

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

**Childhood Reminiscences in William Wordsworth's and Dylan
Thomas's Poetry: A comparative Study**

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This thesis entitled "Childhood Reminiscences in William Wordsworth's and Dylan Thomas's Poetry: A Comparative Study" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Gajendra Aryal, has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

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Abstract

This dissertation makes clear the attitude of William Wordsworth and Dylan Thomas in the treatment of their childhood focusing on some of the poems of both poets. The main objective of this study is to show how Wordsworth and Thomas look back at their childhood in their poetry. Beautiful and familiar landscapes, incidents and experiences become the object around which their nostalgic feelings evolve. Wordsworth and Thomas idealize their past experiences in their poems through literary reminiscences. The charming and glorious days of childhood are recalled and contrasted with darker and sinister world of the adult. But attitude in the treatment of childhood is different in those two poets. Wordsworth is not so much pessimistic because he has not yet been disillusioned so he reconciles the loss of childhood splendor with philosophical vision but Dylan Thomas does not see any possibility of compensating childhood vision in adult life. His main focus is not on the pain of knowledge but on the bliss of innocence.

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I: Childhood Reminiscences and other Issues in the Poetry of William Wordsworth and Dylan Thomas: An Introduction

William Wordsworth (1770-1850) and Dylan Thomas (1914-1953) are the creative genius of 18th and 20th century respectively. Though they do not belong to the same era, they have written many fine poems on the same theme childhood. The theme of childhood reminiscences is more powerfully and beautifully expressed in their poems. They have written their poetry on various subjects matter but their primary concern is to deal with their emotional life related with childhood experiences. Extreme dependence on the experiences of childhood and the desire to recapture it, is a major characteristics of their poems. They used their poems to define their private passion and attitude rather than to respond to public events. For them, some object or event in the present triggers a sudden renewal of feelings they have experienced in childhood days, and exhibits a sharp discrepancy between what they were then and they are now. They recollected and interpreted that very feeling as illuminating the meaning of life and experience. The past that Wordsworth and Thomas recalls is one of the emotional turmoil this is now ordered with the tranquility of the creative mind. They both have certain attachment with nature, which is the means to help them to recall their past experiences.

During the romantic period creative artist immensely emphasized imagination, emotion and creativity of their individuality. The romantic artists expressed the independence of the individual, the assertion of the self against creed and authority. In the same way, the creative genius Wordsworth and Thomas, in their art transport us to the land of heart's desire, where the stubborn facts of life are modified, fate falls away and men are as gods. They favored

innovation as against traditionalism in the materials, forms and style of literature. They ventured upon the new territory of subject matter, eschewed the critical canons as received and devised for themselves principles. They put themselves into their art and expressed their personality, their longings and hopes. With these poets, the relation of the poem to the poet became more important than its relation with the reader. Reminiscences or memories of the past experiences became highly important subject matter for their poetry.

Despite many similarities in writing the poem on the same theme, childhood reminiscences, there are also the differences between them in the way of dealing with their subject matters. Indeed childhood is very important and fascinating for them but experienced of childhood differ from one to another and it depends upon their attitude towards their childhood. William Wordsworth in his poems, laments over the loss of childhood spontaneity and vigor, but he finds consolation with philosophical vision, that he gains with the maturity, where as Dylan Thomas recalls his joyous childhood experiences in his poems to contrast childhood with the world of adulthood and to project his perspective toward childhood He does not see any possibility of compensating childhood vision in adult life.

William Wordsworth as a Poet

William Wordsworth was born on April 7, 1770, in Cockermouth, Cumbria, England. Wordsworth attended Hawkshead Grammar School, where his love of poetry was firmly established and, it is believed, he made his first attempts at verse. While he was at Hawkshead, it is believed, he made his first attempts at verse. After Hawkshead, Wordsworth studied at St. John's College in Cambridge and before his final semester, he set out on a walking tour of Europe,

an experience that influenced both his poetry and his political sensibilities. While touring Europe, Wordsworth came into contact with the French revolution. This experience as well as a subsequent period of living in France, brought about Wordsworth's interest and sympathy for the life, troubles and speech of the common man. These issues proved to be of the utmost importance to Wordsworth's work. Wordsworth's earliest poetry was published in 1793 in the collection *An Evening Walk and Descriptive Sketches*.

Equally important in the poetic life of Wordsworth was his 1795 meeting with the poet, Samuel Taylor Coleridge. It was with Coleridge that Wordsworth published the famous *Lyrical ballads* in 1798. While the poems themselves are some of the most influential in Western literature, it is the preface to the second edition that remains one of the most important testaments to a poet's views on both his craft and his place in the world. In the preface Wordsworth writes on the need for "common speech" within poems and argues against the hierarchy of the period which valued epic poetry above the lyric.

Wordsworth wrote mostly in blank verse and mostly about the spirituality of nature and the wonders of human imagination that is related to the childhood experiences. Wordsworth considers the platonic notion that humans forget all their knowledge at birth and spend the remainder of their lives recollecting rather than learning. In, most of the poems of Wordsworth he celebrates the child, who enjoys an ecstatic communion with nature, and hopes that in adulthood people can eventually recover this ecstasy by heeding intuition. The old man could only get consolation and spirit to live from the inspiration revived from those of childhood throughout life.

In most of his poems, Wordsworth gives his most complete account of the balance sheet of maturity. In his mature years, the splendid vision of childhood had changed into the light of common day and was not lost. The sheer animal delight in the freshness and beauty of natural object changed into the passionate love like a young man's passion for his beloved and in the last stage he experiences the spiritual and human significance of nature.

Regarding the subject matter and the poetic diction, Wordsworth focuses on the rustic and humble people as his subject matter because in that condition, the essential passions of human hearts find a better soil in which they can attain maturity. He projects the idea that humble rustic people are always under the direct influence of nature. Rousseau's idea of essential dignity of peasants is transformed into Wordsworth's idea of poetic subject matter. Wordsworth does not distinguish the language of poetry from the language of prose. Wordsworth's *'Lyrical Ballads'*, especially the 'Preface to the Lyrical Ballads' is the landmark which completed the funeral to the neo-classical pompous, stylized, and artificially sophisticated use of language in literary creation.

Wordsworth's view on poetry is very revolutionary. He has even defined poetry as "a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings that takes its origin from the emotion recollected in tranquility". (qtd. from Adams 436). According to Wordsworth poetry is not the mechanical production of the preplanned subject matter and highly embellished idea. Poetry should be based on the feelings and emotions of a fertile and highly comprehensive soul that is creative process not a mechanical formation. He further says that the essence of poetry is to express the reality of human heart and thus to reveal the truth of nature.

William Wordsworth has written many fine poems on various subject matters but most of his poems are related with his childhood days and experiences. What he experienced in the childhood days became the better poems later. In his childhood Wordsworth regarded natural objects, the streams, the hills, the flowers, even the winds, as his companion and with his nature belief that all nature is the reflection of the living god, it was inevitable that his poetry should thrill with the sense of spirit that rolls through all things.

