

Original Paper

Dynamics of Symbols in Romantic and Neo-Romantic Poets: A Study of Some Selected Poems of William Blake, William Wordsworth, Ted Hughes and Seamus Heaney

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Received: July 25, 2023

Accepted: August 29, 2023

Online Published: September 3, 2023

doi:10.22158/selt.v11n3p73

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/selt.v11n3p73>

Abstract

In literary discourse, symbolism is the use of objects to signify ideas and qualities. Consequently, symbols take varied forms to convey these ideas, concepts or emotions, explicitly, and implicitly, relying on shared cultures or conventions. On this note, this paper underscores that there is a shift in the dynamics of symbols from the romantic epoch to the postmodern period with each era portraying nature and childhood symbols in a manner that is satisfactory to humanity across ages. The paper also shows that though the Romantics (William Blake and William Wordsworth) and Neo-romantics, (Ted Hughes and Seamus Heaney) share similar concerns in relation to nature and childhood, these consternations are read through different prisms. In this light, they plunge into the ambiguities of the imagination and the changing consciousness, from a quiet romantic time to the traumatic epoch of the 21st century. To Blake, Wordsworth, Hughes, and Heaney, imagination, as such, remains a gift, as it enables them to sail beyond the ordinary. Against this backdrop, the romantic and postmodern theoretical paradigms become inevitable as they pave the way for a better insight into the distinct styles of these poets in the exploration of space, time, thoughts, and other constituents through vibrant symbols to transcend the ordinary for a better portrait of nature and childhood.

Keywords

Dynamics, Imagination, Neo-Romantic, Romantic, Symbols.

1. Introduction

It is generally understood that all poetry is the product of the imagination. However, theories on the Romantic imagination distinguish between the ordinary and the creative imagination, which can be qualified further as poetic and philosophic imaginations. The ordinary or poetic imagination refers to

the use of figurative language to create poetry and the creative or philosophic imagination is embedded in the subject matter of a poem. The secondary imagination employs the poetic image as a device for philosophical speculations about life and this is evident in the imagination's quest for esoteric values in a world beyond real experience. For Blake, Wordsworth, Hughes and Heaney, the imagination especially as childhood and nature are concerned, remains the most important gift to poets because it enables them to re-enact the transcendental or Godly. Consequently, humanity's experiences and their immediate environment is taken into consideration. Inasmuch as due attention is given to the aforementioned, political and social visions, across different epochs remains their thrusts. Based on this stance, the work attempts to trace the submerged Romanticism and neo-romanticism in poetry and explores the complexities of the imagination and its changing consciousness within the traumatic experience of the 21st century.

The article is therefore structured into four sections: Dynamics of oneiric symbols, Paradigm shift in the use of symbols, the poets and the imagination, and Authors visions.

2. Dynamics of Oneiric Symbols

Oneiric is an adjective that describes things related to dreams. For example, at the end of *The Wizard of Oz*, by Lyman Frank, one is left to determine if Dorothy really travels to Oz or if she is simply in an oneiric state, dreaming up the whole journey. Oneiric comes from a Greek word meaning a dream. In Greek mythology, the Oneiroi, or dreams, were the brothers (or sons depending on the author) of Hypnos, or sleep. Homer, Ovid, and Euripides all wrote about them.

According to the Hindu philosopher as quoted by K Coomaraswamy in *A Dictionary of Symbols*, "symbolism is the art of thinking in images" an art now lost to civilised man, notably in the last three hundred years. The lost language of symbolism, is limited to consciousness and not to the unconscious, which to compensate is perhaps now overloaded with symbolic material. John Diel in *Symbolism in the gospel of John* considers the symbols to "a precise and crystalised means of expression", corresponding in essence to their inner life (intensive and qualitative) in opposition to the external world. Carlot in *The Dictionary of Symbols*, posits:

For psychologists, the symbol exists almost wholly in the mind and is then projected outwards upon Nature, either accepting language as it's being and its form or converting being and form into dramatic characters, but it is not seen in this way by orientalists and esoteric thinkers who base symbolism upon the incontrovertible equation macrocosm =microcosm. (XXXi)

It is from this view point that Blake uses different types of oneiric symbols to bring into the limelight the different facades of human imagination and his vision (dream) of the world. These symbols include: corruption symbols, energy symbols, sexual symbols, oppression symbols and place symbols to mention a few. Besides the aforementioned, Blake equally delves into other recurrent symbols like plant symbols, animal symbols and time symbols to represent the dreams or visions of humanity.

