

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS ON WILLIAM WORDSWORTH'S *ODE: INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD*A. Imagery of Wordsworth's *Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood*

Wordsworth's *Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood* consists of 204 lines and eleven stanzas. The readers are invited into Wordsworth's belief that life on earth is a dim shadow of an earlier, purer existence, dimly recalled in childhood and then is forgotten in the process of growing up.

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:

The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star, (59-60)

Human life is merely "a sleep and forgetting" that human beings dwell in a purer, more glorious realm before they enter the earth. At our birth, human carries the soul of heaven that becomes the light in human's life. For a brief moment, children are just like a white paper which is still pure. The children enjoy 'the light of heaven', whatever they do, and it makes them happy. They have no sadness, what they feel is only the happiness which filled their minds. They see the meadowland, grove, stream 'appareled in celestial light' and feel the world alive with all the freshness of a dream. Everything has made them happy.

THERE was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,

The earth, and every common sight,

To me did seem

Apparelled in celestial light,

The glory and the freshness of a dream. (1-5)

The capitalize letters of the words 'THERE' and the using of the past tense 'was' show an index of the poem that there is a time in the past, which was so important/immortal in the speaker life. Here, the speaker describes a certain time in the past when all of nature seemed dreamlike to him, and it comes with the light of heaven.

The things which I have seen I now can see no more. (9)

But then it is forgotten due to the process of growing up of each human being. The shades of adulthood close in upon the dreaming child. Human's beautiful moment at birth is perceived to die away until finally, at childhood's end, it fades into the common light.

The sunshine is a glorious birth;

But yet I know, where'er I go,

That there hath past away a glory from the earth. (16-18).

Forget the glories he hath known

And that imperial palace whence he came. (84-85)

The speaker was stricken with a thought of grief while listening to the birds sings in springtime and watching the young lambs leap and play.

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song

And while the young lambs bound

As to the tabor's sound,

To me alone there came a thought of grief:

Rather than a feeling of grief, the speaker experiences “a thought of grief”, a phrase that will haunt the poem’s final lines.

Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears. (204)

The rapid shift remains suspicious, leads the writer to conclude that rather than true “relief”, the speaker is here forcing himself to ignore and sublimate his emotions through a meditation on nature.

A timely utterance gave that thought relief,

And I again am strong: (23-24)

The sound of nearby waterfalls, the echoes of the mountains, and the gusting of the winds restored him to strength. He declares that his grief will not disturb nature’s happiness.

No more shall grief of mine the season wrong; (26)

Then, the speaker beholds a six-year-old and imagines his life, and the love his mother and father feel for him. He sees the boy playing with some imitated fragment of adult life, “some little plan or chart,” imitating “a wedding or a festival” or “a mourning or a funeral”. The speaker imagines that all human life is a similar imitation.

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,

A six years’ Darling of a pigmy size!

See, where ‘mid work of his own hand he lies,

Fretted by sallies of his mother’s kisses,

With light upon him from his father’s eyes!

See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,

Some fragment from his dream of human life, (86-92)

The speaker addresses the child as though he were a mighty prophecy of a lost truth, and rhetorically asks him why, when he has access to the glories of his origins, and to the pure experience of nature, he still hurries toward an adult life of custom and “earthly freight”.

Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
 Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height
 Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
 The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
 Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?
 Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight, (122-127).

The speaker experiences a surge of joy at the thought that his memories of childhood will always grant him a kind of access to that lost world of instinct, innocence, and exploration. In the tenth stanza, bolstered by this joy, he urges the birds to sing, and urges all creatures to participate in “the gladness of the May”.

Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
 And let the young lambs bound
 As to the tabor's sound!
 We in thought will join your throng,
 Ye that pipe and ye that play,
 Ye that through your hearts to-day
 Feel the gladness of the May! (169-175)

He says that though he has lost some part of the glory of nature and of experience, he will take solace in “primal sympathy,” in memory, and in the fact that the years bring a mature consciousness “a philosophic mind.” In the final stanza, the

speaker says that this mind which stems from a consciousness of mortality, as opposed to the child's feeling of immortality enables him to love nature and natural beauty all the more, for each of nature's objects can stir him to thought, and even the simplest flower blowing in the wind can raise in him "thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
 Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
 To me the meanest flower that blows can give
 Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears (201-204).

B. Praise of Nature in William Wordsworth's *Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood*

B.1. Nature's Presentation

Wordsworth opens his ode by describing a certain time in the past when all of nature seemed dreamlike to him. Here, he uses the particular elements of nature.

