



PASTORAL DEVICES IN DYLAN THOMAS' "FERN HILL" AND "POEM IN OCTOBER" – A CRITIQUE

N. SUMATHI

Ph.D., Research Scholar

Department of English

VISTAS (Vels University),

Chennai 600117, India

sumathinarayan@gmail.com

DR P.SURESH

Research Supervisor & Associate Professor

Department of English

VISTAS (Vels University),

Chennai 600 117, India

drsureshponnurangam@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Dylan Thomas' "Fern Hill" and "Poem in October" is laden with subjectivity and the reminiscences of childhood through pastoral mode. The pastoral settings are predominant in these poems traces the recollections of childhood in Fern hill in tranquillity. The landscape fern hill in these poems occupies the predominant position in celebrating his childhood against the harsh present. The real world crashes down on the persona and he wants to linger in those moments of youth as "the prince of apples". The persona is none other than the poet himself as he spent his youthful days in fern hill which shapes the poem "Fern Hill" and the shaping of "Poem in October" involves the occasion of the thirtieth birthday recalling the childhood birthdays that he celebrated in the fern hill. The pastoral mode is marked by satirical tone to contrast the present and the past life of the persona to lean on the contented life of the latter. To contrast them, the poet uses robust pastoral imagery and the mood of the poem switches from present to past through dreamt situation and poetic imagination. Dwelling in the nostalgic mind, the poet denies the present and craves for the past. The sequence of situations notable in his life is exaggerated through pastoral hyperbole. The dreamt happiness is created throughout the poem when the mood shifts from present to past and past to present. Pathetic fallacy and Pastoral hyperbole also shore up the contrast leading to the retreat on the memories of past to relive it or create a binary of art and nature through poetry. Retreat relives the eternal joy of the past and raises the spirit of the poet.

Keywords: Nostalgia, contemplative life, innocence , simplicity, tragic undertone, refuge and retreat, a pathetic fallacy, pastoral hyperbole, art-nature binary,

INTRODUCTION

Pastoral genre in perspective has invited criticism over centuries. The shaping of the pastoral according to the needs of the writer became characteristic of the genre throughout its history. Pastoral creates a world of bliss and tranquillity. This would rule out any form of pain or sorrow but pastoral has the power to recreate and assuage whatever is undesirable. Virgil's *The Fourth Eclogue* in the middle ages was interpreted as a prophecy of coming of Jesus Christ as a shepherd bound to the concept of pastoral and the pastoral life. Christ takes the role of the shepherd and is evident in the verses of Psalm. "Lord is my Shepherd/ I shall not want/ He makes me lie down in green pastures/ He leads me beside still waters." (Psalm 23.1-2)¹.

Renaissance Pastoral was used by writers as "a vehicle to expound their philosophies relating to nature and city, to discuss the aspects of love in terms of the usually contented life of the shepherd and to comment tangentially on politics and religion"² (Walter, 1). Pastoral based on the tone, mood, and character relies on characterizing devices like contrast, satire, art-nature binary, pathetic fallacy and pastoral hyperbole. It is difficult to separate the elements and attributes of pastoral as they are usually elided and the identification of pastoral characteristics tend to overlap on the pastoral devices. The

objective of this paper is to analyse the pastoral devices in Dylan Thomas' "Fern Hill" and "Poem in October" and conceive those poems as modern pastoral poetry.

I. NOSTALGIA AND CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

Nostalgia is a sentimental yearning for an irrecoverable past and the most distinguishing characteristic of pastoral poetry. The poet is enchanted by the past which cannot be matched by the present or the future. In "Fern Hill", "Now I was young and easy under the apple boughs", apple boughs enchants the poet and it shows the switch between present and past. The phrase "green and carefree" is connected to his youth and joyous experience he had at Fern Hill. The opening line in "Fern Hill" "About the lilting house and happy as the grass was green" sets the mood of the past recollections of his childhood. The "green" mirrors the youth and "lilting house" (lilting is an old school of Gaelic singing referring here to cheerful and happy tone) and "happy as the grass" mirrors the speaker's joy. Lerner considers nostalgia as "the basic emotion of pastoral". To Lerner, it is a longing that makes art a reality and he uses the novelist Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* to support the claim that nostalgia is "the same as saying that longing is what gives sense to living" (52)³. In "Fern Hill", the poet recollects his childhood days as "Golden in the heydays of his eyes", "green and carefree", "green and golden", "young and easy" and "heydays" refers to the carefree days of his childhood which he has lost forever. In "Poem in October", "winged birds", "fond climate", sweet singers", "spring of larks", "blooming" and "shower of all my days" convey the freedom of the youth that the poet enjoys at the farm.

