseness, —that it is only the second order of poets who much delight in it,"[12] and, in the chapter "Of Modern Landscape," tries to place Scott as the "greatest" modern poet, then his discussion seems to me to lose its persuasiveness. He regards Wordsworth, Tennyson and Keats as the "second order of poets" or "Reflective or Perceptive," and unsparingly criticizes them because they "carry their cares to her [nature][13], and begin maundering in her ears about their own affairs."[14]

On the other hand, he admires Scott uncritically, saying as follows:

> . . . in Scott, being more than usually intense, and accompanied with infinite affection and quickness of sympathy, it enables him to conquer all tendencies to the pathetic fallacy, and, instead of

> making Nature anywise subordinate to himself, he makes himself subordinate to *her*—follows her lead simply—does not venture to bring his own cares and thoughts into her pure and quiet presence —paints her in her simple and universal truth, adding no result of momentary passion or fancy, and appears, therefore, at first shallower than other poets, being in reality wider and healthier.[15]

Now, I do not want to discuss whether Ruskin's praise of Scott is reasonable or not. I would rather take notice of how Ruskin uses the word "pathetic fallacy" in his discussion about modern poets such as Wordsworth, Keats and Tennyson, because he makes use of the word as a standard of judgment to tell whether a poet is "creative" or "reflective." That is to say, "pathetic fallacy" is used as a touchstone to make a distinction between "creative" Scott and such "reflective," "second order of poets" as Wordsworth, Keats and Tennyson. Ruskin maintains that the "pathetic fallacy" results from a "reflective" poet's perverted love of nature, because he believes that a poet should not make nature "anywise subordinate to himself," and a poet's love of nature should be "unselfish and humble." This kind of belief is considered to arise from Ruskin's own personal ethical view or moral precept of nature: nature should not be interpreted to suit man's own ideas or sentiments. And if a poet violates this precept, he comes to expose his "pathetic fallacy" of nature. Then, we can sum up as follows: Ruskin uses the "pathetic fallacy" from both the rhetorical and the ethical points of view.

(3)

In some of Lawrence's descriptions of natural objects and landscapes

in his novels, we can find his intention of exposing some characters' "pathetic fallacy." In Lawrence as in Ruskin, the "pathetic fallacy" of nature is used for a touchstone for judging characters' attitudes towards nature. As a matter of fact, Lawrence often depicts in his novels how self-conceited modern people are, and how barren their lives are. In other words. we can also say that he expresses how deeply modern people are seized with their "pathetic fallacy" of nature. And at the same time, we can notice how earnestly he draws the processes of "trial and error" of a certain character, who makes a determined attempt to expose mercilessly the "pathetic fallacy" other characters nourish in their minds.

Birkin in *Women in Love* could be pointed out as a typical example of such a character who attempts to blame other characters for their fallacy. Birkin clearly realized that the desperate state which modern intellectuals fell into resulted from their fallacious, overlording atti tudes towards nature. He lost patience with their attitudes, and blamed them for their fallacious, willful self-conceit. In the chapter of "Classroom," for example, Birkin severely critisized Hermione's deceitful way of thinking about natural objects. She is "a woman of the new school, full of intellectuality." But Hermione raised her voice against "knowledge," saying, "If I know about the flower, don't I lose the flower and have only the knowledge? Aren't we exchanging the substance for the shadow, aren't we forfeiting life for this dead quality of knowledge?"[16] Birkin, who knew very well what she really was, could not help finding her fallacy in her speech, and retorted:

"You are merely making words," he said; "knowledge means every-

> thing to you. Even your animalism, you want it in your head. You don't want to *be* an animal, you want to observe your own animal functions, to get a mental thrill out of them. . . . Passion and the instincts—you want them hard enough, but through your head, in your consciousness. It all takes place in your head, under that skull of yours. Only you won't be conscious of what *actually* is: you want the lie that will match the rest of your furniture."[17]

Often he invited bitter counterattack, and on a certain occasion he was physically hurt as shown in an episode where he was hit with "a blue, beautiful ball of lapis lazuli" by Hermione. He escaped from Hermione's house of Breadalby to the open country, in which "he took off his clothes, and sat down naked among the primroses," feeling that "this was good, this was all very good, very satisfying. Nothing else would do, nothing else would satisfy, except this coolness and subtlety of vegetation travelling into one's blood. How fortunate he was, that there was this lovely, subtle, responsive vegetation, waiting for him, as he waited for it; how fulfilled he was, how happy!"[18]

The relation between Birkin and the vegetation is described as if they are lovers. However, if Birkin did not throw away all of his mental, self-conceited consciousness of nature to get in close to the heart of nature, he could not perceive the intimate, subtle connection with natural objects. Or, in other words, if he did not fling away his egotistical "pathetic fallacy" of nature to move "in a sort of darkness," he could not feel any living elements of the vegetation flowing into his own blood.