His poetry of later years like his prose, becomes dull and unimaginative; and he misses the flashes of insight, the tender memories of childhood, and the recurrence of noble lines-each one a poem that constitutes the surprise and the delight of reading Wordsworth.

Dylan Thomas as a Poet

Dylan Thomas was born on October 27, 1914 in Wales and died on November 9, 1953 in New York. He is widely regarded as one of the Twentieth century's most influential lyrical poets and possibly amongst the finest of all times. From the very beginning of his childhood, he was very much devotee to the art of poetry. He spent his childhood in south western Wales. He was fond of reading from his childhood. Due to frequent illness he spent many months in bed, which gave him time for reading. He was sent to the Swansea Grammar School at the age of eleven, and by his early teens had chosen his vocation: he was to be a poet. Academically, he was not a success. He did badly at school, since he was always intellectually lazy with regard to any subject that did not directly concern him.

His father, David Thomas an English literature teacher at Swansea Grammar School, was himself a lover of poetry. Dylan spent much of his time in his father's study, which was particularly rich on its collection of English poetry. He did not like to study much except English, but he had been reading Shakespeare from the age of four. His father would teach him about Shakespeare at that time.

Thomas practical knowledge of English poetry was enormous. He had begun writing poems at a very early age. In his early age, he revealed unusual power in the use of poetic diction and imagery. Gradually, Thomas's eyes were now turned towards London. He had by the time, written some of the poems that were to be included in *18 poems* (1934) and it announced a strikingly new and individual voice in English poetry. This original style was further developed in *twenty-five poems* (1936) and *The Map of Love* (1936). The poetry written up to 1939 is concerned with introspective, obsessive, sexual, and religious currents of feeling.

The poems collected in *Death and Entrances* (1946) show a greater lucidity and confirm Thomas as a religious poet. This book shows an advance in sympathy and understanding due, in part, to the impact of World War II and to the deep harmony between the poet and his Welsh environment. He often adopts a bardic tone and is a true romantic in claiming a high, almost priest like function for the poet.

Thomas published his *collected poems* in 1952, which exhibited the deeper insight and superb craftsmanship of a major twentieth century English poet. For Thomas, poetry was a means of self-definition and of self discovery. His major subject was his own emotional life; he used his poems to define his private

passion and attitudes rather than to respond to public events. He also believed that his poems about his own emotions described struggles that reader would recognize as their own. In most of his poems, Thomas tends to turn for the central themes for his poetry a vision of his Welsh childhood, a transformation of money into vision, a vision of lost paradise regained. The important features like recaptured childish-magical - landscape, semi-fairy-tale, semi- ode-kind, long poems of formal celebration can be found in the poems.

His poetry is usually divided into three stages. In the first stage, his poems are difficult and often obscure, focusing on the cyclic theme of birth and death. The poems written in the second phase, during Second World War take on a more human and personalized dimension. In his last period, he produced longer narrative pomes, using simple imagery and fluid lines.

In the way, the major concern of the Dylan Thomas is written about the reminiscences of childhood. He has created many fine poems on this subject. In many of his poems, Thomas descends imaginatively into the quest of childhood state of innocence and grace where all things were spotless, pure and glorious and contrasts it with the world of adulthood. Indeed, Thomas's attitude toward childhood is idealized. Thomas glorifies his childhood in Wales. He explores his lost past through such literary reminiscences. Thomas's poems also state the adult human awareness. He is very much aware of the flow of time and mortality of individual life. Still, Thomas is able to cherish his childhood in Wales.

Review of Literature

William Wordsworth is one of the exponents of romanticism. He introduced completely new approach to the writing of English poetry.

Wordsworth abandoned all his romantic philosophy about the nature, the child, the society, and imagination.

Since the very beginning of Wordsworth's career, many critics have studied the poetry of Wordsworth from the different perspectives. In response to his influence in English literature, David Daiches expresses his opinion that Wordsworth has become the source of inspiration during his life time, and after his life to his successors and followers. He says, "No earlier English poet had held such a view, nor, in spite of Wordsworth undoubted influences on later poetry, has any subsequent English poet held it in its purity. Wordsworth is thus unique in the history of English poetry (815).

Regarding Wordsworth's method of composing poem F.W. Bateson argues in the following manner:

Wordsworth always composed orally. Normally he composed aloud. There is some evidence that his voice rose and fell in the process of composition, as though he was reciting the poem before and imaginary audience. Only when the poem had been completed, unless it was an exceptionally long one, was it put into writing often it was not Wordsworth himself but his sister who actually wrote down the poem. (192)

His subject matters are about the incidents and situation from common and rustic lives. In this response, E. Albert argues in the following way:

Regarding subject, Wordsworth declares his preference for "incidents and situations from common life" to obtain such situation, "humble and rustic life was generally chosen, because in that condition the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity." Over these incidents Wordsworth proposes to throw "a certain colouring of the imagination whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect". (295)

John Stuart Mill analyses the poetry of Wordsworth in the following words:

In Wordsworth, the poetry is almost always the mere setting of a thought, the thought may be more valuable than the setting, or it may be less valuable, but there can be no question as to which was first in my mind: what he is impressed with and, what he is anxious to impress, is some proposition, more or less distinctly conceived, some truth or some thing which the dreams such. He lets the thought dwell in his mind till it excites, as is the nature of thought, other thoughts, and also such feelings as the measure of his sensibility is adequate to supply. (15)

Here, Mill finds that Wordsworth's poetry is the poetry of thought coloured by emotions. He gets certain feelings or emotion from the external world and lets it dwell in his mind until it gets excited. The excited emotion becomes the sensibility which is the poetry of Wordsworth.

On the other hand, Dylan Thomas is widely, regarded as one of the twentieth century's most influential poet. He wrote poems in the third, fourth and

fifth decades of the twentieth century. From that time to the present, many interpretations have been made on his works. History books are covered with his biography and his works. Dylan Thomas has written many poems on different subject matters but his primary concern is to deal with his emotional life related with childhood reminiscences. In response to the Dylan Thomas and his poems, E. Albert, describes Thomas as the originator of neo-romantic poetry and his poems as splendidly colorful and musical, He argues:

Dylan Thomas may be described as the originator of neo romantic poetry in forties and the enemy of intellectualism in verse. He was a true Celt, deeply passionate, and with a wonderful sense of what uncontrolled appreciation of the magic of language, especially in his earlier poems. The drew upon the human body, sex, and the old testament for much of his imagery and complex word play, and his verse was splendidly colourful and musical .(583)

Assembling the different themes of Thomas's poetry, David Daiches argues:

Thomas first appeared to readers new trained to regard Eliot's dry gentlemanliness as the approved poetic stance, to be a prophet of wild new romanticism, challenging the cerebral order liners of the fashionable poetry of the time his breathless and dying imagery with its skulls, maggots, hangmen wombs, ghosts and thighs, his mingling of Biblical and Freudian imagery, of the elemental world of nature in the raw with the feverish internal world of human desires, human secrets, human longing and regrets, his compound adjectives ("sea-sucked.", "man-melted", "field tongued", "an-iron", "alter wise")- all these suggested a great liberating verbal energy

with echoes of such earliest romantic extravagant as Beddoes.