In "Poem in October", "heron priested ashore" is significant of the poet meditating on the memories of childhood like the heron which stands motionless ashore and it is a satirical tone on the religious rituals done in the seashore according to Welsh tradition. "Mussel pooled" signifies that the recollections are made in the poem. "Water praying" reflects the ebb and tide of his emotional attachment to the landscape and his longing to retrieve the past memories attached to the landscape. "Call of a seagull" and "the knock of sailing boats" recalls the Swansea memories of a typical seashore area where the fishermen proceed to the call of the dawn. The phrase "that second" captures the stillness of the heron, stillness of his childhood, the stillness of the landscape and nature and that stillness is not alive now.

Much of the pastoral is an expression of reminiscing about the ideal and innocent past world. The persona usually the poet chooses reflective withdrawal of the past, regret for the loss of innocence and past and the hatred for the present in contrast with the pleasures of the past amidst nature. The setting is often a *Hortus conclusus* (in Latin meaning "enclosed garden"). The enclosed garden which the poet reflects upon in "Fern Hill" is the farm owned by his aunt, Ann Jones. In "Poem in October", the same Fern Hill (the farm) where he climbs up and spent his holidays and his present place, Laugharne in October reminds the poet of the autumn of his life and is contrasted with the wonderful summer mornings spent in Fern Hill (Swansea). Nature in the poem contrasts the pleasant childhood days with the hatred for the present by the shift in the seasons through poetic imagination. In "Poem in October", the present time is referred as winter representing the stillness of heron and the past is momentarily alive that the heron dives into the tide (The name Dylan means "sea tide" in Welsh). In "Fern Hill", the shift in the time of a day, sun and moon, the summer, spring and winter changes according to the mood of the persona, the present, and the past. When the poet refers to the bright time of the day with "sun shining", "sun born over and over" and bright time of the "starry" dingle, "simple stars" of night, the happiness and youthful days of his childhood are smelled. When he wishes to refer to the present, he employs "all the moon long", "in the moon that is always rising" to convey the unstable mind to stick on to the present and craving for the past.

The pleasant reminiscences of the past and the world of innocence is beyond reclamation as the existence of nostalgia jolts the realization in the poet of the harsh reality of the present and the imaginary past. The faint memories of the past in "Poem in October" is phrased in "dwindling harbour"

(meaning the size of the harbour is small as the poet is away from the seashore), "beyond the border" (meaning landscape and past are out of reach with the trick of time) and "over the sea wet church the size of a snail" which also symbolises his faint memories of the distant landscape. Nostalgia in pastoral sharpens the necessary contrast and comparison between the irrecoverable past and inescapable present. In *Poem in October*, the realization of the nostalgic past occurs through the "call of a seagull" and "knock of sailing boats" and the poet wakes up to the realization but the "still sleeping town" refers to the lack of the same realization in people and landscape. The realization of the present is felt when he "took the road" "over the border" and finds that the gates of the town are closed and the town is awakened. Heron is symbolic of poet himself who is meditating on the past and priested ashore now. He once had divided into the high tides of his childhood.

The realization is felt in "Fern Hill" through the line, "And then to awake" denoting the awakening of the present that he finds that the farm looks like a "wanderer" covered with dew but the poet is, in fact, a wanderer who wants to take consolation for his longing. The final awakening comes when the farm is found childless as the poet has grown up and farm being fled away from the land refers to the impact of urbanization that the farm disappeared through the line "And wake to the farm forever fled from the childless land". Marinelli states "Essentially the art of the pastoral is the art of the backward glance and Arcadia from its creation the product of wistful and melancholy longing." He also views that the escape from the present extends even into "some indistinct and redeeming future"⁴

Nostalgia leads to the expression of the longing for a simple way of life, search for the pristine innocence and serenity of remote bygone days entirely different from the complexities of the present. "All pastoral is in search of the original splendor, but the different ways in which it conceives of that splendor are the grounds of its multiple variations."⁴ (Marinelli, 11)