THERE was a time when meadow, grove, and stream

The earth, (1-2)

Almost in each stanza contains the particular elements of nature as shown on the table below:

Element of Nature	Line
Meadow	1, 188
Grove	1, 188
Stream	1
Earth	2, 18, 29, 44, 78
Rainbow	10
Rose	11
Moon	12
Water	14, 168
Star	14, 60
Sun	16, 49, 197
Bird	19, 169
Lambs	20, 170
Cataracts	25
Season	26, 162
Mountain	27
Winds	28
Land	30
Sea	30, 164
Valley	48
Flower	49, 179, 203

Tree	52
Field	53
Pansy	55
Cloud	65, 197
Brood	120
Weather	162
Grass	179
Fountain	152, 188
Hill	188
Brook	193

Based on the table it can be known that the poem contains a lot of elements of nature. It could be one of Wordsworth's ways to show his appreciation of nature toward the reader. Wordsworth writes it beautifully by repeating some words, such as earth, sun, flower, meadow, grove, water, star, bird, lambs, sea, cloud, and also season.

Earth and Sun

The most repeated word is 'earth' and followed by the word 'sun'. They are closely related. Considering that the sun comes up from the edge of earth in the morning, it returns to the edge of earth in the evening. Earth, from which good things come for the living creatures on it. Earth, to which all creatures finally go.

That is why Wordsworth uses the word 'earth' five times in the poem. While sun associated with energy. Sun transfers energy toward all of living things on the earth, but sun could be a destroyer as well, burning everything which tries to get closer to it. Sun controls the time. When the sun rises, it shows the morning comes to us. And when the sun sets, it shows evening, the day will change into the night. Sun has an important role in human's life and also to all of creatures on the world.

Flower

Another repeated word is 'flower' that is found in lines 49, 179, and 203. The writer already realizes why Wordsworth uses this word more than one in the poem. Wordsworth wants to remind the reader that nature is very close to human being. And the word 'flower' here is the representation of nature. Wherever people go, they could find flower around them. Flower says about peace, solemn, and also love. There is no something 'bad' related to flower, even *rafflesia*. People still could see the beautiful of it. There are so many kinds of flower, and each region has their typical flower. The writer also finds the word 'Rose' in the poem, the most popular flower on the world.

And lovely is the Rose (11)

It is true that the rose is lovely, beautiful, charming, etc. According to Morrison in his article *Rose Colors and Their "Meanings"*, he says that the red-rose says the true and romantic love, beauty, courage and respect, even courage and passion. The yellow-rose says joy, gladness, friendship, delight and jealousy. And the white-rose says purity, innocence, silence, secrecy, reverence, humility, youthfulness and heavenly. It indicates man's relationship toward others. On the

other hand, the rose's thorn is so hurtful. When people don't treat the Rose nicely and properly, they will get hurt with its thorn. It shows that even the Rose has a beautiful appearance; people have to be careful with it. It is also one of nature's characters. When people treat the nature nicely, they will get advantages from it. On the other hand, when people do not treat it nicely, they will be damaged by nature. As Paul Scott Mowrer says,

There is nothing like walking to get the feel of a country. A fine landscape is a like a piece of music; it must be taken at the right tempo. Even a bicycle goes too fast (Scott online).

Wordsworth hopes man always becomes a part of the earth, seeks a closer harmony with nature, preserves biodiversity and the delicate ecological balances of the planet, not just as a matter of survival, but as a matter of personal fulfillment.

If we do not permit the Earth to produce beauty and joy, it will in the end not produce food either (Woodkrutch online).

Water

The other words that attract the writer are the words stream, water, cataracts, sea, fountain, and also brook. All of these words actually come from one thing. It is water. The stream, cataracts, sea, fountain, and also brook are the representation of water. All of them are other forms of water. Again, Wordsworth tries to persuade his reader become closer to nature by giving several advantages of nature. People already know that water is very essential to support their life.

Even the body, 70% of it contains of water. Water is energy. Water gives freshness. In short, water is the source of energy.

In this poem, Wordsworth takes every aspects of nature and beautifies it. He brings out the hidden, true beauty of life and shows it to all those who read it.

Waters on a starry night

Are beautiful and fair; (14-15)

Here, he uses 'starry night' to show the glorious and the powerful of nature. He tries to build a sense of awe with the word 'night' and make it beautiful with the word 'starry' that are often associated with nature.

Sky

One word that is shown implicitly in the poem is 'sky'. This word is removed with a group of words that is associated with it. These words are rainbow, moon, star, sun, and cloud.