In the "The Lamb" and "The Tiger" the personae, represent certain positions towards reality. They

equally represent childhood innocence and adulthood experience. In “The Lamb”, Blake presents a symbol of childhood innocence that is considered to have originated from baby Jesus in the Bible. This child-like quality is compared to that of God’s infinite goodness, purity and forgiveness of sins. The poet’s presentation of these figures of the lamb and the child is a reflection of a world of innocence. The “Tyger” on its part is an embodiment of both virtue and vice. This is evident in the oxymoron as he says in one of the poems: “Tiger! Tiger! burning bright” (L1). The poet juxtaposes the binary between good and evil. Freedom and rebellion are at once celebrated because they are a kind of divine creative energy, and at the same time, terrible, because they lead to death and horror. “The Lamb”, represents a tranquil pastoral scene, painting a vivid picture of the lamb skipping in its countryside environment. The urban world is notable for its nonappearance in a traditional natural setting to symbolize purity. Implicitly, the poem “The Lamb” symbolizes and projects the beauty in nature and the innocence in childhood. It represents a powerful source of happiness and freedom. Blake uses a set of related symbols to create a prominent symbolic pattern through which the Lamb, Nature and God symbolise child, father and Christ, which all represent the states of innocence, and experience. Such triangular image, as is in the case in the poem below, does not paint ordinary pictures but exposes the poet’s dream or vision of his world.

The lamb itself is part of nature, but it is also an oneiric symbol of the freedom and happiness, associated with the natural world, which according to the poet, cannot be found in a modern urban environment. The Lamb is equally a biblical allusion to the lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. The first stanza expresses this deep connection between nature and joy. The lamb lives among rivers and pastures. These are places where nature is allowed to bloom, and they in turn give the lamb a beautiful and free environment to live in. It is for this reason that the lamb’s coat is not just “clothing,” but “clothing of delight.” Nature allows the lamb to be fully itself, without restriction.

Blake’s “Tiger”, is a paragon of frightful and creative energy, Wordsworth’s “Rainbow”, epitomizes inspiration, Hughes “Hawk” is a symbol of violence in nature. Heaney’s bird in his poem “Turkey” symbolizes untimely death. The usage of symbols has a wide range of meaning and more. The above premise is apt when Blake talks of the sick rose. At this juncture, one will not be wrong to suggest that Blake paints a picture on how evil can easily attack the soul of man. By portraying this, Blake makes good use of the metaphor of the “Sick Rose”. The image of the flower is very significant in both “Songs of Innocence” and “Songs of Experience”, as it is a reflection of the fall of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. “Ah! Sun-Flower” is a more symbolic, and evokes a greater variety of responses. The flower also represents a man who is “bound to the flesh”, but “yearns after the liberty of eternity”, thus brings out the weak side of man.

Blake moves from the flower symbol, to the animal symbol as in “Tiger”. The persona questions his smile. This is evident in the following rhetorical questions: Did he smile, his work to see? / Did he who made the Lamb make thee!?” (L19-20) The image of the lion in the poem “Night” in *Songs of innocence*, contrasts the tiger in *Songs of Experience*. Both animals seem dreadful, but the lion could be tamed into a gentle animal whereas the tiger cannot. The tiger represents power and imagination in humankind, unlike

reason. Blake equally believes in natural impulses and hates all restrictions upon children. In “Holy Thursday” he interrogates:

*Is this a holy thing to see,
In a rich and fruitful land,
Babes reduced to misery,
Fed with cold and unsavoury hand? (L1-4)*

The above question reveals the persona’s doubt about Christians. The poem “Holy Thursday” is an allusion to Ascension Thursday in the bible the day Christians believed Jesus Christ went up to heaven body and soul. Blake is sarcastic when he describes the singing of these children as a cry of anguish, rather than songs of joy. The use of this poetic devices, introduces the theme of hypocrisy in Christianity. Here, Blake cautions humankind to treat children well and stop hypocrisy. Equally, in “A Poison Tree” the poet uses allegory to present the tree as suppressed wrath or anger. The water represents fear, the apple is symbolic of deceit and hidden anger. The deeper meaning is that anger when kept for long develops into poison that could destroy a relationship or kill someone. Blake in his foresight technique uses this poem to conscientise humankind on the danger embedded in anger.