II. CRAVE FOR PAST

The most appealing attribute of pastoral as a literary genre is the yearning for a past. The past was the world in a state of innocence in its originality remained uncorrupted by primitive man. The primitivism extends the scope of nostalgia. The uncorrupted origin connects to the pastoral and the longing for a primitive way of life. The intense desire to take refuge in paradise age is the outcome of unrealizable yearning for a state when a man was "as free as nature first made man"⁵ (Cuddon, 743). The ideal illusory existence is aptly described as "mythical state of well-being"⁵ (Cuddon, 743). In "Poem in October", the illusory existence is expressed through the repetition of "There I could marvel my birthday" which also communicates his wish to celebrate his every birthday in Swansea.

The regret for the present is the reason for his adulthood and he is no more a child to enjoy the blissful past. It is expressed through "but the weather turned around" and repetition adds a tragic tone while craving for the past. The repetition creates preoccupation with melancholic and tragic undertone is heightened as Theocritus' pastoral *Idyll*. This tragic undertone does not weaken the pastoral mode rather it intensifies the pastoral theme. The yearning for the past is visualized as a wish to be fulfilled in the near future as:

"O may my heart's truth
Still, be sung
On this high hill in a year's turning"

The poet expresses his hope for his return to the high hill where he wants to "marvel" his birthday.

This yearning for the past makes the poet craft a sharp contrast between an unsatisfactory present and a critical scrutiny visualizing an ideal world with poetic imagination. As Cooper notes: "the contrasts

between ideal and actual are an obvious source of satire"⁶ (87). In some cases, the shortcomings of political, moral and religious in contemporary society are satirized.

Satirically in "Poem in October", the poet has contrasted rain of the present with "pale rain" and the past with "shower of all my days". The contrast of garden with "gardens of spring and summer" was "blooming in the tall tales" and "tall tales" refers to legends of his youth. The description of the past fantasizes nature in contrast with the castle-like "brown owls" and church like "the size of a snail with its horns" in the present which has grotesque images of owls, snail, and mist. The grotesque image of owls "bearing the farm away" and "the sun grew round that very day" (as the sun does not wax or wane) in "Fern Hill" conveys the shocking tone of the speaker and his non-acceptance of having left the farm.

III. CONTRAST

The system of contrasts in an integral part of the pastoral composition as the virtues of a blissful past stands in contrast to the complex, troubled and corrupt present. Kermode states that the sharp contrasts lie "between the two ways of life, the rustic and the urban" (14)⁷. The contrast is made between two worlds to point out the defects of one to show why the other is preferred. Pastoral celebrates the virtues of the "great good place" and inferior which does not escape the mind. Toliver (in Loughrey, 125) lists a number of contrasts in pastoral: "nature and society, nature and art, idyllic nature and anti-pastoral nature, and earthly nature and celestial paradise"⁸. According to Walter, the concept of nature can be seen as "honest and simple when it is opposed to a corrupt court, as violent and rough when it is opposed to divine order or refined courtly order, as offering licence when it is opposed to oppressive constraints, and as a place of lechery when it is opposed to virtue". Greg has defined the pastoral as "a constant element in the pastoral as known to literature is the recognition of a contract, implied or expressed, between pastoral life and some more complex type of civilization"⁹

IV. THE MYTH OF THE REALITY AND THE GARDEN OF EDEN

Writers of Christianised pastoral often portray the Garden of Eden as the pastoral mode. The fall of Adam is compared to the loss of innocence in the poet. The loss of innocence creates the sinful existence of first human beings, Adam and Eve being tempted by Satan to eat the forbidden fruit which is often recognized as an apple in Christian allegory. This loss of innocence led them to indulge in sex and it ruined their lives as they were forbidden from entering the Garden of Eden and prompted the perpetual desire to recover the lost Garden. In this perspective, the pastoral poetry almost epitomizes the human beings often trapped in the complexities and their desire to recover the natural pastoral of the past. The loss of nature is compared to the loss of Garden of Eden. Ecocritics have modern interpretations of the allegory of Garden of Eden as the first human beings turned against nature; they were expelled from the Garden. This expulsion is recognized in "Poem in October" as "gates of the town closed" and "it turned away from the blithe country". "Fern Hill" represents the Garden of Eden as "apple towns" can be compared to Eden. "Sleeping" in the poem refers to the sleeping of Adam after a fall from the Grace of God.