This episode seems to me to present most clearly Lawrence's vision of the state where man and nature are quickly reponsive to each other

without any interference by man's willful "pathetic fallacy." At the stage of *Women in Love* Lawrence had already established his unique way of seeing such a relation between man and nature as is clearly and forcibly expressed through Birkin's mouth:

> "Well, if mankind is destroyed, if our race is destroyed like Sodom, and there is this beautiful evening with the luminous land and trees, I am satisfied. That which informs it all is there, and can never be lost. After all, what is mankind but just one expression of the incomprehensible. And if mankind passes away, it will only mean that this particular expression is completed and done. That which is expressed, and that which is to be expressed, cannot be diminished. There it is, in the shining evening. . . ."[19]

Birkin reconfirmed the fact that nature did not exist for human beings but it existed of itself. He thought, "the beautiful evening with the luminous land and trees" would never lose its meaning even if the human race became extinct; and yet he loved nature. And his love of nature was "unselfish and humble," because he did not see evening landscapes through his "pathetic fallacy." Then, we can say conclusively that Birkin's way of seeing nature evidently shows a keynote of Lawrence's own philosophy of nature, though we know full well that it is not easy to say something definite about what Lawrence's philosophy of nature is. Of course, it may be open to question whether Lawrence had been cherishing such an idea of nature from his early days. Nevertheless, I would like to say that he had cherished it all the time, but that he could not express it so clearly and definitely till he went through the process of writing the novels from *The White Peacock* to *The Rainbow*.

(4)

Now, let us examine how Lawrence describes natural objects in *The White Peacock*, and how he tries to expose the "pathetic fallacy" the characters cherish in their minds.

At first, it should be noted that *The White Peacock* is an "I" novel and is narrated by Cyril Beardsall. Of course, we regard the narrator as the author's mouthpiece; but can we accept blindly all of Cyril's ideas or sentiments for the author's own? In fact, Cyril actually emerges in the novel as one of the important characters. This means that we cannot take blindly all his ideas or sentiments as the author's, because Cyril is sometimes forced to be tied up in his standpoint as one of the characters. This ambiguous position of Cyril seems to me very interesting, for Lawrence himself fully realized that he should "stop up the mouth of Cyril," and "kick him out"[20] of the novel, but he failed to shut Cyril's mouth. Cyril succeeded in using his role as the author's mouthpiece to dominate the novel, though we do not think Cyril always performed his task faithfully. But why couldn't Lawrence kick him out? We cannot answer confidently, but we can guess that Lawrence always had something like an intention of making his mouthpiece-like character appear in his novel and of uttering his ideas or sentiments through the mouth of such a character. Both Paul and Birkin, for example, are regarded as such characters; but we cannot say definitely that Cyril, Paul and Birkin, are all of them the same kind of mouthpiece-like character. Each character has his own unique way of expressing the author's ideas or sentiments, though each of them has the same role as a mouthpiece of the author. And when we

consider them, we always face the problem: how much their ideas or sentiments differ from the author's, or how much apart they are from the author.

Then, let us concentrate our attention on Cyril. He describes many natural objects or landscapes throughout the novel. But can we say that his descriptions are always the same? For example, in one case, he describes natural or human objects in a peaceful evening as follows:

> The beautiful day was flushing to die. Over in the west the mist was gathering bluer. The intense stillness was broken by the rhythmic hum of the engines at the distant coal-mine, as they drew up the last bantles of men. As we walked across the field the tubes of stubble tinkled like dulcimers. The scent of the corn began to rise gently. The last cry of the pheasants came from the wood, and the little clouds of birds were gone.[21]

This passage can be called one of Lawrence's unique descriptions, because it appeals to our visual, aural and olfactory senses. And a whole atmosphere in the evening field is vividly and sensuously transmitted to us. "The rhythmic hum of the engines at the distant coal-mine" broke the stillness of the evening field. yet the narrator did not complain of the ugliness modern industrialism produced in the lovely countryside. The narrator picked up some natural objects from the rural evening scene to paint them very objectively. Only the sentence, "the tubes of stubble tinkled like dulcimers," seems to show the young author's pedantic way of expression; but, roughly speaking, we can say the narrator, here, succeeded in avoiding the "pathetic fallacy."