(1143)

Childhood experience is the major source of the creative expression for Dylan Thomas. In many of his poems, Dylan Thomas recaptures the lost past through imagination and celebrates it. John Ackerman Says, "Extreme dependence on the experience of childhood and the desire to recreate it is major characteristic of both Anglo-welsh poetry and prose. In such poem is *Fern Hill* and *Poem in October*, this theme finds perhaps, in our own day, its most intense and beautiful expression (11).

Some critics have attempted to associate Dylan Thomas with the surrealist movement. One of them is David Holbrook who regards Thomas's Poems on nonsensical verbal batter. He argues:

Poetry has its logic: and good poetry must first be good prose-
Dylan Thomas and writers such as Edit Sitwall and Stephen
Spender have achieved a method of defying there requirement in
order to delude the reader into believing that he has before him
some new form of poetry and that it would be stupid for him not to
see that it is poetry. This is sometimes concealed by a great, deal of
nonsensical surrealist theory about the 'autonomy of the symbol'
and so forth. (90-91)

Holbrook points out that Thomas's poems are not good kinds of poems since they cannot be changed into prose and they are nonsensical. But this charge against him is groundless and superficial because understanding of his poems in depth does not lead the readers toward such blame.

In this way, different literary critics have viewed William Wordsworth and Dylan Thomas from various perspectives. Some critics have admired them, some critics have refuted them. The critics show the general characteristics of the life and poetry of Wordsworth's and Dylan Thomas. But none of the above mentioned critics talked about the childhood experiences of Wordsworth and Thomas together. So, my research will be unique in the sense that it aims to analyze some of the poems of both poets and show the similarities and differences between their childhood reminiscences.

II: Reminiscences of Childhood in Poetry: A Theoretical Support

Time and tide wait for no man. Once it is lost, it never returns. Hence human beings are always under many compulsive pressures to grasp each and every moment of the time. In their endeavor to utilize time without missing its urgent importance, sometime they succeed, sometimes they can't. When human beings are not in harmony with the rushing movement of time they feel sad and disappointed. Feelings of utter pains overwhelm them at present. When they find themselves at odds with the present, they travel back to their past childhood mentally. They, then, assume nostalgic tone . In a nostalgic tone they cherish sweet memories of the past.

Indeed, one aspect of human consciousness is the awareness of time. Human feel, think and act in the time flow. Time is a constant flow that leaves changes behind as it moves forward. Constant flow of time can be the major fascination to human beings especially to the poets. The poets, through their creative power, make believable what is unbelievable. In their work they capture the fleeting moment through literary reminiscences or visions and deny the flow of time.

Reminiscence is the generic term denoting the conscious recurrence, totally or in part, of a function or an experience learned or undergone in the past. It is the most typical product of human memory. It is primarily the recollection of past events or situation. Each and every individual holds such reminiscences. Without reminiscences, all our experiences would be lost as soon as they ended and each new situation would be totally unfamiliar. Not only this without reminiscences of our past experience, we would also lose the richness that

reminiscence give to life the- pleasure of happy remembrance as well as sorrows of unhappy ones.

There are types of reminiscences, but especially reminiscences of childhood are recollected and treasured by many poets in their poems. In the time, particular incidents, objects, experience, music and more, that is rich in childhood association inspire poets to explore their lost past again. Reminiscences of childhood are recalled by many poets in their poems, but it does not mean that they all face the same experience in their childhood. Actually, childhood differs from person to person. Generally, for all of them, childhood is considered to be blissful, innocent and joyous but this may not be true to all. Even the childhood experience is same to all, they have presented it in different way in their poems. Some poets presented childhood like that of Adam in the Garden of Eden before fall. Some of them obsessively try to recapture their childhood again and regard their maturity as pain producing machine. Some poets privilege adulthood over childhood in terms of advancement of knowledge and experience. But many of them, recall childhood experiences in their poems to contrast childhood with the world of adulthood and to project their perspective toward childhood. So the purpose of the exploration of childhood differs from poet to poet and it depends upon the attitude of the poet towards their childhood.

Since long, many poets wrote poems by celebrating their childhood experiences. In the 17th century many poets showed their interest in childhood as a state of innocence and grace. Specially, Henry Vaughan, a religious poet presented a feeling of distance from the original innocence of childhood and a desire to recapture the visionary moment of that time. In his poem *The Retreat*, he says:

Happy those easy dayes' when I

Shin'd in my Angell –infancy.

Before I understood this place

Appointed for my second race.

[...]

But (ah!) my soul with too much stay

Is drunk, and staggers in the way.

Some men a forward motion love.

But I by backward steps would move.

And when this dust falls to the urn

In that state I came return. (1-4, 27-32)

Here, Voughan recalls and regrets the days of his childhood, and tells how the vision of celestial things had grown weaker with passing years. Now, such vision of his childhood days is no longer with him. So, he tries to recapture obsessively what is already lost.

In the Neo classical period, the poets gave less emphasis on the personal matter. In this period the creative artist privilege the intellect over emotion. They believed in the highly sophisticated, over stylized and artificial use of language and subject matter. Thus they preferred the urban language and the urban style, artificiality and vanity of life process as the best and only appropriate subject matter of poetry. Poetry in this period worked within relatively narrow limits. The poets of this period focus on the issue of social matter than personal, more intellect than imagination, more normal than unfamiliar. By this what can be

known that, the poets of neo-classical period did not emphasize on the childhood reminiscences rather they gave their attention to the society and its people pretentious behaviors.

The era of romanticism, this emerged as the antithesis of the over stylized, sophisticated and artificial use of language in poetry by the neo-classicists poets and raised very influential voice for the simple use of language. In this period poets' emphasis is on the expression of the reality of human heart and thus to reveal the truth of nature. The romantic artists expressed the independence of the individual, the assertion of the self against authority. The poets put themselves into their art and expressed their personality, their longings and hopes. During the romantic period, reminiscences or memories of the poet became highly important subject matter for poetry.