The Rainbow comes and goes, (10)

The Moon doth with delight (12)

Waters on a starry night (14)

The sunshine is a glorious birth; (16)

The Clouds that gather round the setting sun (197)

Wordsworth wants to show the sky's power. When people look at the night sky, s/he will feel of awe and wonder at the overwhelming beauty and power of the universe. But Wordsworth does not want to make the image of the sky become scary. His way to avoid it is by using those kinds of words that have beautiful senses. He wants to unite people with universe, oneness. The use of these

elements of nature (earth and sun, water, flower, and sky) symbolizes a certain belief; showing the power of nature and universe.

Another thing that requires a closer look is the third stanza of the poem.

To me alone there came a thought of grief:
 A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
 And I again am strong:
 The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;
 No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;
 I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng,
 The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep, (22-28)

Rather than a feeling of grief, Wordsworth experiences 'a thought of grief'. He chooses the word 'thought' (also shown in the last line of the poem—"Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears." (204)) means that human's grief is caused by his/her own thought.

The rhymes of "grief/relief" and "strong/wrong" separate Wordsworth's emotion into distinct opposites, heightening the shift from grief to strength. The rapid shift of grief and relief that is caused by "a timely utterance" leads the writer to conclude that rather than true "relief", Wordsworth is forcing himself to ignore and sublimate his emotions through a meditation of nature and "timely utterance" becomes the mysterious one.

The "cataracts" drown out his grief. He says that he hear the "Echoes". What "Echoes" does he hear? At first, the writer assumes they must be the sound of the cataracts, but the poet listens to the echoes only after his emphatic statement

that he will no longer “the season wrong”. Perhaps, then, the echoes are of his own words, shouted to quell his heart. The feeling that Wordsworth here sublimates rather than cures his grief increases with the image of “the fields of sleep”. Rather than confronting his emotions, he forces them back down, drowns them out with his own and nature’s noises, and covers them with sleep. The return of Wordsworth’s grief in the next stanza confirms that the ‘relief’ from the ‘timely utterance’ was ineffectual.

Whither is fled the visionary gleam?

Where is it now, the glory and the dream? (57-58)

In addition, the poem is naturally spoken monologues and written in a lilting. Further, Wordsworth doesn’t explore single idea from start to finish, the Ode jumps from idea to idea. The stanzas are not constructed nicely as the story’s plot.

It might be the best way for the writer to paraphrase the poem firstly and re-arranged the stanzas into the proper one. The new construction of the poem that the writer has done is: stanza I-II-V-X-III-IX-VI-VII-IV-VIII-XI

Wordsworth tries to memorize his childhood at the first and the second stanza. It is continue with his philosophical mind that human life is merely “a sleep and a forgetting”-that human beings dwell in a purer, more glorious realm before they enter the earth. The fifth, tenth, third, and ninth stanza of the poem tell his philosophical thought when he was a child. Then, the following stanzas (VI-VII-IV-VIII) bring him back to present time. He realizes that everything has changed. And finally, what he can do is enjoying the nature, as presented in the last stanza.

Wordsworth proposes the idea that man should seek a closer harmony with nature, preserves biodiversity and the delicate ecological balances of the planet, not just a matter of survival, but as a matter of personal fulfillment with his childhood memory in which he found the beauty of nature when time seems endless, everything is new, and everything is amazing. Then, by bringing the reader into his childhood memory with all the beauty of nature, he wishes the glory came back to the earth because he feels that a glory has passed away from the earth.

The things which I have seen I now can see no more (9).

That there hath past away a glory from the earth (18).

He persuades the reader to come into his idea that nature was the most powerful thing that could teach people about life and how to fulfill one's life with happiness and wealth. Nature holds the answer to a simple, plentiful, happy, and healthy life. By proposing the words such as rose, bird, flower, and grass, he tries to introduce the beauty of nature toward the reader. While the words such as stream, cataracts, winds, and weather show the power of creative energy. All of these are manifestations of nature's energy.

Wordsworth's aim in writing this poem is emphasized in the last stanza that bears the traces of his desire to get the oneness with nature.

I love the Brooks which down their channels fret,
 Even more than when I tripped lightly as they;
 The innocent brightness of a new-born day
 Is lovely yet;
 The Clouds that gather round the setting sun

Do take a sober colouring from an eye
 That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;
 Another race hath been, and other palms are won (193-200).

Like his earlier suspicious protestations, the poet again claims to appreciate "even more" the nature with which he was one as a child. The words "lovely" and "yet" recall the second stanza in which the Rose is lovely; yet "there hath past away a glory from the earth" (18).