We cannot, however, maintain that he always saved himself from falling into the "pathetic fallacy." We will easily find how differently

he narrates, for example, as follows:

> A corn crake talked to me across the valley, talked and talked endlessly, asking and answering in hoarse tones from the sleeping, mist-hidden meadows. The monotonous voice, that on past summer evenings had had pleasant notes of romance, now was intolerable to me. Its inflexible harshness and cacophony seemed like the voice of fate speaking out its tuneless perseverance in the night.[22]

Here, a corn crake is presented as a personified being, by means of which Cyril indulges himself freely, exposing his sentiments. The corn crake's cries remind him of his happy "past summer evenings" and make him sharply conscious of his present forlornness. And its voice sounds to him like that of "fate."

Lawrence himself, in an essay named "The Nightingale," blamed Keats, saying, "How John Keats managed to begin his 'Ode to a Nightingale' with: 'My heart aches and a drowsy numbness pains my senses,' is a mystery to anybody acquainted with the actual song."[23] The actual sound of the nightingale is, to Lawrence, "nothing in the world so unforlorn." Here, Lawrence seems to blame Keats for his indulgence in the "pathetic fallacy" when he thinks of the nightingale. Lawrence's criticism of Keats is very interesting, because Cyril, Lawrence's own mouthpiece, ignores a corn crake's actual song and interprets it from his "pathetic" point of view. Evidently he himself expresses his "pathetic fallacy" of a corn crake.

In *The White Peacock*, in fact, are found a lot of descriptions, where we can discover the narrator's "pathetic fallacy" of natural objects. As another example, I would like to quote the following passages, in which we can see the narrator indulging in pouring out his "pathetic"

love for "snowdrops," and. at the same time, we can detect why he represents "snowdrops" as sad flowers.

> . . . All the ground was white with snowdrops, like drops of manna scattered over the red earth, on the grey-green clusters of leaves. There was a deep little dell, sharp sloping like a cup, and white sprinkling of flowers all the way down, with white flowers showing pale among the first inpouring of shadow at the bottom. . . . High above, above the light tracery of hazel, the weird oaks tangled in the sunset. Below, in the first shadows, drooped hosts of little white flowers, so silent and sad; it seemed like a holy communion of pure wild things, numberless, frail, and folded meekly in the evening light. Other flower companies are glad; stately barbaric hordes of bluebells, merry-headed cowslip groups, even light, tossing wood-anemones; but snowdrops are sad and mysterious. We have lost their meaning. They do not belong to us, who ravish them. The girls bent among them, touching them with their fingers, and symbolising the yearning which I felt. Folded in the twilight, these conquered flowerets are sad like forlorn little friends of dryads.[24]

Cyril, Emily, Leslie and Lettie walked through the woods, and they were surprised to find "clumps of snowdrops." Cyril here presented many kinds of flowers in all their glories, but, above all, he concentrated his attention on "snowdrops" and repeatedly mentioned the sadness they suggested to him. It may safely be said that such expressions as "other flower companies are glad," or "these conquered flowerets are sad" are regarded as what Ruskin previously characterized as "pathetic fallacy," because other flower companies, in actuality, cannot be "glad," or flowerets cannot be "conquered" nor "sad." Such adjectives as "sad" and "conquered" evidently show the narrator's

preoccupied notion of "snowdrops." Then, what is the notion the narrator is preoccupied with?

Fortunately the scene which immediately follows the above passage will furnish a key to the question. Let us listen to the following conversation between young people for a while.

> "What do they mean, do you think?" said Lettie in a low voice, as her white fingers touched the flowers, and her black furs fell on them.
>
> "There are not so many this year," said Leslie.
>
> "They remind me of mistletoe, which is never ours, though we wear it," said Emily to me.
>
> "What do you think they say—what do they make you think, Cyril?" Lettie repeated.
>
> "I don't know. Emily says they belong to some old wild lost religion—They were the symbol of tears, perhaps, to some strange hearted Druid folk before us."
>
> "More than tears," said Lettie "More than tears, they are so still. Something out of an old religion, that we had lost. They make me feel afraid."
>
> "What should you have to fear?" asked Leslie.
>
> "If I knew I shouldn't fear," she answered "Look at all the snowdrops"—they hung in dim, strange flecks among the dusky leaves—"look at them — closed up, retreating, powerless. They belong to some knowledge we have lost, that I have lost, and that I need. I feel afraid. They seem like something in fate. Do you think, Cyril, we can lose things from off the earth—like mastodons, and those old monstrosities—but things that matter—wisdom?"
>
> "It is against my creed," said I.
>
> "I believe I have lost something," said she.
>
> "Come," said Leslie, "don't trouble with fancies. . . ."[25]