V. INNOCENCE AND SIMPLICITY

Innocence and simplicity are characteristics of childhood. "The state of free of moral wrong, "ignorant of the existence of evil and sinless in the child who is sentimental pastoral writing often replaces the shepherd as an alternative pastoral protagonist"¹⁰ (Loughrey, 21). The mode is traditionally regarded as being born in a state of natural innocence in a pastoral setting is liable to corruption when he enters the adult world in an urban setting. The journey from innocence to maturity has corrupted the innocence and quests to recover the lost innocence; the lost paradise is the pastoral concern. The yearning for childhood leads to contrast the innocence of childhood with the lost innocence in adulthood. Contrast plays the role of basic device of pastoral when comparing the past with the present. "Poem in October"

in fact starts with this journey. "Myself to set foot" is metaphorically not just going for walk but entering into the world of experience leaving behind the innocence of childhood and it may mean the poet's physical movement from Swansea to Laugharne and spiritually it may mean the "thirtieth year to heaven".

Pastoral poetry is "an elegiac lament for a lost age of innocence (Loughrey, 9). Being innocent is being without guilt and sinless. Loughrey says: "Man was most innocent when pursuing untrammelled` instinctual gratification"¹⁰(13). He further clarifies that "before the fall, the act of love was totally innocent. So in the Garden of Eden, there occurs the supreme paradox of a happy couple living in a state of married chastity" (Loughrey, 13)

Simplicity in the pastoral sense derives from the shepherd's kind of life on whom the pastoral poetry is based.

"... a shepherd reclining under a spreading beech
and meditating the rural muse, or piping as though
he would be' er grow old or engaging in a friendly
singing contest, or expressing his good or bad fortune
with a lovely mistress, or grieving over the death of a
fellow shepherd."¹¹(Abrams, 127)

Natural simplicity is the core of the life of the shepherd. The complexities of urban life magnify the attractions of a simple, rural existence. This simplicity is augmented by the happiness resulting from a carefree way of life. The simplicity of rural existence and complexities of urban existence are often contrasted to bring out the lofty and unreal ideas of an ideal pastoral setting. Urban complexities include stresses and strains with vexation and emotional turmoil. Pope states that simplicity makes a pastoral feel natural and cautions that simplicity that is spontaneous does not strain for effect, but pleases and delights. Thomas Tickell regards simplicity as an "established nature in the pastoral"¹²(in Loughrey, 54)

VI. NATURE AND SERENITY

The pastoral is purely concerned with nature and serenity. The country is pure and untainted in contrast to the city spoiled by man. Kermode considers this contrast between country and city "as the seed of the pastoral" and "the social aspect of the great Art-Nature antithesis which is the philosophical basis of pastoral literature" ¹³(37). He also characterizes nature as "the uncultivated, the pure, the untamed, uncorrupted fields and the world of Art, the civilized, the cultivated, the sphere in which men had meddled with nature"¹³(37).

It is significant in any pastoral poetry including "Fern Hill" as it focuses on fern hill as the setting in which young Dylan used to spend his vacation but this did not last long. As an adult, man is corrupted and the primary reason for this according to Dylan Thomas is sex. As the innocent world is corrupted, so is the serenity of nature. A man comes to reflect at some point in time but the loss of his innocence and serenity of nature is irrevocable. The reflection is due to the distortion of his mind when he is perplexed and dissatisfied with the complicated city life and he looks back at the glorious bygone days and tends to take refuge in it. The contrast between childhood glory and sadness of maturity, summer and winter, past and future is brought out in "Poem in October" and October is poised between summer and winter and Dylan was thirty at the time of writing this poem and his age is poised between childhood and maturity.

"And I saw in the morning so clearly a child's
Forgotten mornings when he walked with his mother
That his tears burned my cheeks and his heart moved in mine" ("Poem in October")

The classical antiquity "otium" (Smith, H, 2) is a positive ideal meaning "state of content and mental self-sufficiency"¹⁴. The poet retreats to an idealized rustic world to find leisured contentment which is contrasted with the vexatious life of the urban. This contrast inevitably exalts the attractions of the idealized retreat bathed in peace, tranquillity, and serenity that characterizes the life of pastoral. This contentment and self-sufficiency are often due to the enchantment of the idealized past. In this connection, Charles Batteux adopted that "Pastoral poetry may be defined as an imitation of rural life represented with every possible attraction."¹⁵(in Congleton, 147) in connection to nature and its attraction to the poet.