Ralph Waldo Emerson in *Nature* says; “man has to hold God and nature symbols face to face so that he will be able to see the beauty of the universe. This can only be possible if one goes into nature, retires as much as possible from his chamber, from the society, and then looks into the atmosphere, to discover designs that give man a perpetual sense of the presence of the sublime (11). To the above claim, Emerson continues:

The stars awaken a certain reverence because though always present, they are inaccessible; but all natural objects make a kindred impression when a mind is open in their influence, nature never wears a mean appearance. Neither does the wisest man extort her secret and lost his curiosity finding out all her perfection. Nature never became a toy to a wise spirit, the flowers, the animals, the mountains, reflected the wisdom of his best hours, as much as they had delighted the simplicity of his childhood (11)

To Emerson, nature is not only the best teacher, but also a symbol of wisdom which is always ready to improve on peoples’ perilous situations. Emerson thinks that when humanity is all open to all aspects of nature, nature will never disappoint them. He further argues that nature never jokes with those who are seriously seeking for solution through the natural elements like flowers, animals, mountains to mention a few. No doubt, at the end of the poem “Chimney Sweeper” of Innocence, the children awoke in the dark, took their bags and brushes, ready to go to work with anxiety and the spirit of determination to work. Even though the morning is very cold, Tom and his friends are very happy and warm. Nature has the power to transform any bad situation to a good one. In contact with nature, the children no longer consider their work as suffering because of the comfort which nature has offered to them. There is, thus, no doubt that Blake values and appreciates nature and feels that humanity can invest in it, for there is hope in nature.

Wordsworth on his part, uses London in “Upon Westminster Bridge” to represent beauty under the influence of the early sunrise. The city is so attractive that it looks like it is wearing a wonderful dress, and anyone who cannot be hit by the power of this scene must be dead spiritually. Consequently, the poet proceeds to describe the details or aspects of the city in the early sunshine add up to the total splendid picture: the city seems appareled, and the physical features and the flowing river- all of these – are bright and glittering in the smokeless air. It is something like the sun is in its early rise has never been more beautiful; the poet has neither seen nor felt a calling so deep. The justifying details now following the river gliding smoothly, the houses dead asleep, and the “mighty heart lying still”. Thus, the poem opens with a general observation, followed by some details to buttress it. We find in Wordsworth a symbolic and hopeful lover of nature. He believes in assimilating sense impressions through dreams, vision and the imagination. We also find in the sonnet sign of someone so sensitive to natural beauty that he would consider “dull of soul” anyone who could pass near such touching sight unaffected by its beauty. In the last line, Wordsworth personifies the city by giving it a “heart”, indeed, a “mighty heart” that would give life, the stimulating force, to the many houses now still sleeping. Literally speaking, the people in the city are still asleep. That is why there are no activities going on, nor is there any industrial smoke from factories or houses. When the city dwellers are awake and begin their activities, the “mighty heart” will have been awake and the air will no longer be smokeless. The simile: “This city now doth, like a garment, wear/ The beauty of this morning, silent, bare,” (L4-5). Shows the beauty that sun rise can give to the wasteful city; that appears so beautiful as if it is wearing a dress.

Taking a shift from the romantic to neo-romantic view of nature, Stephanie Krassenstein .J.O in “Towards a Northern Irish pastoral: Reading the rural in Seamus Heaney and Paul Muldoon”, purports that Heaney’s Nature symbolizes a contradiction in its relationship with humanity. Irish nature consists of a landscape that underwent numerous changes in order to adapt to human needs. Nevertheless, it is still a nature that keeps its strength, individuality and hazards. Instead of presenting symbols in nature that has been subjugated by man, “Heaney presents an abject pastoralism in which the purity of country life is always endangered, always encroach upon” (Krassenstein (20). In addition, Krassentein says:

Multiple examples in Heaney’s oeuvre, particularly in his early collections, illustrate that his relationship to the pastoral, and the fertile, life-affirming gifts that the genre typically celebrates, is frequently tinged with images of death, of rot, of decay, of frightening and monstrous sexuality. These moments that appear in Heaney’s poems of place ultimately indicate a lingering ghost of the abject haunting the patriarchal and colonial landscape of pastoral tradition- one that is sometimes overlooked in favour of a reading of Heaney that is less complicated, more earthy and “pure” (23)