It is evident from Cyril's answer to Lettie that Cyril himself had no particular preoccupation with "snowdrops." He merely mentioned a story he had heard from Emily: "They were the symbol of tears, perhaps, to some strange hearted Druid folk." But it is impossible to deny that he had watched under the influence of this old legend. Now we can understand why Cyril depicted "snowdrops" as "sad," "conquered" flowers. Old Druid folk were conquered and died out, and yet "snowdrops" which had been "the symbol of tears" for them still remained. Cyril could not see "snowdrops" without expressing full sympathy with the old died-out folk.

As Leslie very appropriately put an end to their conversation, saying, "don't trouble with fancies," so we had better not trouble ourselves with the narrator's fanciful descriptions, for the author, who made Leslie say so, seems to me to write this passage from a much broader point of view, though he sometimes fails to subdue his desires to pour out his sentiments through Cyril's mouth. Such a speaking as Leslie's, however, makes us encounter a problem: in fact, from whose point of view is the above scene narrated, that is, the narrator's or the author's? In a way, we may be able to insist that all scenes are narrated by Cyril because this novel is an "I" novel; but, in such a case as Leslie's speaking, it seems doubtful if the narrator can make Leslie say "don't trouble with fancies," for the narrator himself would like to keep on enjoying a fanciful conversation. Here, we are made strongly aware of the author's own omniscient point of view.

If we think, furthermore, about how Leslie and the other three characters responded to "snowdrops," we cannot help feeling the author's intention of describing "snowdrops" as a touchstone for making clear

the characters' attitudes towards nature. In other words, here. from the omniscient point of view, the author tries to represent four young people's attitudes towards nature. As for Leslie, it is obvious that he has no interest in natural objects. He can be classified as a character who would like to live in the human sophisticated world and reject the natural world the "snowdrops" represented. On the other hand, as for Cyril, Emily and Lettie, who, too, were sophisticated. they would like to appreciate the natural world and take delight in seeing natural objects in the nostalgic light.

Among these three characters, Lettie seemed to have real sympathy with "snowdrops." And we may say that she was really moved by the beauty of "snowdrops" and tried to see them from her own point of view. It was she who began the discussion about "snowdrops." She interpreted them as "more than tears," and maintained "they belong to some knowledge we have lost, that I have lost, and that I need." She refused to see them merely from the sentimental point of view. Lettie seemed to feel something much deeper in "snowdrops." This opinion of Lettie's, though it sounded very unique, is considered to be clearly connected with Cyril's previous narration: "we have lost their meaning. They do not belong to us, who ravish them." Then, we can suppose that the narrator described "snowdrops" after due consideration of Lettie's interpretation.

Judging from her interpretation of "snowdrops," Lettie seemed to grasp something of significance in them and have a feeling of awe of mysterious nature. But can we say that her words really showed her real self? It seems to me that Lettie, just like Hermione in *Women in Love*, pretended to have a real, deeper understanding with natural

objects. If such a character as Birkin in *Women in Love* appeared in *The White Peacock*, he would have severely criticized Lettie, saying, "You are merely making words." For example, the following sentence "her black furs fell on them" appears to me to be inconsistent with Lettie's love or yearning for "snowdrops."

If we do not know Lettie's discussion about "snowdrops," we may pass over the scene as a merely pastoral one. As a matter of fact, the scene was picturesque and impressive, for a beautiful girl sat on white crowds of "snowdrops," touching them tenderly with her white fingers and laying her gorgeous furs beside her. The blackness of her fallen furs formed remarkable contrast with the whiteness of "snowdrops." However, after having heard her interpretation about "snowdrops," we cannot help feeling her insensitiveness towards the frail, powerless flowers. If she really loved them, she could not bury the living flowers under her black furs. Here, by presenting Lettie's insensitive conduct towards "snowdrops," the author, not Cyril, seems to try to make it clear that she was self-conceited and lacked real love for natural objects, and that she fell a victim to the willful "pathetic fallacy" of nature.