William Blake has written beautiful poems contemplating on the Child's and nature's impact in life. Blake privilege the childhood over the adulthood because adulthood symbolizes the restriction and corruption. For Black, the world of childhood is the world of protection and Devine care, where innocence reigns and it symbolizes the liberty. Most of his poems show the child's communion with nature. In his poems, the words express the spontaneous happiness of childhood. The words, the world of innocence is like a paradise uncorrupted by experience and being aware of the sorrows that await them when they grow up. Blake says, the world of childhood is untouched by evil and corruption, child don't have any knowledge about enemy, jealousy or greed. He expresses the natural delight in the life of every happy child in the world. In many of his poems, Blake successfully sketches the ideal world of innocent children. For him the world of children is the world of purity, joy and security. The Child's happiness is expressed beautifully in

his poems. These children have no regrets for what is gone, no fear for the future, and no knowledge of evil but perfect happiness. For example, in the poem *The Lamb* the poet celebrates the stage of childhood. Here, the poem equates the child with God. The symbols of child, lamb and Christ are assimilated each other:

Little Lamb I 'll tell thee,

Little Lamb I'll tell thee!

He is called by thy name,

For he calls himself a Lamb:

He is meek and he is mild,

He became a little child:

I a child and thou a lamb,

We are called by his name.

Little lamb God bless thee.

Little lamb God bless thee. (11-20)

In these lines, time and again Blake shows the similarity between Christ, lamb and the child. Christ is gentle and innocent as the child and the lamb are. For him the child himself is the symbol of innocence, the state of the soul, which has not yet been corrupted by the world of conventionalized pretensions called religion, culture, society and state.

D.H Lawrence, The poet and novelist has written some poems that are related with the reminiscences of his childhood. The poem entitled *piano*, is fine example of reminiscence for childhood in the poem, the speaker is overwhelmed in his adulthood by childhood memories when he hears the melody of a piano:

Safely, in the dusk, a woman is singing to me taking me

Back down the vistas of years, till I see

A child sitting under the piano, in the boom of the tingling strings

And pressing the small, poised feet of a mother who smiles as the

sings

In spite of myself, the insidious mastery of song

betrays me back, till the heart of me weeps to belong

[...]

So now it is vain for the singer to burst into clamour

With the great black piano appassionato. The glamour

Of childish days is upon me, my manhood is cast.

Down in the flood of remembrance, I weep like a child for the past.

(1-6, 9-12)

In this poem, in the evening, a woman is singing softly to the speaker by which he remembers how his mother used to play the piano while he was a small child. He returns to the days of his childhood and memory of those days comes to him vividly. As a small child he used to sit by the lap of mother where he received caressing smile and the melody of piano from his mother. Today, he has achieved mastery over the art of playing the piano but also his nostalgic past troubles him again and again, and he weeps to remember those lovely days of past.

Today, the great glamour of his childhood days revives again and again.

He is a grown up man, yet his manhood is cast down in the flood of remembrance. He weeps like a child for the past.

In the way, the reminiscences of childhood are more powerfully presented in this poem. This poem shows the poet's reminiscences through which every one can realize poet attachment to his childhood.

William Wordsworth, one of the exponents of romanticism, presented the theme of childhood reminiscences in his poetry more powerfully and beautifully. He believes that poetry is primarily the record of certain state of mind or the record of emotion recollected in tranquility. Moments of inspired perception produce emotion recollected after some time in tranquility revealed its spiritual significance.

He writes many poems on the theme of childhood reminiscences. The natural instincts and pleasures of childhood are the true standards of his poetry. The freshness and innocence of childhood is recalled in his poems. He wanders imaginatively into the quest of childhood state of innocence and grace His *Ode: Intimation of Immortality recollection of early childhood* is a fine example of 18th century meditative poetry. In this poem, the poet presents two experiences that is of childhood and of maturity. Here, the poet idealizing his childhood through literary reminiscences the poem begins thus:

There was a time when meadow, grove and streams,

The earth, and every common sight,

To me did seem

Appareled in celestial light,

The glory and the freshness of a dream

It is not now as it hath been of yore,

Turn where soe'er I may,
By night or day
The things, which I have seen, I now can see no more
The Rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the Rose,
The Moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare,
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth,
But yet I know, where're I go,
That there hath passed away a glory from the earth
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:
A timely utterance gave that thought relief, (1-23)

As the poem begins, the speaker laments at the loss of innocence of childhood stage. He says, when he was a child, the world of nature for him was lovely. But now he is experienced and matured, so the world is no lovelier. Now, he can't see what he used to see in his childhood so, here are also the two consciousnesses one is of past and another of present. He used to see glory in nature but now, that

glory is gone far away. Experience is also the age of corruption, so, he can't enjoy the world as he used to do. The nature is still same but as being an experienced man, he can't see the glory in nature.

Here, the poet meditates on the loss of the Divine original vision that the child was born with, attempts to explain the nature and causes of loss, and deals with compensating gain of philosophical vision by the grown up poet.

Dylan Thomas, a creative genius of 20th century English literature, has written many poems on the theme of childhood experiences. He is looking back at his childhood through literary reminiscences. He recalls his childhood experiences in his poems and contrasts them with the bitter reality of adulthood. Many of Thomas poems are written in and concerning his, childhood in Wales to which he became most deeply attached. His poems expressed the experiences of childhood that he had spent in his childhood days where he had good relationship with nature.

Fern Hill is the fine example of reminiscences of childhood in poetry. In the poem *Fern Hill* the poet draws upon his childhood experiences at the farm of his aunt in Wales, where he had spent his joyous summer holidays. Here, the poet views the past with nostalgia but along with this he is very much aware of the passage of time and the mortality of individual life. Thomas laments the loss of childhood joys and innocence by recreating childhood spontaneity and implying both its transience and its contrast with the poet's adult existence:

Now as I was young and easy under the apple boughs

About the lilting house and happy as the grass was green,

The night above the dingle starry,

Time let me hail and climb
 Golden in the heydays of his eyes,
 And honoured among wagons I was prince of the apple towns
 And once below a time I lordly had the trees and leaves
 Trail with daisies and barley
 Down the rivers of the windfall light
 And as I was green and carefree famous among the barns
 About the happy yard and singing as the farm was home,
 In the sun. That is young once only,
 Time let me play and be
 Golden in the mercy of his means
 And green and golden I was huntsman and herdsman, the calves
 [...]

As the sun long it was running, it was lovely, the hay
 Fields high as the house, the tunes from the chimneys, it was air
 And playing, lovely and watery
 And fire green as grass. (1-15,19-20)

The poem is about the childhood of the poet Dylan Thomas who had stayed in Fern Hill with his uncle and aunt in his early days. The poem recounts the childhood experiences in Fern Hill and also traces the development of the perspective and the experience of boy- his mental life- in the natural world. The poet says that when he was child he was leading his careless life, he did not know

problem, his wishes and ambitions were higher than the haystacks he could enjoy with nature. Time gave those things but the same has been changed. His ambition wish and pleasures have gone away. The time, now, has not grace towards him indeed. He has become the puppet in the hand of time.