The attraction refers to aspects of rural life such as peace, tranquillity, and serenity that soothe the spirit and pleases the senses while glossing over the inconveniences of that mode of life. According to Freud, "and" is a dream's chosen connective and is used to idealise the enchantment of nature in Poem in October where the poet lists the variety of features of enchantment of nature in Fern hill and Swansea like "wonder of apples...." (symbol of awe and beauty), "twice told fields of infancy" (glorious visions of past), "true joy of the long dead child sang burning in the sun" (true joy is in the past and the child is dead long ago – loss of innocence as well as past), "parables of sunlight" (glorious past) and "legends of green chapels" (considers landscape as not only beautiful but also holy).

The dream connective "and" is also found in Fern Hill whenever the poet recalls the past to be superior to the present. The phrases like "And honoured among wagons"(wagons stop by his call), "And once below a time I lordly"(time has kept him like a lord), "And green and golden I was huntsman and herdsman" and "calves sang to my horn" (golden memories of his youth, poet takes the role of a shepherd), "And playing, lovely and watery"(lively childhood), "And fire green as grass"(vitality of youth and green memories of it), "And nightly under the simple stars"(simple stars refers to the innocence and simplicity of a child), "And honoured among foxes..."(controls nature), "And awake to the farm forever fled from the childless land"(awakening of the present). The childish fantasies are no longer possible for him. He finds that the glory and the dream have departed from the farm, with the loss of his own "green and gold".

VII. ART – NATURE BINARY

The pastoral poetry is mainly concerned with nature. Kermode notices that "the social aspect of the great Art-Nature antithesis is philosophically the basis of pastoral literature"¹⁶(30) Art is superior to Nature as Art can be manipulated to create an ideal world free or vice and taint and art makes up for the blemishes of the present natural world. The real world which is monotonous is projected against the ideal world as a backdrop for past time and place. For Dylan, this ideal world is something which he has witnessed in his childhood and something which he lasts forever "it was air" and the present life at Laugharne is a curtain hiding the ideal backdrop which he craves for.

Art's timeless portrayal of nature is portrayed through the confusions of seasons in "Poem in October". The world of fantasy meets the reality and mingles the wild confusion of seasons. Bright weather above – "spring of larks" and "summery on the hill's shoulder" – cold and rain below – "to the rain wringing wind blow cold" symbolize the escape world and the harsh, real-world respectively. This wild confusion is shattered by the phrase "In the wood faraway under me" and he refers to the woods as his own when he says "under me". The superiority of the art over nature is exemplified through this description of nature. The marvel of the timelessness of art is brought out through the repetition of "And there could I marvel my birthday" and makes the poet spend several birthdays in the distant landscape by its repeated references. Time's magic has evoked the timelessness of art in these lines:

"O may my heart's truth

Still, be sung

On this high hill in a year's turning" ("Poem in October")

The above lines convey the poet's longing and the landscape where his heart belongs to and "turning" takes him back to the past and here, the imaginative power of art challenges the powerful work of time on man.

In *Fern Hill*, "once below the time" suggests that man is subjected to time. Time is the real lord and master and if Dylan was a "prince" there it was by the allowance of time. "Time let me hail and climb" measures the youthful time of his life. "In the sun that is young once only" quickens the passing of time. "Come back" and "sky gathered again" convey the favorable time for the poet to recollect the memories of childhood. He mentions that "time allows" to express the powerful control of time in his life and he has to "follow him out of grace". Once the time held him green, young, easy and carefree and treated him with mercy but at the end, it makes him "green and dying" like a master i.e., memories are green in his mind but those memories prick his heart like death.

Time as a master has chained the slave. "Though I sang in my chains like the sea" refers to the slave who in chains mumbles and murmurs about his circumstances and he can nowhere escape from it. The sea is often associated with emotions in ebbs and tides but the waves control the ebbs and tides of emotions into the depth of the sea and cannot come out of it. Just like the sea, he is chained not to overcome the situations and rather buries in the depth of his consciousness but Art can help him to sustain his life and channelize his dreams, emotions, and longing in the form of poetry.