Heaney in “Blackberry-picking” uses symbols to paint an anti-pastoral genre in a different way, it is memories of childhood summer spent out to pick berries that eventually ends with sadness, “The fruit fermented, the sweet flesh would/ turn sour/ I always felt like crying. It wasn’t fair” (L25-27). The transience of, the sweet fruit, the creeping rot that overtakes them before they can be eaten. In “Blackberry-picking” the rat imagery returns as the protagonist of this poem is a fruit, a part of the

man-earth relationship. The blackberry, signifies a gift offered by mother earth to humankind and other animals. The picking activity offers the possibility to describe the environment and, once again, the farm represents the main part of the background, with its “round hayfields, cornfields and potato-drills” (L13). The water elements appear timidly and quickly, as if at the corner of the eye, when the damp grass in which Heaney walks whitens his shoes. This poem symbolizes the celebration of life beautifully created by God and regret of a lost paradise.

In a similar way, Hughes in “The Thought -Fox” prescribes the symbols a poet needs in order to write a poem, from inspiration to solitude, silence and the environment. The idea of dream or thought comes through a Fox symbol, which enters a forest and immediately expels itself out. The Fox here symbolises fear, superstition and creativity. This is symbolic of Hughes paganism in the originality, is attracted to great myths to suit his ideas:

*I can imagine this midnight moment's forest:
Something else is alive
Besides the clock's loneliness
And this blank page where my fingers move. (L1-4)*

Through dreams and symbolism, Heaney in “Bogland” dwells on the Irish identity and its past relation. Heaney metaphorizes the peat bog for memory and feeling, a land where identity is suppressed and conserved. It reflects what Heaney himself said when thinking about poetry and the past and its role to help understand identity:

*Butter sunk under
More than a hundred years
Was covered salty and white
The ground itself is kind, black butter (L13-16)*

The narrow stanza of the poem mirrors the bog itself, layer upon layer of peat, language both figurative and descriptive. Heaney gets to involve his best word “dig” similar to the peat bog spade once commonly used in Ireland. It brings out the similarities and differences. The American plain with its vastness is contrasted with the narrowness of the Irish bog. The speaker attempts to beautify the landscape he loves and is familiar with by making reference to the past, how the bog protects things and keeps memories. He re-enacts mythology into the present through oneiric symbols. Alliteration is highlighted in the poem “sight of the sun” (L8), depicting the beauty, musicality, and wonders of nature and creation. Also, we find metaphor which symbolises judgment; “The ground itself is kind, black butter” (16). This is indicative of the fact that the land renders justice accordingly. One cannot cheat nature, and whatever we do, we should do it in kindness to avoid negative consequences.

3. Paradigm Shift in the Use of Symbol

Christopher Arigo in “Notes Towards an Ecopoetics: Revising the Postmodern Sublime and Juliana Spahr’s “This connection of Everyone with Lungs,” maintains:

Innovative practices and ecological thinking/being/feeling combine to produce a site of resistance, of politics, of political resistance. Perhaps, given the postmodern world in which we live, a world in which we are fully aware of the interdependence of the body, an ecopoetic is an inevitable outcome or byproduct: perhaps poetry as a practice is the best means of directly addressing an environment in crisis. (1)

The view echoed in the quotation above emphasize the interdependence and shift of oneiric symbols usage, from Blake and Wordsworth, to Hughes and Heaney. The poets lived and wrote in the 18th and 21st centuries, yet their experiences and concern with nature, though influenced by varying philosophical worldviews, offers avenues for the assessment of human relationship with nature from the past to the present century. Blake's concept of symbols is embedded in "The Laughing Song". In the poem, all the forces of nature are presented as a single happy whole:

*When the green woods laugh, with the voice of joy
And the dimpling streams runs laughing by,
When the air does laugh with our merry wit,
And the green hill laughs with the noise of it. (L1-4)*

The resounding laughter that runs through Blake's poem is a mark of happiness that results from the natural link that exists among all nature's creature. Hardy's poetry also has affinities with William Blake's. This is evident in Hardy's "weathers," a poem closely connected to Blake's oneiric symbolism. The persona announces symbols in nature in the following words:

*This is the weather the cuckoo likes
And so do I
When showers benumber the chestnut spikes,
And nestlings fly:
And the little brown nightingale bills his best,
And they sit outside at "The Travellers' Rest
And maids spig-muslin drest,
And citizens dream of the south and west,
And so do I. (L12-21)*

Blake's oneiric symbols are linked to his characters like the speakers in "Spring", "Nurses Song", "Laughing Song" and "The Echoing Green." Blake's persona likens his love or hatred to natural phenomena or creatures. Like Blake, Wordsworth's doctrine towards oneiric symbols is seen in "The Tables Turned," wherein the poet sermonises his bookish friend to put aside his dull books and turn to Nature that has a great deal to offer him.

*And hark! How blithe the throstle sings!
He, too, is no mean preacher:
Come forth into the light of things,
Let nature be your teacher.*

*She has a world ready wealth,
Our minds and hearts to bless-
Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health, (13-19)*

However, the poet uses imageries to demonstrate the part that states the basic truth: that the scientific, analytical, dissecting mind only destroys man's relationship with Nature. Our meddling intellect /Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things:-/ We murder to dissect. (L26-28) The simplicity of diction is in line with Wordsworth's linguistic and theory spelt out in the preface to the Lyrical Ballads concerning the choice of language used by the common man, and illustrates Wordsworth's and nature's nexus.

John Lambo in *The Archetypal, the Mythical and Sublime* makes a strong case for symbols in the poems "Lucy" as forming the archetypal, or internal cyclical pattern of birth, death and rebirth, or life, death and regeneration. Indeed, according to this view, we can consider "Strange Fits..." to be a poem wherein Lucy is still alive even though death is implicit; and with the exception of "A Slumber did my Spirit Sail" the others could be said to be dealing with issues of life and death, particularly the latter. And then in "A Slumber did my Spirit Seal" we find the theme of rebirth or regeneration in that the now apparently dead Lucy has only been transposed to a higher plane of existence, even if only in a metaphysical sense. The use of archetypal symbols such as stars, rocks and stones and trees, earth and heaven, as well as the moon symbolises cosmic harmony, which suddenly drops behind Lucy's roof. This is connected with Wordsworth attempt to link Lucy with a greater cycle. The "Lucy" poems, indeed, can rightly be said to be concerned with the myth of apotheosis for the simple reason that the poems raise Lucy, a mortal, to the realm of or rank of the god. With regards to language most of the lines in this poem could really be said to be free from "artificial diction". Yet all the words are certainly not a "selection of the language really used by men" as Wordsworth makes it clear in the *Preface to the lyrical ballads*.

Hughes and Heaney, on their part, are considered as poets who stand between the romantic tradition, modernism and postmodernism. Thus, they transmit the romantic traditions to younger poets, especially British poets through another platter. They impart some of the features through advice that older poets be re-written in modern ways. Hughes in "The child is the father to the man", re-echoes Wordsworth's line in the poem "Rainbow" written in 1802. This shows the shift from romanticism to neo-romanticism as an imitation for renovation:

*The child is father to the
Man
How can he be? The words are
Wild.
Suck any sense from that who Can:(L1-6).*

The title of the poem, is an allusion of a romantic poem reinvented in postmodernism. Hughes draws inspiration from William Wordsworth's poems, "The Rainbow" wherein "the child is father to the man" (L 7). Wordsworth uses the child as a metaphor and symbol to demonstrate childhood superiority over adulthood by indicating that our childhood serves as a foundation to adulthood and is therefore

primordial to adulthood. Though it sounds stupid, it gives more credence to childhood. The child is seen as having purity, innocence, truth, to name a few than man that is superior. Hughes is therefore trying to find out how possible it could be through the different rhetorical questions: The man is father to the child; the child is father to the man! How can he be? (L 6-7). He questions Wordsworth ideology and sees his words to be wild and unconventional. At the end he asserts that... “Th man is father to the child”/ “The child is father to the man!'/How can he be? The words are wild(L8-10). Hughes contests the child as a symbol of a father and considers it too harsh and unconventional.

Heaney on his part brings an innovation on the romantic ideology of digging as he prefers to use the pen between his fingers to dig his future rather than the ancient way of holding the spade by his father and grandfather.