It is not too much to say that Lettie is the most successfully described of the characters in *The White Peacock*. She made sport of two young men, Leslie and George, and in the end she got married to Leslie because of his high social position as a mine-owner. But now, a matter of our concern and interest is how Lettie's "pathetic fallacy," or her willful, pretentious way of interpreting natural objects, is presented. As examples, I would like to take up two scenes where she talked to her suitors, for, there, she tried to adorn herself lavishly

with flowery words, often making allusions to natural objects in her speaking. First, let us examine how Lettie talked to Leslie.

In an autumn evening at the field of the Saxton's, walking with Leslie, Leffie suddenly felt as if she "wanted to laugh, or dance. Something rather outrageous."[26] But Leslie replied, "Surely not like that now." She did not want him to finish his proposal, and tried to be free from him. She insisted on dancing a polka; and she danced at first with Cyril, and then with George, and not with Leslie at all. At length, George "looked big, erect, nerved with triumph, and she was exhilarated like a Bacchante." Sullenly Leslie asked, "Have you finished?"

> "Yes." She panted. "You should have danced. Give me my hat, please. Do I look very disgraceful?"
>
> He took her hat and gave it to her.
>
> "Disgraceful?" he repeated.
>
> "Oh, you *are* solemn tonight! What is it?"
>
> "Yes, what is it?" he repeated ironically.
>
> "It must be the moon. Now is my hat straight? Tell me now —you're not looking. Then put it level. Now then! Why, your hands are quite cold, and mine so hot! I feel so impish."—and she laughed: "There—now I'm ready. Do you notice those little chrysanthemums trying to smell sadly; when the old moon is laughing and winking through those boughs. What business have they with their sadness?" She took a handful of petals and flung them into the air: "There—if they sigh they ask for sorrow —I like things to wink and look wild."[27]

Leslie in an ill temper replied to Lettie's question ironically. She attributed his sullen look to the moon, though she indeed felt uneasy about her whimsical attitude towards him. And she made a sacrifice

of the poor chrysanthemums in order to justify her outburst of passion. We are not sure whether chrysanthemums actually tried "to smell sadly," but she confidently affirmed so. Then, she took the petals of chrysanthemums and threw them away into the air, which would mean that she tried to express her contempt for Leslie's sullen attitude towards her. And then, she spoke very highly of the old moon, which appeared to her to be "laughing and winking." Of course, the moon does not laugh nor wink. This expression is said to be imbued with her "pathetic fallacy" of the moon. Here it is evident that Lettie took advantage of natural objects for justifying her whimsical conduct.

Secondly I would like to take up a scene where Lettie talked on and on to put an end to her relation with George, because she knew full well that "she would keep her engagement with Leslie."[28]

> "Look!" she said "it's a palace, with the ash-trunks. smooth like a girl's arm, and the elm-columns, ribbed and bossed and fretted, with the steel shafts of beech, all rising up to hold an embroidered care-cloth over us; and every thread of the care-cloth vibrates with music for us, and the little broidered birds sing; and the hazel bushes fling green spray round us, and the honeysuckle leans down to pour out scent over us. Look at the harvest of bluebells —ripened for us! Listen to the bee, sounding among all the organ-play—if he sounded exultant for us!" She looked at him, with tears coming up into her eyes, and a little, winsome, wistful smile hovering round her mouth. He was very pale, and dared not look at her. She put her hand in his, leaning softly against him. He watched. as if fascinated, a young thrush with full pale breast who hopped near to look at them—glancing with quick, shining eyes.[29]

How onesidedly Lettie talked and talked! She explained to George, as

if she were a schoolmistress, how he should appreciate natural objects. How often Lettie said, "Look!" or "Listen!" And she illustrated natural objects with colorful words as if she were trying to display flauntingly how many witty words she knew: "ash-trunks" as "smooth like a girl's arm," "elm-columns" as "ribbed and bossed and fretted," "beech" as "the steel shafts," and all trees stood there for her and George as "an embroidered care-cloth," which, according to A. Robertson's note, was "a cloth held like a canopy over the heads of the bride and groom during the marriage ceremony."[30] But why did Lettie speak such high-flown words though she cherished in her mind an intention of putting her relation with George to an end? Was she herself intoxicated with natural beauty? Or, did she abandon her intention? At any rate, she would not shut her mouth; saying that the birds sang for them; "the honeysuckle" stood giving out a nice smell for them; "the harvest of bluebells" ripened for them; and the bee "sounded exultant for" them. Lettie saw every natural object as if it existed only for her and George. And how wanton cruelty Lettie displayed when she spoke these high-flown words and repeated "for us"!