Marinelli comments that "Art is superior to fallen nature because it is capable of rectifying it. It is capable of taking a brazen world and rendering a golden one in return. In this sense, Art creates a new Nature; the felicity at which it aims involves transcendence"¹⁷(22). Cooper at this point says, "The shepherd world if it is used to comment on life at all, is set against the real world in an artistic contrast."¹⁸(5). Art has the power to transform an existing unhappy situation into a world of imagined happiness. The mental flight of the speaker in "Fern Hill" and "Poem in October" enable the poet to escape, momentarily from a world of torment into a world of illusory consolation. The poet in "Poem in October" has imagined that the "rainy autumn" showers him with blessings of nature on his birthday. "High tide" where the "still heron" dive expresses the height of imagination of joyous experience during his childhood. It may also mean that the heron which once was praying at the shore and wishing Dylan on his birthday has now dived into the sea to turn away from him. The illusory consolation in "Fern Hill" is that though he is controlled by situations and time, he sings in praise of his golden memories of childhood and it is possible only through the power of art.

VIII. DREAMT HAPPINESS

Any human being would like to live a life of ease without stress, promoting internal harmony, emotional stability, and mental composure. This state of internal repose creates equilibrium to achieve happiness. "A child's happiness corresponds to fantasy"¹⁹, McFarland says. The pastoral world is the product of illusion. It focuses only on the brighter side of life concealing all its sorrows. The dreamt happiness is in critical contrast with the tragic undertone. The imaginative impulse of daydreaming preoccupies the man who is stricken by the tragedy. As Poggioli recognizes "daydreaming becomes the vehicle for transition to happiness"²⁰(in Loughrey, 98).

Dreamlike atmosphere is created in "Poem in October" when the poet finds the gates closed and "town awoke". The momentary happiness of the dreamy atmosphere of the first stanza with "still sleeping town" is shattered by the harsh present reality. It is difficult to comprehend whether "sleeping town" just refers to the sleeping people or his mind's non-acceptance of the separation of his life from Swansea. In fact, "sleeping town" refers to the ignorance of his mind that the landscape is his own but

"gates closed" refers that he has left Swansea and he has no business there. The awakening from dreamt of Swansea is the realization of the "town awoke" (his realization of the town).

There is a lovely confusion of seasons and climates on the hill in "Poem in October". It is both spring and summer in the third stanza of the poem. The poet is on the hill a little away from the seashore. This confusion is caused by the subjective inability of the poet to distinguish between the hill and the seashore, reality and fantasy, near and distant, present and past, season and climate and all mingle into the lovely confusion. The dreamt happiness is shattered by the phrase "But the weather turned around" and his escape into the fantasy world of his boyhood is short-lived and he has to return to the harsh reality of the present. Symbolically, there is a "turning away" from the past to the present, from spring and summer to cold and winter and from Swansea to Laugharne and then to New York. In "Fern Hill", the shortness of happiness and youth is felt in this line "The sun that is young once only". The dreamt atmosphere sets in the phrase "As I rode to sleep". The poet has imagined that when he sleeps, the owls are bearing away the farm from him. "All the moon long" and "the moon that is always rising" makes the reader feel the poet's dreamt emotions.

IX. PASTORAL HYPERBOLE

The hyperbole is a "bold overstatement, or extravagant exaggeration of fact"²¹ (Abrams, 77) that "appeals to the imagination rather than to understanding" (Ogilvie and Albert, 117). The pastoral hyperbole is, by extension, a hyperbole in the context of the pastoral language of expression. It is used to underscore or emphasize a pastoral fact, truth or idea for effect. In "Fern Hill", the pastoral hyperbole "I was the prince of the apple towns" conveys the lordly pride of owning not only the farm but the town itself. As none can own a town but it merely conveys the height of freedom he enjoys at the farm. In "Whinnying stable", the poet compares him to the horses which are whinnying as they were once warm in a secured place but now the place has been denied for the horses. Stable cannot whine but it expresses the transferred epithet of the emotion of animate object to the inanimate object with an exaggeration.