Reminiscences are the aspects of human existences. Especially childhood reminiscences have attracted many creative artists who have created beautiful works of art on this subject. Indeed, childhood is very important and fascinating part of human life. But it is true that no one can stay in the heaven of childhood for ever. In course of time every thing changes and passes away. After that, only memories remain. Creative artists especially poets handle such memories beautifully and productively. And such memories adopted the shape of literary art and must be interpreted as such.

III: Childhood Reminiscences in the Poetry of William Wordsworth and Dylan Thomas: A Textual Analysis

Childhood Reminiscences in Wordsworth's Poetry

Ode: Intimation of Immortality

Ode: Intimation of immortality is one of the typical poems of William Wordsworth, which shows how he is idealizing his childhood through literary reminiscences. In this poem, the poet presents two types of consciousness that is consciousness of past and present:

There was a time when meadow grove, and stream,

The earth, and every common sight,

To me did seem

Appareled in celestial light,

The glory and the freshness of a dream.

It is not now as it hath been of yore

Turn whereso'er I may,

By night or day,

The things which I have seen I now can see no more. (1-9)

As the poem begins the speaker laments at the loss of innocence of childhood stage. He says, when he was a child, the world of nature for him was lovely. But now he is experienced and matured, so the world is no lovelier. Now, he can't see what he used to see in his childhood. He used to see glory in nature but now that glory is gone away. Experience is also the cause of corruption, so he can't enjoy

the world as he used to do. The nature is still same but being an experienced man, he can't see the glory in nature:

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:

A timely utterance gave the thought relief. (19-23)

The birds are singing the joyous songs. The natural phenomena take the usual course; they do their best to please the man kind but the speaker is in grief so he can't get relief from those natural phenomena rather he tries to seek the relief in this poem itself. In the world of nature, all the creatures are happy. But for him, glory, Vision and light have gone from the nature. He is searching for the lost innocence though he knows that can not be restored:

Thou little child, yet glorious in the might

Of heaven-born freedom on thy beings 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 they, soul shall have her earthly freight,

Heavy as frost, and deep almost al life. (122-129)

He says that the child comes up with the glory of innocence / heaven. Heaven is our home and setting of our soul so, the child remembers his heavenly glory but

as he grows up, he forgets it, and he is caught up in earthly prison. Earth offers her gift and a matured man forgets the heavenly pleasure and comfort. Child knows the heavenly glory, which a man can't know and understand. The poet remembers his childhood days and feels that he was also such at his childhood days:

Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind;
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering;
In the faith that looks through death;
In years that bring the philosophic mind. (178-187)

Towards the final section, he gives solace too. He knows the innocence, once lost cannot be regained. Therefore, he does not think it good to lament at the loss. So from the tone of remorse he comes to the tone of solace and relief himself. If he had lost innocence, at least he would not have lost himself. He has still preserved the soul that comes from heaven and in soul alone, he can take relief. This soul is comprehensive soul, which understands many more things of the humanity.

In this way, in the poem, Wordsworth celebrates the child, who enjoys an ecstatic communion with nature, and hopes that in adulthood people can

eventually recover this ecstasy by heeding intuition. The old man could only get consolation and spirit to live from the inspiration revived from those of childhood and those of nature's influence throughout life.

Tintern Abbey

In the poem *Tintern Abbey*, we can see the two consciousness of poet. The small incident in present triggers him to past experience, which shows what he was in the past and what he is at present. The poem emphasizes the passage of time:

Five years have passed, five summers, with the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain springs
With a soft inland murmur. Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
The landscape with the quite of the sky. (1-9)

The setting of the poem is the bank of Tintern abbey, five years ago with his sister. His present visit reminds him of those experiences of past. In past, nature was quite beautiful, every thing was harmonious. Now, all the scenes of past come in front of his eyes. As these things came in front of him, he forgets himself and suspends the feeling of who he is, and he becomes one with the cosmic soul. So, when he remembers, he becomes pure soul and his body is forgotten, his blood suspends and becomes one with nature. He hears the waters, sees the green scenes

and the smoke coming up from the woods. He had experienced those things five years ago too. So, he is recollecting his past experience:

Those Beauteous forms,
 Through a long absence, have not been to me
 As is a landscape to a blind man's eye;
 But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the did
 Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
 In hours of weariness, sensations Sweet,
 Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart,
 And passing even in to may pure mind
 With tranquil restoration feelings too. (23-31)

Now the poet remembers nature and says, the scene of nature has been absent for him, nature is not with him but he recollects the beautiful forms of the nature. As he recollects, he forgets the pain and weariness of the world whenever he is in town/ cities or whenever he is in crisis, he remembers his past in which he played with nature, which gives sweet sensation and unremembered pleasure. And this pleasure increases and leads him to sublime thought. The sublime thought helps him to suspend his bodily motion and he becomes the living soul which lives with the cosmic souls of nature. That soul is able to see the life of things, and see truth in nature.

In this manner, Wordsworth celebrates his past. His present visit to the same place where he used to visit in his childhood days take him back into his

past. The poet here projects his idealized attitude towards childhood though it is very difficult to protect that vision of glory with his philosophical vision of life.

Summing up, *Tintern Abbey* in much greater detail, express the naive freshness of the child's awareness gives way to the more sober vision of the man; mediated by love, the child perceptions in a strange world take on a meaning which as he grows up, finally emerges as the recognition of profound human significance in nature.

The Prelude

The prelude is in fact the first long autobiographical poem written in a drawn out process of self-exploration. The poem begins with an account of the poet's childhood in the English lake country. Wordsworth describes the influence of nature on his solitary childhood. He first gives a record of that innocent life out of which his happy poetry grew then he goes on to explore how the mind develops. He reveals a strange world and the deeper we dive into it, the stronger it becomes.

The poem basically deals with the autobiographical incidents of his childhood days and his school time. The recollection of various experiences of childhood days paves way for the growth and development of the poet's mind.

Was not ignoble. Oh! When I have hung

Above the raven's nest, by knots of grass

And half-inch Fissures in the slippery rock. (30-32)

One summer evening (led by her) found

A little boat tied to a willow tree
 With in a rocky cave, it's usual home,
 Straight I unloosed her chain, and stepping in
 Pushed from the shore. It was an out of stealth
 And troubled pleasure, nor with the voice
 Of mountain echoes did my boat more on. (57-63)

In the above lines, the poet says that, his favorite sport in his childhood days was looking for birds' nests. He tells us how he used to move about just like robbers in search of birds eggs. He further talks about his boating experiences. When the stolen boat started moving over the smooth lake there come echoing sounds, rather sounds of warning from the mountain sides. After sometimes, he found a huge and black peak rearing its head from behind the uneven range of hill. This boating incident is one of the finest illustrations of how poet's soul was fostered by nature's mystery of fears. From the very earliest days of his childhood, the poet has intimate relationship with the things of nature. It was through such communion that Wordsworth was inspired with exalted thoughts and passion and ultimately was able to recognize loftiness, grandeur even in the throbbing of the human heart.