Here, in this melodramatic scene, the narrator did not trespass. It is certain that the descriptions of the lovers were given from the omniscient point of view. We found Lettie's eyes suffused with coming tears: but why did she wear "a little, winsome, wistful smile hovering round her mouth"? We may say that her smile showed something like her sympathy with George, and yet it seems to me that the smile did not match so well with her coming tears. Then, it seems to me that Lettie's smile showed something like her hidden disposition: that is, her desire to take some pleasure in flirting with poor George. In

other words, she seemed to enjoy the privilege of handling an unsophisticated young man at her mercy.

George, on the other hand, "dared not look at her," but absorbedly watched a young thrush "who hopped near to look at them." This young thrush is considered to be presented here for the purpose of heightening a picturesque effect on the scene. Indeed, the abrupt insertion of a thrush gives us a start, because it is portrayed so livelily and animatedly that it makes a striking contrast with Lettie's sophisticated talking. We can suppose, then, that the author inserted a description of the thrush "glaring with quick, shining eyes" with the intention of exhibiting the sham of Lettie's embroidered talking. And now, it is evident, I think, that Lettie is the first and most typical of the characters who make up their own images or ideas about natural objects in order to paste them on natural landscapes.

(5)

We may say conclusively, now, that in *The White Peacock* is found something like the author's intention of exposing the "pathetic fallacy" some characters nourish in their minds. At the stage of *The White Peacock*, however, the author does not yet express his opinion, so clearly as shown by Birkin in *Women in Love*, on why and how such characters fall victims to the "pathetic fallacy." The fact is that even Cyril himself, the mouthpiece of the author as he is, often shows his own "pathetic fallacy" of nature. But in the case of Cyril, it is not so simplified as in the case of Lettie, because he has the privilege of expressing freely the author's own sentiments or ideas or visions without any restraint. It is certain that Cyril frequently indulges in his

wistful sentiments for natural objects and interprets and explains them from his sentimentally conceited point of view. But he does not always do so. There are some other cases where he tries to express something like his philosophical vision. For example, how can we understand such a case as a scene of "the burial of the keeper." The narrator begins to tell about "a magnificent morning in early spring" as follows:

> It was a magnificent morning in early spring when I watched among the trees to see the procession come down the hillside. The upper air was woven with the music of the larks, and my whole world thrilled with the conception of summer. The young pale wind-flowers had arisen by the wood-gate, and under the hazels, where perchance the hot sun pushed his way, new little suns dawned, and blazed with real light. There was a certain thrill and quickening everywhere, as a woman must feel when she has conceived. . . .[31]

The narrator keeps on talking about trees, flowers and birds. He has "a delight in watching" every living thing moving exuberant in life. But here, apparently the narrator is portraying a scene where the funeral procession of Annable slowly came down the hillside. Annable and the narrator were very friendly with each other, though for a short time. We may suppose, therefore, that the narrator would deeply lament his friend's sudden death, and express his mawkish sentiment and pathos on the scene. But, on the contrary, the scene is depicted as glowing with vigor and vivacity. And the narrator felt "there was a certain thrill and quickening everywhere," but, judging from a commonsense standpoint, it seems very strange that he enjoyed himself feeling the newly-conceived life as if he completely forgot the death of

his intimate friend.

To express his delight in discovering how vividly life revealed itself, for example, he gave us a minute, vivid account of a nesting thrush:

> Ah, but the thrush is scornful, ringing out his voice from the hedge! He sets his breast against the mud, and models it warm for the turquoise eggs—blue, blue, bluest of eggs, which cluster so close and round against the breast, which round up beneath the breast, nestling content. You should see the bright ecstasy in the eyes of a nesting thrush, because of the rounded caress of the eggs against her breast![32]

Here, it is evident that the narrator wants to impart his vivid impression of the beauty and wonder of life the thrush and its blue eggs stand for. And yet, there still remains a question why he expresses his warm admiration for natural objects when describing a funeral procession. Does he knowingly observe natural objects closely because he shrinks from watching the coffin? No, he does not shrink. He actually fixes his eyes on the coffin and the men who bear it, and represents them without falling a victim to sentimentality and pathos.