In "Poem in October", "birds of winged trees flying my name" is a pastoral exaggeration that trees do not have wings and it may mean the branches of the trees and the birds portray "flying my name" as if the birds are wishing for his birthday. He rose like a prince climbing on a white horse. "Tears burned my cheeks" reflects the painful present scenario where the poet not only lost the landscape but also a mother. The poet feels as the child is separated from mother so from the landscape. It is typical that tears cannot burn cheeks but "burn" refers to the bitter present where the poet experiences the pangs of separation of his motherland.

X. PATHETIC FALLACY

The term "pathetic fallacy" invented by John Ruskin in 1856 in his work *Modern Painters* is "a literary trope ascribing human feelings to the inanimate world"²² (Loughrey, 26). Kermode observes that the shepherd exists in sympathy with nature that when, in his contemplative or melancholic moments, "he weeps, nature with which he lives in such sympathy weeps also"²³ (16). The speaker in pastoral poetry lives in harmony with his environment. The speaker experiences the joyous feeling when the spring rains and the summer warmth provide a lush and abundant water and warmth to stimulate growth. Nature becomes alive with it the speaker exults in the glory of growth and joys of living. In "Fern Hill", the persona had a joyous childhood in the farm in Swansea. "I was young and easy under the apple boughs", "I was green and carefree among the barns", "I was the huntsman and herdsman" and "prince of the apple towns" reveal the youthful days which he spent in the farm. "Lilting house", "happy as the grass was green" and "dingle starry" express the joyous circumstances while staying at the farm. In "Poem in October", trees become "winged" (alive), "flying my name" to express the joyous birthday of the poet. "Shower of all my days" is a pathetic fallacy referring to rain but it cannot be wholly

sustained. He finds freedom and immediacy relating to objects which he imagines ("rain wringing" and "wind blow cold" - Nature responds to the mood of the persona). "High tide" and "herons dived into it" our response to his ecstasy.

"In the sun born over and over, I ran my heedless ways" conveys the exhaustion of the summer where he runs to satisfy his thirst for reliving the past and consolation out of the present. Winter comes with withering and death in nature as water becomes scarce and the speaker does not enjoy the season and it denotes that he is longing for the past. It is a mere perception that nature sympathizes with the shepherd but being inanimate in the literary sense, nature cannot align itself to the shepherd's feelings and emotions.

XI. REFUGE AND RETREAT

*"Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendor in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind."*

- William Wordsworth's "Ode: Intimations of Immortality"

Pastoral gives an imaginary retreat to the poet as the refuge follows retreat which is attainable and accessible. Roger Sales has listed "refuge" as one of the concluding elements of the pastoral. The poet's wish to escape from the complexity and vexation of the town to the simplicity of the countryside is well expressed through the refuge. The parallels can be drawn from experience of adulthood to innocence of childhood.²⁴ (Sales, 15). Marinelli points out that the world of innocence is corrupted by the man's entry into sexual life i.e. into the world of adult experience. Retreat enters the scene where a man cannot recover the past but only can have a backward glance. The refuge is not accomplished in the torments of the present world but retreat to backward glance offers him consolation in nature and childhood. The poet at the end of any pastoral poetry acquires the refuge and retreat offered by nature and his memories which he recollects through his poetic imagination.

In "Poem in October", "water praying" and "call of a seagull" refers to the poet's imagination to take refuge and retreat in a distant landscape. The refuge at last in the poem is that the poet hopes for the wish to be fulfilled in the near future that his heart may sing in the distant high hill and his hope can be fulfilled by time. Time has the power to control everything, to change from melancholy to retreat. According to W.Y. Tindall, "gates closing as the town awakes" implies rebirth on his birthday and his heart tries to take refuge and acceptance of the reality. "But the weather turned around" reflects that it is not a new turning but a return to the first and is a retreat. A new year of his birthday turned him to be thirty but the age returns him back to his childhood and it conveys the timeless marvel of art.

CONCLUSION

The central concern of pastoral is the search for a simple life away from the town which is corrupted by atrocities of war or urbanization. In a way, it reveals "a yearning for a lost innocence, for a pre-fall paradise life in which man existed in harmony with nature" (Cuddon, 689). Pastoral offers relief from realities to dreamt happiness, an ideal world as in "Fern Hill" and "Poem in October". Sukunta Chaudhuri (1989) in introducing his treatise on pastoral poetry sums it up, "It selects details from that [pastoral] life, adds to them, and reorders them to create a world of the imagination, invested with urban longing for an ideally simple life in nature. In other words, it is subtle and sophisticated, exploring the gap between the complex existence of poet and reader and the designedly naive dream of rural simplicity. All pastoral implies this duality, this awareness of two opposed worlds: country and city, simple and complex, imaginary and real."