In most of the stanzas of this poem, the poet tries to recapture and record the full and intense life lived through the senses as a child and as youth. The child is characterized by a vague understanding of the nature's moral influence for the child is indulged in more bodily pleasures, the adolescent phase is marked with dizzy ruptures; he speaks of youthful love of freedom and liberty, which he enjoyed in the woods and on the mountain paths where he did not feel fettered by

the chains of society and school work. But those pleasures soon ended naturally after the youth began to understand human sufferings. He began to make spiritual interpretation of nature as a living entity by following whose ways he could get rid of the eternal problems of human misery.

To sum up, we come to conclude that the natural instincts and pleasure of childhood are the true standards of a man's happiness in this life. All artificial pleasures soon grow tiresome. So the nature is the chief means by which man expect permanent and increasing joy.

My Heart Leaps up when I behold

This beautiful poem by William Wordsworth, projects the poet's recollected childhood experience and the whole process of growing up. The feelings and emotions attached with the original experience are also revived in a more purified form:

My heart leaps up when I behold

A rainbow in the Sky:

So was it when my life began;

So is it now I am a man:

So be it when I shall grow old,

Or let me die! (1-6)

According to him, nature is a source of calm joy. He feels the joy in nature and realizes the greatest good through the communion with nature. He says he always feels a great joy when he sees a beautiful scene of rainbow in the sky. When he was a small child his heart was filled with ecstasy to see a rainbow. Now, he is a

man and he will grow old but also he expects such joys and ecstasy from the nature otherwise he will die.

"The child is father of the man" (7). He calls the child as father of man because as long as the child remains in the state of innocence, it enjoys celestial vision. The child just comes from heaven. So the child remembers his heavenly innocence but as he grows up, he forgets it, and he is caught up in earthly prison. Earth offers her gift and a matured man forgets the heavenly pleasures and comforts. So, child is god like being innocent but man is experienced and away from heaven. So the child knows more than the man and on that sense the child is father of man. Child knows the heavenly glory which a man can't know and understand.

And I could wish my days to be

Bound each to each by natural piety (8-9)

In these lines, the poet expresses a happy mood of relaxation after consolation. He wishes the days of his life to be bound together by his love and respect for nature, nature is his god and religion. Through nature he realizes the greatest truth. So the experiences of his childhood days express the natural piety.

To A Butterfly

To A Butterfly is a typical poem of William Wordsworth referring to the period of his childhood. In this poem, the poet presents his joyous moment of his childhood with his sister.

The poem begins with the description of his activities along with sister in his childhood days:

Stay near me-do not take they flight!

A little longer stay in sight!
 Much converse do I find in thee,
 Historian of my infancy!
 Float near me; do not yet depart!
 Dead times revive in thee.
 Though bring'st, gay creature as thou art!
 A solemn image to my heart
 My father's family! (1-9)

In these lines, the poet expresses his feeling and emotion. He says, his infancy was so colourful. He, along with his sister play with the butterfly and that game used to give him pleasure and joy . But now, time has passed. In course of time, all these pleasurable moments vanish and things which used to please him is now passed away. For him all those things lost their charm, so, the poet tries to revive the past image in his art.

He says, the days which he used to play with his sister in his childhood days were really pleasant. He, along with his sister Emmeline used to chase the butterfly:

Oh! Pleasant, pleasant were the days
 The time, when in our childish plays,
 My sister Emmeline and I (10-12)

He is amazed at himself that how wonderful the days were. Now, he is overwhelmed by the activities of his childish days with his sister. They used to

play with butterfly. They together chased the butterfly here and there and used to please themselves:

A very hunter did I rush

Upon the prey;-with leaps and springs

I followed on from brake to bush;

But she, God love her! Feared to brush

The dust from off its wings (13-17)

Here, the poet celebrating the childhood days of his life. He keeps returning to the contrast between his own wildness and the gentleness of his sister. It sounds an innocent enough wildness in all conscience. The objective record of his past in his old age supplies an invaluable complement.

Childhood Reminiscences in Thomas's Poetry

Fern Hill

Fern Hill is an autobiographical poem of Dylan Thomas on the theme of childhood reminiscences. Here, the poet laments the loss of childhood joy and innocence by recreating childhood spontaneity and implying both the transience and its contrast with the poet's adult existence. In the poem the poet draws upon his childhood experiences at the farm of his uncle and aunt in Swansea, Wales, where he had spent his joyous summer holidays. The poet views the past with nostalgia but along with this he is very much aware of the passage of time and the mortality of individual life. In the poem the first three stanzas are about the Child's experience, which is full of fantasy. The last three stanzas still seem to continue with the pleasures of childhood but actually they deal with the loss of the

innocence and pleasure deriving faculty. The attempt seem to fail, and we see that the poet now realizes that the Paradise has forever gone but fortunately the present poet is able to sing about the loss and the song is a means of consolation and in fact a different form of pleasure.

The speaker remembers his childhood days which he had spent in Fern Hill where he had good relationship with nature. He was climbing the golden life at the hand of the time. He was approaching his youth from the child. He was the prince and lord among the trees, flowers, and fruits. On the one hand, he was a youth and on the other he had harmonious relationship with nature:

And as I was green and carefree, famous among the barns

About the happy yard and singing as the farm was home

In the sun that is young once only,

Time let me play and be

Golden in the mercy of his means,

And green and golden I was huntsman and herdsman, the calves

Sang to my horn, the foxes on the hills barked clear and cold,

And the Sabbath rang slowly

In the pebbles of the holy streams (10-18)

In the past, he was green and carefree. He was very famous among storehouse, every thing and everyone knew him. He was happy under the sun which becomes young once in a day. He was also young once in his life. All the creatures were friendly with him, the nature used to support him whether he was in rest or in action. He was hot like the sun and green like the plant. When he went to sleep,

the owls and birds used to take his place. During the day time, he was with nature and even he went to sleep, the natural creatures still were with him:

And then to awake, and the farm, like a wanders white

With the dew, come back, the cock on his shoulder: It was all

Shining it was Adam and Maiden

The sky gathered again

And the sun grew round that very day. (28-32)

When he woke up in the morning, this farm was filled up with dews and it looked like the happy Eden garden with Adam and Eve. The sun gradually got maturity. Like himself, the horse being too spellbound with the beauty of nature, what running to the field.

Nothing I cared, in the lamb white days, that time would take me

Up to the swallow thronged loft by the shadow of my hand,

In the moon that is always rising,

Nor that riding to sleep

I should hear him fly with the high fields

And wake to the farm forever fled from the child less land.