> . . . The men come over the brow of the hill, slowly, with the old squire walking tall and straight in front; six bowed men bearing the coffin on their shoulders, treading heavily and cautiously under the great weight of the glistening white coffin; six men following behind, ill at ease, waiting their turn for the burden. You can see the red handkerchiefs knotted round their throats, and their shirt-fronts blue and white between the open waistcoats. The coffin is of new unpolished wood, gleaming and glistening in the sunlight; the men who carry it remember all their lives after the smell of new, warm elm-wood.[33]

How objectively are the figures of the men represented! The description of the coffin destroys our preconceived notion that the coffin should be gloomily and ominously depicted, because here the coffin is "gleaming and glistening in the sunshine," and smells "of new, warm elm-wood." And the "new unpolished wood" readily suggests that the keeper made a poor living in the human world; but in the natural world his coffin is teeming with the bright sunshine and the fresh smell of elm-wood as if it were blessed. The narrator views everything in this scene with an unprejudiced eye, and does not make any distinction between natural beings and humans. We can see he presents human beings only as one part of a magnificent natural landscape.

As yet, it remains an unsolved problem why the funeral procession of Annable is represented so vivaciously against such a magnificent natural landscape sparkling with vigor and vitality. Indeed, we can suppose that the narrator, or the author himself, surely intends to picture his vision of life and death in this scene. But it seems impertinent to me that we exceed the supposition and make some definite remarks, because, here, we can make a random guess so that we may say whatever we please. Nevertheless, for the present, I would like to say that in this scene we can divine one of Lawrence's own visions of life and death. It is not until he got through his work on *Sons and Lovers* that he could confidently express his unique ideas of life and death. However, we can gather from his letter to Rev. R. Reid[34] that he had already seen a certain vision of life and death in "Cosmic harmony" before he began to write *The White Peacock*, and he tried to visualize it in this scene.

Lawrence often draws the vision in his novels, and sometimes, in his

essays, gives more plain, concrete expressions to the vision. His expressions are varied, and therefore, it is not easy to say which expression gives the most plain account of the vision. But now, as an example, I would like to quote a passage from "Whistling of Birds" published in 1919, which conveys lucidly his idea about life and death.

> The blackbird cannot stop his song, neither can the pigeon. It takes place in him, even though all his race was yesterday destroyed. He cannot mourn, or be silent, or adhere to the dead. Of the dead he is not, since life has kept him. The dead must bury their dead. Life has now taken hold on him and tossed him into the new ether of a new firmament, where he bursts into song as if he were combustible. . . .[35]

Lawrence insists that the world of life does not have any relation with that of death. Then, all living things should, as long as they are living, live their lives without worrying about the dead. However, human beings usually "adhere to the dead" because of their pathetic memories of the dead, and they fatally come to take life tragically. But Lawrence is the man who rejects the thoughts that take life as tragedy.

I should say that the narrator in *The White Peacock* tries to convey a visionary idea of life and death somewhat similar to the one shown in the above essay. *The White Peacock* can be said, in a sense, to be a novel rich in tragic and pathetic atmosphere; and, for that reason, the scene of the funeral procession of Annable gives us a more vivid and startling impression.

Now, we return to our subject of the "pathetic fallacy." In the description of the scene of the funeral procession we could not find such

a "pathetic fallacy" of natural objects as shown in Lettie's speaking to Leslie and George. The narrator is considered as keeping his "unselfish and humble" attitude towards nature. for he does not intend to paint natural objects in pathetic, sentimental colors. The narrator seems to describe the scene very objectively; nevertheless, we fail to affirm with confidence that he does not show any kind of fallacy, because we cannot help feeling that he makes an effort to impart his subjective vision of life and death to us. no matter how objectively he describes natural objects. Then, how can we understand his effort? Of course, these objective descriptions in which the narrator represents his subjective vision cannot be regarded in the same light with the ones in which he represents natural objects pathetically. But it is doubtless that the narrator makes use of natural objects for the purpose of imparting his subjective vision. And consequently, that objective description of the scene of the funeral procession should be taken as another kind of description. We cannot call it an objective description, because, exaggeratingly speaking, it does not avoid a sort of "fallacy" whereby the author or the narrator tunes nature to his vision or idea. This sort of "fallacy" cannot be placed in the same category with the "pathetic fallacy," for this "fallacy" does not contain any sentimental, pathetical elements. Then, we could consider the "fallacy" as another sort of "fallacy" or "fiction"; or rather, I would like to venture to call it "prophetic fiction," for every author who tries to represent his visions or ideas, especially prophetic visions in a novel or a poem, always falls a victim to such a prophetic fiction.