B.2. The Significance of Nature

It is widely known that Wordsworth is the Priest of Nature. Almost all of his poems state the beauty of nature. Maxos calls Wordsworth's poetic theory as religion of nature.

The poet's aim is to reach the complete intimation of the reality that lies hidden under the surface of things thanks to nature's intellectual benefits... (Maxos online).

The song of thanks and praise; (141)

Nature in Wordsworth's *Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood* is already described previously. The writer considers it will be an interesting one to relate the poem to one of philosophical ideas, Pantheism.

He says in the first stanza of the poem that "earth, and every common sight appared in celestial light". It means that everything comes in form of "celestial light", the light of heaven. They come from heaven and reflect the heaven's

nuance. That all of common sights are natures appear with “Soul” in it that brings the light of heaven.

The Soul that rises with us, our life’s Star, (60)

The light is so bright till Wordsworth says it becomes the “Star” of human life. “The Soul” comes within human being at his/her birth and it becomes the Guide (“Star”). Capitalized letter of ‘S’ either in the word “Soul” or “Star” shows that it has deep meaning, something special beyond the words. Related to pantheism that divinity infuses the world, the skies, the seas, the rocks, the trees, the animals, and man. On other word, all of living and non living things are the manifestation of God, it could be referred to the term ‘God’, considering that the “Soul” is human’s life’s “Star”. It means that the “Soul” gives guidance to human being.

A timely utterance gave that thought relief,

And I again am strong: (23-24)

“A timely utterance” here is the manifestation of the “Soul” that infuses his thought and gives him strength. The “cataracts”, the “Echoes”, and the “Winds” makes Wordsworth strong. The power controls his thought. That is god who controls all of it. God manifest in nature, all is nature, and nature is god.

Hath had elsewhere its setting,

And cometh from afar:

And not in utter nakedness,

But trailing clouds of glory do we come

From God, who is our home:

Pantheism does not believe in separate spirits or survival of the “Soul” after death. The word “setting” here includes time and place. In short, wherever

and whenever it is, the Soul is united in human beings and still becomes their guide. These lines give evidences that the "Soul" is the representation of God that gives guidance to human being.

Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing; (152-153)

The "fountain" is metaphor to a master, someone who teaches, gives knowledge and guides people.

In this ode, Wordsworth many times addresses the child as though he were a mighty prophet of a lost truth; the changing of the world-Wordsworth is feeling detached from Nature where he communes with Nature only in thought.

Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind, --
Mighty Prophet! Seer blest! (111-115)

Thou Child of Joy, (34)

Ye blessed Creatures,...(37)

It is one of Wordsworth's ways to emphasize that he had lost something which is happened in his childhood. It inverts the traditional child/adult relationship. Wordsworth saw the child as being purer than the adult, more in tune with the spiritual side of Nature, because he had not yet been "spoilt" by the defiling inevitability of growing up to adulthood in an impure world. In other words, adults can learn a lot from children.

Wordsworth's *Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood* makes explicit Wordsworth's belief that life on earth is a dim shadow of an earlier, purer existence, dimly recalled in childhood and then forgotten in the process of growing up. Child, the first stage of human development still retain some memory of heaven (the glories realm before s/he enter the earth), and s/he has visionary power to the earth—but as the baby passes through boyhood and young adulthood and into manhood s/he has lost his/her visionary power.

Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy (34-35).

For children, time seems endless, everything is new and everything is amazing. And it is possible for them that everything is god.

Most children...believe that god is all around, in the sky, in flowers, and in people too (Heller 20).

In the poem, he finally makes a connection with the "spirit" in nature and himself by witnessing the joy of a "shepherd boy". The "shepherd boy" here is children in whom the happiness still in touch with them.

Shades of the prison-house begin to close

Upon the growing boy

But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,

He sees it in his joy; (68-71)

In these lines, Wordsworth uses a prison as a metaphor to convey his ideas concerning the immortality of the soul and our earthly existence. The Boy's soul is eternal, but, once he is born, his soul is trapped in "the prison-house" of this earthly existence or of his physical body. The "shades," suggesting a lack of light, "begin to close / Upon the growing Boy." As the Boy grows, the "light" of his soul

seems to fade away. However, because the Boy is still young, he "beholds the light, and whence it flows." In other words, the Boy still has some awareness of his eternal soul, even though he has entered the prison of earthly existence. In this passage, Wordsworth suggests that the Boy's "joy" is what allows him to see "the light" (the soul) and "whence [the light] flows."