Oh as I was young and easy in the mercy of his means,

Time held me green and dying

Though I sang in my chains like the sea. (46-55)

When he was young, he was heading his careless life, he did not know problem, his wishes and ambitions were higher than the haystacks. He could enjoy with

nature. Time gave all these things but the same has been changed his ambition, wishes and pleasures have gone away. The time now, has not grace towards him. Indeed, he has become the puppet in the hand of time. It is the same time that made him green and it is the same time again which makes him old and die too. He was quite innocent (lamb) in his childhood days but now, the changed time has given experience and problems and will give him death also. Now, when he goes to the same farm again, he finds that it has become childless. His all desires, innocence, wishes and ambitions are gone rather experience, maturity and problems as well take the place.

Therefore, time is almighty which gives joy and sadness, youth and old age and life and death. Time has made him old from the days of childhood which itself was the gift of time. In this way, in the poem, the poet privileges childhood over adulthood, but also he knows that no one can stay in the heaven of childhood forever. He accepts the flow of time and passing away of childhood still, he cherishes his childhood in Wales Farm.

The Hunchback in the Park

The Hunchback in the park is a kind of symbolic poem by Dylan Thomas. Here, the speaker is an adult poet who depicts the pathetic life of the hunchback and at the same time recaptures his treasured childhood memories.

In the poem, the poet talks about an adult's pathetic life along with the picture of park. In the poem, the solitary hunchback enters into the park quite early with its opening and stays there seeking to enjoy the beauty on the park till its get closed. He is not at all free there. The children from the town come in the park and tease and torment the hunchback and chase him. The poem transcending

the two worlds that of hunchback and the children. Past and present consciousness of speaker can be seen there. In the past, he was child as well as tormentor but now he is a pathetic adult followed up to the dog's kennel by the children. But in imagination, he can create the perfect company of a woman; this is his imaginative and fantastic life though he has to live in the dog kennel of reality. He is imperfect but creates perfection out of his imperfection. He creates the perfect figure of woman who might be the mirror in which he could visualize the shadow of his perfection that is not crooked. But the reality begins as the park shuts the hunchback out and the boys chase him to his kennel abode.

In this poem, the park refers to freedom. The poem is written in the memory of hunchback in that very park where the poet spent many of his happiest childhood days. The poet having spent much of his childhood at the park has at this moment special childhood memories:

Eating bread from a newspaper

Drinking water from the chained cups

That the children filled with gravel

In the fountain basin where I sailed my ship

Slept at night in a dog kennel

But no body chained him up (7-12)

The Poet in these lines depicts the activities done by the hunchback and narrates his experience that when he sailed his ship, he saw the hunchback who used to eat bread from newspaper and drink from the chained cup filled with gravel. At night, the hunchback slept in kennel, but nobody had chained him, himself had chained him:

Made all day until bell time

A woman figure without fault

Straight as a young elm

Straight and tall from his crooked bones

That she might stand in the night

After the locks and chain (31-36)

The hunchback, though he himself is faulty of being hunchback makes a figure of woman quite perfectly. He himself is imperfect but the figure of woman that he makes is quite perfect this seems to be a kind of substitution of his crooked body. She has been made so beautiful as if she will stand in front of him at night after locks and chains where he lives. His unfulfilled desire of being perfect is fulfilled only in his art. He feels joy and freedom only in his art but the reality begins when the park shuts the hunchback out and the boys chase him to the dog kennel.

In this manner, the poet depicts the pathetic condition of the hunchback and the carefree activities of the boys and gives his perspectives to the boys who are free in the park. The poet recalls his memory of Cwmdonkin park. The chained cups in the fountain basin, the rockery and willow groves recaptured are still blue with sailors.

Paper and Sticks

Paper and Sticks is one of the poems of Dylan Thomas, very much enriched by childhood reminiscences. In this poem, the poet presents the fine contrast between his past and present and gives his perspectives towards idealized childhood.

The poem begins with the description that how he used to set the fire with paper sticks, shovel and match. The moment of such incident of childhood days used to excite him but now, the poet is adult and the same situation has lost its charm and the very moment is not exciting for him:

Paper and sticks and shovel and match

Why won't the news of the old world catch

And the fire in a temper start. (1-3)

Here, the poet feels the gap between his past and present. The situation which used to excite poet has lost its charm and cannot please the poet at present. So for him that very fire is temper starts and the means of his boredom.

As the poem moves forward it is interesting to see that, in recapturing his childhood experience, he is using the technique of internal monologue and recalls the state of childhood in which every little things used to give him pleasure and joy:

Once I had a rich boy for myself

I loved his body and his navy blue wealth

And I lived in his purse and his heart

When in our bed I was tossing and turning

All I could see were his brown eyes burning

By the green of a one pound note. (4-9)

In the above lines, the poet describing his past and says that in the state of his childhood days he was a carefree, charming and attractive. For him there was lack of nothing. He was fulfilled by every thing. He says, if he got some money, he

would feel excited and that money could fulfill his needs. His eyes used to glitter just after getting a one pound note:

I had a handsome and well off boy

I'll share my money and we'll run for joy

With a bouncing and silver spooned kid. (13-15)

In these lines, the poet presents himself as a handsome and well off boy in his childhood days. He was well-off in the sense that his desires were limited and he used to feel happy after getting his demand. The sense of well-off shows that there was no lack of anything in his childhood days:

Sharp and shrill my silly tongue scratches

Words on the air as the fire catches

You never did and he never did. (16-18)

In these lines, the poet again projects his perspectives towards the state of his childhood with extraordinary charm. In these lines, he cherishes the memory of his childhood. Whenever the reminiscences of his childhood days triggers him at present, he cannot stop scratching, sharp and shrill sound stating that his childhood was quite unique and special from that of others.

To sum up, by idealizing his childhood, the poet tries to say that his adult reality is quite different and boring. So, with the celebration of his past experiences, the poet privileges his matured attitude towards childhood.

Being But Men

In the poem *Being But Men*, Thomas talks about the brightly coloured past. Here, Thomas recalls his childhood experiences and contrasts them with the bitter

reality of adulthood and projects his perspectives towards childhood. The poet presents his childhood as the brightly colorful and charming which was full of innocent, joys, blissful and out of chaos.

In the very beginning of this poem, the poet talks about the existence of adults. He says adults are always guided by experience and rationality and they are not free at all; cannot do anything on the basis of their free will. They are always bounded with responsibilities and anxieties and they are compelled to pass their life without any charming moment:

Being but men, we walked into the trees

Afraid, letting our syllables be soft

For fear of waking the rooks,

For fear of coming

Noiselessly in to a world of wings and cries (1-5)

In these lines, the poet presents the adult world of experienced, which is full of conscious with time. He says, being adults are being a conscious, they cannot lead carefree life, their life is full of torturous. They are compelled to hide their feeling and emotion as well as desires.