*Between my finger and my thumb
The squat pen rests; snug as a gun.
Under my window, a clean rasping sound
When the spade sinks into gravelly ground.
My father, digging. I look down
Till his straining rump among the flowerbeds
Bends low, comes up twenty years away(L1-7)*

Heaney depicts a rural life of his childhood, being a son of farmer and cattle rearer, digs the land, to plant and harvest. Decides to break away from the traditional way of handling the spade as a means of survival into holding a pen between his thumb and fingers to dig his destiny. The poem's tone is serious and endowed with nature and childhood symbols: “Under my window/ a clean rasping sound when the spade sinks into gravelly ground! /My father, digging. I look down” (L 3-4). The harvest is usually an exciting one full of satisfaction and delight “To scatter new potatoes that we picked, / Loving their cool hardness in our hands (L13-14). It highlights a shift from the past to the present, then stretches its tentacles into the future.

4. The Poets and the Imagination

This section, throws light on the poets' imagination on nature and childhood. Imagery is one of the most important techniques in writing. The poet creates a mental image for the reader using descriptive language. This descriptive language, creates the mood or setting for the poem. A conglomeration of these imageries or descriptive language makes the reader to fully experience the poets' visions of the world and hereafter. This use of language, transcends from the Romantics to the Neo-Romantics.

Romantic as a term, first used in France, depended on the imagination to create a new reality and not escape from it. This term transcended into other cultures wherein there has been varied transformations. From this imagination the Americans, Germans, British, created other realities. Postmodernists, equally delved into related issues by embracing, randomness, playfulness, fragmentation, metafiction, intertextuality, objective reality, morality, truth, human nature, reason, language and social progress.

From this perspective, Hughes and Heaney exhibits a postmodernist ideal of no essential truth in a world of no order. In “The Harvest moon” by Heaney, the persona points out that:

*As you plaited the harvest bow
You implicated the mellowed silence in you
In what that does not rust
But brightens as it tightens twist by twist
Into a knowable corona. (L1-5)*

The word “plaited” suggests the harvest to be unpredictable or below expectation. “Corona” symbolizes the imperfect consistency of memory, a visual image on human nature and a pun for the disease corona affecting humankind today. Again, Heaney explores the nexus between him and his father, that symbolizes the bond with members of his family like aunts, mother, father and brother. The bow is made from freshly harvested straws and given to him by his father as a sign of his eternal love for him. This act describes Heaney’s father (Patrick Heaney) as a strong, strict, and caring man who loves ploughing in rural life.

Hughes imagination in “The Wind” explores the theme of the struggle within humankind and nature. The poet connects the reader directly with the wind. He paints the image of the wind as a powerful monster. This creates the sense of fear and insecurity, the wind is looked upon as a threat, whenever it hits the house and the environment. This act causes havoc, likened to an invader. The wind begins in the day and continues in the night unending, indicating an impending doom. The wind is a symbol of change for the couple who cannot feel free due to the dreadful wind. It is a mixture of powerful language and clear visual and auditory imagery as depicted in the onomatopoeia, pronounced by the persona: “The woods crashing through darkness, /the booming hills/ winds stampeding the fields under the window” (L2-4).

Wordsworth and Blake use their poetry as a medium to change the people’s attitude and to evoke sympathy for the poor. Wordsworth being one of the pioneers of the Romantic Movement in England, is well known for his use of imagery and imagination especially in *The Prelude* “which reflects a distinctive philosophy that explains how a moral and spiritual development can be achieved from close proximity to nature. Every great poet he says is a teacher; “I wish either to be considered as a teacher or as nothing” (*The Prose of William Wordsworth* (P 286). Blake and Wordsworth are the first Romantic poets, who deal with childhood as a symbol of a state of the soul which is, perfectly compatible with maturity. Wordsworth thinks that adults cannot enjoy the same innocence that children enjoy. This goes in contrast with Blake who thinks that we can keep innocence after we grow up, even if we are experienced. For Blake, Childhood can live more than this; it can penetrate the minds of adults if they still love each other and try to protect each other. In *Songs of Innocence*, Blake deals with the innocent joyous perspective of the child and the more worldly-wise perspective of the adult. For him children were no vehicle for a mere nostalgia. They are not only a symbol of innocence, but also an expression of imaginative day and essential humanity.