We may be open to criticism, because we insist that every prophetic writer cannot help composing anything but a fiction, however realisti-

cally he may create his world of art; but we should say that no writer can create such a vision as always holds to all people in every age. And a vision or an idea that is believed as true and real by a person will be criticized, by another person, as a kind of fallacy or fiction. But now, we had better point out that fiction is one of the most cardinal elements for creating a work of art; and as Ruskin mentioned previously, we like the work "all the more for being" full of fiction.

Lastly, let us listen to Ruskin once more, because he explains so aptly the men who see nature through their prophetic inspirations as follows:

> . . . the men who, strong as human creatures can be, are yet submitted to influences stronger than they, and see in a sort untruly, because what they see is inconceivably above them. This last is the usual condition of prophetic inspiration.[36]

D. H. Lawrence is one of these seers who see nature through their prophetic inspirations and try to represent in works of art what they see in nature. And yet, what Lawrence saw was "inconceivably above" him; but all his life he kept making sincere efforts for discovering descriptive methods fit for representing faithfully what he saw.

NOTES

1 I wish to express my thanks to Professor M. Kinkead-Weekes and Dr. D. Ellis, of the university of Kent at Canterbury, for reading this paper in draft and making many helpful suggestions.

2 G. Hough, *The Dark Sun: A Study of D. H. Lawrence* (London: Duckworth, 1956), p. 26.

3 D. H. Lawrence, *The Trespasser* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1981), p. 112. About "the most interesting" women, a character in *The Trespasser* says,

"She can't live without us, but she destroys us. These deep, interesting women don't want *us*: they want the flowers of the spirit they can gather of us. We, as natural men, are more or less degrading to them and to their love of us. Therefore they destroy the natural man in us—that is, us altogether."

4 Cf., D. H. Lawrence's letter to E. Garnett under date 5 June, 1914.

5 G. Hough, *The Dark Sun*, p. 5.

6 D. H. Lawrence, *The White Peacock* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1983), pp. 58–59.

7 G. Hough, *The Dark Sun*, p. 6.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 6.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 7.

10 J. Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, vol. III (London: George Allen, 1904), p. 204.

11 *Ibid.*, pp. 204–205.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 205.

13 The parenthesis is mine.

14 J. Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, vol. III, p. 343.

15 *Ibid.*, pp. 341–342.

16 D. H. Lawrence, *Women in Love* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1979), p. 45.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 45.

18 *Ibid.*, pp. 119–120.

19 *Ibid.*, p. 65.

20 J. T. Boulton (ed.), *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, vol. I (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1979), p. 69.

21 *The White Peacock*, p. 51.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 195.

23 E. D. McDonald (ed.), *Phoenix* (London: Heinemann, 1961), p. 40.

24 *The White Peacock*, p. 129.

25 *Ibid.*, pp. 129–130.

26 *Ibid.*, p. 54.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 56.

28 *Ibid.*, p. 205.

29 *Ibid.*, pp. 214–215.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 385.

31 *Ibid.*, p. 155.

32 *Ibid.*, p. 155.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 156.

34 Cf., D. H. Lawrence's letter to Rev. R. Reid under date 3 December, 1907, (*The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, vol. I, p. 41.) ". . . But sir, there must at least be harmony of facts before a hypothesis can be framed. Cosmic harmony there is—a Cosmic God I can therefore believe in. But where is the human harmony, where the balance, the order, the 'indestructibility of matter' in humanity? And where is the *personal, human* God? Men—some—seem to be born and ruthlessly destroyed; the bacteria are created and nurtured on Man, to his horrible suffering. Oh, for a God-idea I must have harmony—unity of design. Such design there may be for the race—but for the individual, the often wretched individual?" Or, in a letter to his sister, Ada, under date 9 April, 1911, (*Ibid.*, pp. 255–256.) Lawrence wrote as follows: "I am sorry more than I can tell to find you going through all the torment of religious unbelief: it is so hard to bear, especially now. However, it seems to me like this: Jehovah is the Jew's idea of God—not ours. Christ was infinitely good, but mortal as we. There still remains a God, but not a personal God: a vast, shimmering impulse which wavers onwards towards some end, I don't know what—taking no regard of the little individual, but taking regard for humanity. When we die, like rain-drops falling back again into the sea, we fall back into the big, shimmering sea of unorganised life which we call God. We are lost as individuals, yet we count in the whole."

35 *Phoenix*, pp. 5–6.

36 J. Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, vol. III, p. 209.