But in contrast to adults' world, the world of child is more innocent and carefree. There is no sense of time, responsibilities and anxieties. He says, the bitter reality of matured adulthood breaks the innocent and carefree life of childhood and leads adults to the prison of anxieties and responsibilities. So, to forget such a bitter reality in matured life the poet recalls his childhood experiences:

If we were children we might climb,
Catch the rooks sleeping, and break no twig,
And after the soft ascent,
Thrust out our heads above the branches
To wonder at the unfailing stars. (6-10)

In these lines, the poet recollects the activities of his childhood days. In his childhood he could climb the trees without breaking the twig and catch the rooks. It shows that he was carefree in his childhood and has no problem at all. The activities, which he had experienced in his childhood days, provide extreme pleasure to him. But in course of his maturity, he has lost all these charming and exciting things. He is no more able to create such situation again because the excitement of his childhood is already lost with the emergence of maturity.

Summing up, the poet presents the experiences of activities experienced by the same man in the stage of childhood and adulthood. According to poet, the activities of childhood days were really charming and pleasurable but such spontaneity and enthusiasm of very childhood come to an end as a person enters into the world of maturity. In course of time, vigor and splendor of childhood changes into the pain and anxieties of adult reality and joyous and harmonious world of childhood is no longer there. In this way, in the poem, Thomas projects his perspectives towards childhood which is joyous and harmonious to all and remains untouched by evil reality of maturity.

Once it was the Colour of Saying

Once it was the colour of saying is written on the celebration of his colourful past at school, at the seaside and in the park. The poem is concerned with the visionary experience associated with childhood. In this poem, the school and the park are the memory's center where Dylan Thomas spent many of his joyous childhood days.

With the very beginning of the poem, the poet presents a visionary experience that he had experienced in his childhood. A shadow image of a hill with a capsized field helps him to visualize a school and a colourful girl with white and black patches. But now, this colourful past of the poet is blurred and overturned by the time, and it is no longer charming and pleasurable for him:

Once it was the colour of saying

Soaked my table the uglier side of a hill

With a capsized field where a school sat still

And a black and white patch of girls grew playing;

The gentle seaslides of saying I must undo

That all the charmingly drowned arise to cockcrow and kill (1-6)

In these lines, the poet talks about his brightly colourful past which is charming and pleasurable but now he is adult and only the pain of maturity remain with him. So, he tries to recapture the past moment though the particular image of the past is not as clear as it used to be for him. It is like a shadow and it kills the clear vision of his charming past.

The poem further deals with the reminiscences of the lost innocence and joy of childhood. The poet tries to retreat into his childhood and presents how he had spent his childhood and how colourful it was:

When I whistled with mitching boys through a reservoir park

Where at night we stoned the cold and cuckoo

Lovers in the dirt of their leafy beds,

The shade of their trees was a word of many shades

And a lamp of lightning for the poor in the dark; (7-11)

These lines express the elegiac reminiscence of his innocent and joyous childhood. He says, in his childhood, he was so colourful that he was associated with natural phenomenon. In the night he used to be with other boys and playing with them. They used to whistled and annoyed cuckoo. For them shade of trees were words and shady of words were the colour of saying. But now, all these events are only became memories and his life indulges in to the dark.

In the last section of the poem, the poet says that, his colourful past is capsized by the shadow of time he accepts the flow of time and comes to reconciliation that the past which never comes back. So, the poet tries to revive his childhood only in his memory which still preserved the charm of childhood days.

In this way, from a study of the selected poems of William Wordsworth and Dylan Thomas, we come to conclude that reminiscence is most important factor of their poetry. They are looking back at their childhood through literary reminiscences. They recall childhood experiences in their poems and contrast them with bitter realism of adulthood and project their perspectives towards

childhood. Their poems show their dependence on the experience of childhood and their desire to recapture it. They idealize past experiences in their poems. In those poems they are basically concerned with themselves, with their individual world of physical and mental sensation which they try to express emotionally. They descend imaginatively into the quest of childhood state of innocence and grace where all things were spotless, pure and glorious and contrast it with black and sinister world of adulthood. For them time is important factor. In course of time everything changes. Time changes their golden joy of childhood into sorrow of maturity. In their poems they both deal with reminiscences of their past experiences but they have different views about the past experience in their adulthood. In the poems of Wordsworth, he laments over the loss of childhood spontaneity and vigor, but at last he finds consolation with philosophical vision that he gains with the maturity. On the other hand Thomas's poems glorify his childhood and he attempts to deny the flow of time and matured reality. He views the past with nostalgia but along with this he is very much aware of the passage of time and mortality of human life. At last he accepts the flow of time so, he can only cherish his childhood. He does not see any possibility of compensating childhood vision in adult life.

IV: Conclusion

In this research, the researcher attempts to show how William Wordsworth and Dylan Thomas look back at their childhood through literary reminiscences. They recall their childhood experiences in their poems and contrast them with the bitter reality of adulthood. They highlight the charming and glorious days of childhood and idealize them.

In the above mentioned poems, it is clear that Wordsworth and Thomas are basically concerned with themselves with their individual world of physical and mental sensation which they try to express emotionally. The foregoing analysis of poems shows the calmest and the happiest days of both poets that they had spent in their childhood is the chief part of their creative writing.

In this research work, the researcher has not been able to include all of their poems under analysis. But the poems which are under analysis clearly project their unique reminiscences. In their poems, they descend imaginatively into the quest of childhood state of innocence and grace where all things were spotless, pure and glorious and contrast it with dark and sinister world of adulthood. These poems are enriched by childhood reminiscences but they are not the poems of obsession of childhood and resistance of maturity. Rather, they are the poems of reconciliation.

It is undoubtedly true that Wordsworth and Thomas write their poems on the same theme, childhood reminiscences. Childhood is very important and fascinating for them but experiences of childhood differ from one to another and it depends upon their attitude towards their childhood.

William Wordsworth, in his poems, enjoys various objects of nature through the sense which he experienced in his childhood. The natural phenomenon used to attract him but he did not know any deeper significance of them. He loved and admired nature for its external beauty. He had not experienced any suffering. He was rather content to take delight in the sound and sights of beautiful objects of nature. But, later part of his poems shows his regret that nature no longer looks beautiful to him. He reminds himself that he has lost the vision of childhood. So, he laments over the loss of childhood spontaneity and vigor. Now, the poet is grown up, so he is thankful to the memories of childhood. The poet feels happy to think that even in manhood he can realize the spontaneity of childhood. He regrets the vision of childhood but with passing of years, he has gained maturity, so he finds consolation with the philosophical vision.

On the other hand, Dylan Thomas beautifully recreates a world of child and then contrasts it with the phase of disillusionment in the adult age. Thomas glorifies his childhood in his poems but this glorification does not mean that he tries to recapture what can never be recaptured. In his poems, he views the past with nostalgia but along with this he is very much aware of the passage of time and the mortality of individual life. At last, he accepts the flow of time and passing away of childhood. Still he cherishes his childhood and projects his perspective towards childhood though he does not see any possibility of compensating childhood vision in adult life.

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