As for Wordsworth, the imagination of his childhood with nature in the innocent world is still an inspiration to all young poets who came after him. In relation to children and nature, Wordsworth believes that Innocence is too pure to be handled by adults, who are exposed to a cruel and harmful world. Wordsworth always has the nostalgia for childhood and spends the rest of his life in regrets for becoming an adult. Both poets therefore have deep philosophical insights about Childhood and the necessity for man to carry along his age the values of Childhood. Such a man will be a man of Higher Innocence. Catalin Ghita in, "William Blake's Concept of Imagination," purports that imagination is like a measuring rod to William Blake's poetry. She reasserts that the creative self actively projects a poetic world in an inspirational medium, and subsequently explores them by a constant use of the imaginative faculty, which acts as a transmitting force, originating from the artist's mental activity and projected in visionary writings. Consequently, through the power of imagination, a poet is able to go beyond the physical realm of viewing the universe and he projects this in his writings with the aim of correcting the disordered universe. She equally posits that philosophically, generally, the concept has two meanings: 'First, the capacity to experience "mental images," and, secondly, the capacity to engage in creative thought' (668). Through the power of imagination, the writer first of all experience images in his mind and then through the power of imagination, he is able to create.

Kathleen M. in, "Wordsworth's Imagination: Three Critical Approaches and The Prelude" asserts that one topic to which the Romantics are particularly interested in, that consistently arises in works by William Wordsworth, Samuel T. Coleridge, John Keats, and other poets of the Romantic era is the imagination. According to him, this subject matter is unique in that it varies significantly both in poetry and in literary criticism. The imagination is not a simple concept, and it is more than a motif to trace throughout a poem. It is also an idea that Romantic poets substantially reinterpret. He also stipulates that the imagination is particularly important in Wordsworth's most famous work, the epic, multi-book poems that appreciate nature and hold it in a very high esteem. Also, the imagination, according to Lynch, is also present in the reader's awareness that the poet is using it in order to create the poem. There is thus no work of art without imagination. "Full moon and Little Frieda", is highly a symbolic poem. Its contrasting images are reasons behind its imagination, its symbols are related to the auto-biography of Hughes. Frieda is the name of his daughter and depicts father and daughter relationship. The poet's everlasting love for his daughter makes the poem more delightful. The title of the poem is highly symbolic thereby indicating the affiliation children have with natural objects. Hughes like Wordsworth, portrays two contrasting images. First, the moon and second is Frieda. Moon is a huge image whereas his daughter little Frieda is a small image. In this way, both images are contrasting symbolically. Full moon represents Hughes and little Frieda the poet puts together adulthood and childhood to show their nexus. Each leaning on the other to survive.

Hughes, also puts to good effect the postmodern technique of playfulness, to bring about temporal distortion of a biblical story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Hughes in, "Theology", illustrates through visual and gustatory imageries and bids the imagination on how Adam and eve ate

the forbidden fruit. He does a kind of counter discourse to re-enact history to poetry:

*No, the serpent did not
Seduce Eve to the apple.
All that's simply
Corruption of the facts.
Adam ate the apple.
Eve ate Adam.
The serpent ate Eve. (L1-7)*

The poem, brings to mind the divine question of theology and the biblical myth of Adam and Eve. Hughes deconstructs the ideology on the biblical myth of Adam and Eve. In the bible, it is known that the snake lured Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit. The poet through his creative faculties, debunks the idea saying the snake did not seduce Eve to eat the apple. He considers this to be simple corruption of facts. He begins the second stanza by saying that it is rather Adam who ate the apple, then, Eve ate Adam and the snake swallowed Eve.

Heaney's poetry pervades a metaphysical and religious tone from a psychological and historical perspective. He wishes a return to humankind's sacred origin by presupposing man, as being incomplete at birth who must be born for the second time spiritually. Man is not a complete creature, and it is this quest for spiritual maturity that pushes Heaney to take us back to our past through the imagination. "The tractor" is a symbol of humankind's quest for fulfilment through hard work using the image as dramatic as possible.

5. Authors' Vision

With, regards to Blake, Wordsworth, Hughes and Heaney, their socio-professional encounters and other life experiences that helped in shaping their vision about nature and childhood. Their life experiences influenced their world view, reactivated and shaped their imagination, and provided them with a profound vision of life and the necessary change in the universe. The analyses of both the poetic and philosophic visions portray on nature and childhood, plus their adoration, preservation and return to the past which they ardently preach, will not be convincing without the mention of some of the corresponding influences and events of real life that possibly helped to shape their vision and perception of reality. Comparing them, will permits us to ascertain whether both Romanticists and Postmodernists share the same world view about nature and childhood, or not.