In pastoral, the double longing after innocence and happiness can be achieved temporarily through dreamt like situations. The permanent recovery of happiness can be achieved only through the realization and acceptance of the present which regenerates new future through a retreat into the

present. One cannot withdraw from the present scenario but can only try to achieve a newly regenerated life with the consolation of the pleasant memories of the past. Pastoral can give the poet an imaginary retreat in the mind and to take refuge in it. Art has the power to record those pleasant memories and the poet relies on pastoral poetry to reflect on his childhood.

WORKS CITED

1. Davis, Walford & Maud Ralph. *Dylan Thomas - Collected Poems 1934 – 1953* (p. 86 -88, 134 -135), Orion House, London, 2000.
2. *New International Version*. Biblica, 2011. *Bible Gateway*, www.biblegateway.com/versions/New-International-Version-NIV-Bible/
3. Greg, Walter, W. *Pastoral Poetry & Pastoral Drama, A Literary Inquiry, With Special Reference to the Pre-Restoration Stage in England* (p. 1), Russell & Russell, New York, 1959.
4. Lerner, Laurence. *The Uses of Nostalgia, Studies in Pastoral Poetry* (p. 52), Chatto & Windus, London, 1972.
5. Marinelli, Peter V. *Pastoral* (p.11), Critical Idiom Series. London, Methuen & Co Ltd, Great Britain, 1978.
6. Cuddon, J A. *Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* (p.743), Penguin, Third Edition, London, 1991.
7. Cooper, Helen. *Pastoral Mediaeval into Renaissance* (p.87), Boydell & Brewer Publisher, Ipswich, 1997.
8. Kermode, Frank (ed.). *English Pastoral Poetry from the Beginnings to Marvell* (p. 14), London, 1952.
9. Loughrey, Bryan. (ed). *The Pastoral Mode* (p.125), Macmillan, London, 1984.
10. Greg, Walter, W. *Pastoral Poetry & Pastoral Drama, A Literary Inquiry, With Special Reference to the Pre-Restoration Stage in England* (p. 1), Russell & Russell, New York, 1959.
11. Loughrey, Bryan. (ed). *The Pastoral Mode* (p.9, 13, 21), Macmillan, London, 1984.
12. Abrams, M H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (p.127), Holt Rinehart and Winston, 4th Edition, New York, 1981.
13. Loughrey, Bryan. (ed). *The Pastoral Mode* (p. 54), Macmillan, London, 1984.
14. Kermode, Frank (ed.). *English Pastoral Poetry from the Beginnings to Marvell* (p. 37), London, 1952.
15. Smith, Hallett. *Elizabethan Poetry: A Study in Conventions, Meaning, and Expression* (p. 2), Havard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1966.
16. Congleton, J E. *Theories of Pastoral Poetry in England 1684 – 1798* (p. 147), Haskell House Publishers Ltd, New York, 1968.
17. Kermode, Frank (ed.). *English Pastoral Poetry from the Beginnings to Marvell* (p. 30), London, 1952.
18. Marinelli, Peter V. *Pastoral* (p.22), Critical Idiom Series. London, Methuen & Co Ltd, Great Britain, 1978.
19. Cooper, Helen. *Pastoral Mediaeval into Renaissance* (p.5), Boydell & Brewer Publisher, Ipswich, 1997.
20. McFarland, Thomas. *Shakespeare's Pastoral Comedy*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1972.
21. Loughrey, Bryan. (ed). *The Pastoral Mode* (p. 98), Macmillan, London, 1984.
22. Abrams, M H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (p. 77), Holt Rinehart and Winston, 4th Edition, New York, 1981.
23. Loughrey, Bryan. (ed). *The Pastoral Mode* (p. 26), Macmillan, London, 1984.
24. Kermode, Frank (ed.). *English Pastoral Poetry from the Beginnings to Marvell* (p. 16), London, 1952.
25. Sales, Roger. *English Literature in History, Pastoral and Politics* (p. 15), Hutchinson, London, 1983.
26. Cuddon, J A. *Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* (p. 689), Penguin, Third Edition, London, 1991.