In these lines, Wordsworth also describes his belief in pantheism, the belief that God's presence moves through all things, including nature and human beings. In "Intimations of Immortality," Wordsworth struggles to recapture the sense of God's presence that he used to enjoy when he was younger. Now that he is older, though, Wordsworth feels disconnected with God, even though he is surrounded by nature.

The philosophy of Pantheism believes that everything is God or that the universe and nature are divine (Harrison online). It means that everything which exists in this world has power either to control the others or originated itself out of nothing. Human beings are potential to have this power as well.

The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;
I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng,
The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep,

And all the earth is gay; (25-29)

As the writer has described previously, in this poem Wordsworth uses almost all of the particular elements of nature. Those elements bring the reader closer to the nature itself. Uniquely, he has made it into certain classifications;

sky, earth, and water. These three elements of nature have their own roles toward the ecological balances.

Wordsworth uses the words “Rainbow”, “Moon”, “Star”, “Sun”, and “Cometh” is to bring the readers to get closer to the sky. Sky is an element of nature which is closely related to the term Pantheism. Sky creates an image of awe and makes people wonder the overwhelming beauty and power of the universe. While the use of the word “mountains”, “Winds”, and “sea” brings the readers to feel a sense of the sacred, just like the feeling of being in a vast mosque.

Pantheism focuses not simply on criticizing transcendental beliefs and religions, but stresses the positive aspects of life and nature – the profound aesthetic and emotional responses that most people feel towards nature and the night sky (Harrison online).

The “Winds” brings the truth that set us free, brings people to the happiness and feels the freedom. The winds’ exhilarating updrafts lift people to new spiritual heights.

I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng,
The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
And all the earth is gay;
Land and sea (27-30)

Quoting what William Blake has said about mountains,

Great things are done when men and mountains meet (Blake online).

By bringing the reader into the sense of awe and wonder at the overwhelming beauty and power of the universe, Wordsworth has succeeded to build up the reader's main frame into pantheistic belief.

My heart is at your festival (40)

The body is natural and is sacred like every other part of nature.

Pantheist beliefs are above all statements of an emotional response of reverence and belonging to Nature and the wider Universe in all their power, beauty and mystery (Harrison online).

Fundamentally, he identified a spiritual element to Nature and presents it as an entity above its material existence. He voices a wider interpretation of the notion of God, suggesting He is manifested in Nature. Nature becomes Wordsworth's faith, and he conveys this sentiment by ascribing terms traditionally associated with formal Christianity, 'child/ shepherd boy/ blessing / joy / the Heaven / thou / art / soul /.' These words are the icons of the poem that invite the reader to associate the poem with certain religion; Christian. His use of archaic language with religious connotations also conveys the timelessness of Nature, 'Ye.' He applies the conventions of prayer and hymnal worship to his praise and thanks of Nature. It is man's growing awareness of an inner, religious response to Nature that interested Wordsworth, and he describes a process during his childhood through which the uncomplicated source of joy provided by the physical aspects of Nature was subtly replaced with a spiritual response and appreciation for its influence in his development. His thoughts, emotions, and personal morality have been shaped by valuable experiences of the natural environment, both joyful and unsettling, 'beauty and fear. '

Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet a master light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing; (150-153)
This establishes Nature as his mentor, and Wordsworth heightens its role,
personifying it as a mother figure,
Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
And, even with something of a Mother's mind,
And no unworthy aim,
The homely Nurse doth all she can (78-81).

Nature became a surrogate guardian, or nurse, nurturing, supporting, and sustaining him in his orphaned state, foster'd, with all the associations of protection and guidance. Wordsworth acknowledges the extent of Nature's guardianship, emphasizing the relationship as constant through reference to the contrasting seasons as well as day and night (Beal online).

Its omnipresence, 'ceaseless,' is symbolized by the continuous background sound from the River Derwent. Wordsworth also personifies Nature as a thinking, active being, 'and seems half conscious of the joy it gives.' There is an increased sense of life forces at work within Nature, and a complex connection between humanity and the non-human universe. Wordsworth's use of the passive tense conveys the power of Nature in determining his fate, 'I was transplanted.'

Wordsworth's *Praise of Nature* is clearly shown in the ninth stanza of this ode.

Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears (201-204).

These closing lines of Wordsworth's *Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood* show and also emphasize his idea that human should seek a closer harmony with nature, preserve biodiversity and delicate ecological balances of the planet, not just as a matter of survival, but as a matter of personal fulfillment.