Just like Blake and Wordsworth, Hughes and Heaney share similar visions and ideologies, although their approaches may be different. They were very close to each other, and this closeness is what inspired them all through. This bond is further explained by Henry Harts in "Seamus Heaney and Ted Hughes: A Complex friendship", wherein he makes a review on their social, educational, and environmental visions on life issues. According to him, when Heaney spoke at Hughes's funeral in Devon on November 3, 1998, he said:

No death had been as devastating to poetry as Hughes's death, and that no death outside his family had hurt him as much. At a memorial service in Westminster Abbey half a year later, he remarked that Hughes's coffin at the Devon funeral had reminded him of a boat floating down a river from the Battle of the Somme that Wilfred Owen had once described. Although Heaney didn't cite the title of Owen's poem or quote from it, he had in mind the sonnet "Hospital Barge at C  risy," in which the World War I poet compared the barge to the boat that brought King Arthur to the fabled island of Avon so he could heal wounds he'd sustained in a much earlier battle: "How unto Avalon, in agony, / Kings passed, in the dark barge, which Merlin dreamed." (1)

For Heaney, Hughes was not only a wounded king; he was also a Merlin-like dreamer, healer, magician, and prophet who mythologized himself in poems and, for better or worse, was mythologized by others. According to Heaney, Hughes had "a soothsayer's awareness that facing a destiny was bound to involve certain ordeal." As a result, he recognised that myths and fairy tales were the poetic code.

The romantic poets focus on the natural world only whereas the postmodern poets focus on nature and technology. Romanticism is a form of literature, art and philosophy, that came into existence in the late 18th century and stresses on the subjective and emotional aspect of human nature. Modernism came up as a philosophical response to romanticism then followed by postmodernism. The industrial revolution paved the way for modern thinking. Both modernists and postmodernists defy traditional norms and replace them with human and moral ethics. As concerns religion, the romantic poets believed in the natural world and a supernatural power that governs it. Wordsworth in "Ode to immortality, views life as having a diving origin and a divine destiny. To them life should be a natural world with hardships such as storms that lead to fatal accidents and sickness then death. Meanwhile, the Postmodernists do not put their trust in religion nor the supernatural, they rather stress the consciousness and willpower that enables man to decide whatever is good for them. Hughes "Theology" justifies this assertion when he questions the biblical story of Adam and Eve and tries to change the narratives.

Their visions or philosophies contrast a little towards their perception of humankind. The Romantics upholds the common man without looking at his failures or short comings; they believe that natural instincts are the best. Their heroes are usually outcast but at the end we see them emerging victorious for the good of humankind. The postmodern poets are rather scared of humankind, because man has lost value and in Hughes "The Hawk Roosting", he places the hawk over humankind, parading the air and taking total control of the earth. Postmodernists also questions people's motives, values and dignity.

6. Conclusion

This paper sought out to examine Dynamic Symbols in romantic and neo-romantic poets. It focused on Blake, Wordsworth, Hughes and Heaney. It further looked at the dynamics of symbols and stretches its tentacles to a shift from the romantic to the neo-romantic epoch which compared Blake and Wordsworth on one hand and Hughes and Heaney on the other hand. It also discussed the imagination

as a natural gift to every poet that enables them to transcend reality. The problem resulted in the way nature and childhood are being handled in recent times. While others view nature as a healer, comforter, shelter, provider, others view it as cruel and dangerous to humankind. While others view childhood as a stage of innocence, purity and honesty, others view it as a stage through to adulthood. The authors' visions on nature and childhood were equally discussed. This study demonstrated that Nature and Childhood are indispensable to humankind. Also, Blake, Wordsworth, Hughes and Heaney share similar concerns in relation to nature and childhood, though read through different prisms. Finally, the imagination remained a gift to poets as it enables them to sail beyond the ordinary, through the use of nature and childhood symbols. Hopefully, from our results obtained, we are optimistic that this study will enhance the 21st century poetry on nature and childhood, ideologies and symbols, thereby reuniting the history of nature and childhood from romanticism to postmodernism.

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