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Lysanets Yu.V., Havrylieva K.H.
Poltava State Medical University,
Poltava, Ukraine

NARRATIVE STRATEGIES IN ODE: INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD BY WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

The paper analyzes the narrator's intentions and strategies in Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood by William Wordsworth. It has been noted that the poem offers a range of profound ideas; it arouses complex questions, and suggests interesting solutions, which render the reading an exciting experience indeed. While examining Wordsworth's Ode, the authors observed a resemblance to the Buddhism conception. It has been concluded that Wordsworth's ode features how spiritual unrest and suffering offer the opportunity for growth, gradual development and philosophical understanding of nature and the outer world.

Key words: *narrator, narrative intention, narrative strategy, poetry, William Wordsworth.*

William Wordsworth's *Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood* (1807) represents the adult narrator's recollections of his childhood comprehension of the surrounding world, of nature and the like. The ode expresses the narrator's feelings of pity and regret that he was changed by time, and all human experiences eventually must end. These feelings are redoubled with uneasy realization that the narrator can no longer feel the same way he felt as a boy. Wordsworth's gloomy reflections reveal the impossibility to return to the harmonious state of unity with nature. The author argues: as children grow up, they get involved into the mundane affairs of mature life and therefore lose the divine vision.

This poem implies the idea that changes are inherent in our life; we simply cannot avoid or ignore them. This is basically the way the processes of ageing and maturation take place. It is our belief that a child is endowed with a kind of special vision primarily because children do not comprehend mortality of human beings. However, the older a person gets, the more he or she tends to look back and realize that nothing is the same. This notion can be traced back to the *Aeneid* (ca. 29-19 BCE) written by Roman poet Virgil. The phrase "sunt lacrimae rerum et mortalia" ("there are tears for things and mortal things") implies the eternal burden of human beings to realize and acknowledge the continual frailty of their lives. This key idea expresses the very essence of human

experience: life anticipates growth, but it also presupposes losses and deprivations which one has to learn to release.

In this context, the following lines of the excerpt are quite remarkable: “Though nothing can bring back the hour / Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower” (Wordsworth). It seems that the narrator compares a flower (a very tender and fragile object indeed) with a human life. In our opinion, this symbolic comparison echoes the similar words from the Bible: “As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field” (Psalm 103:15).

However, the narrator somehow manages to find solace in that what remains: “We will grieve not, rather find / Strength in what remains behind” (Wordsworth). It seems that Wordsworth’s contemplations bear a resemblance to the Buddhism conception. As a matter of fact, the Buddhist doctrine contends that all processes are changeable. It is the transitoriness and impermanence of all phenomena that inflict so much suffering in human beings. As Buddha argued, our pain and grief come from our tenacious attachment to things which are essentially impermanent in their form. Hence, it is only through the detachment from these phenomena that a person can reach freedom, internal peace and harmony.

Thus, the narrator of Wordsworth’s ode develops an understanding of life’s transient nature in much the same way as the Buddhist adherents. In the analyzed excerpt, the narrator resorts to the “carpe diem” formula and enjoys his present position and self-consciousness instead of attending to infinite regrets and despair, and we find this decision adequate and reasonable. Wordsworth’s ode basically features how spiritual unrest and suffering offer the opportunity for growth, gradual development and philosophical understanding of nature and the outer world. That is how we comprehend Wordsworth’s poem – only through the empirical unrest due to the recognition of one’s transience comes the virtuous detachment which eventually leads to wisdom and peace of mind:

“In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering;
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind” (Wordsworth).

Thus, the excerpt from William Wordsworth’s *Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood* offers a lot of profound ideas; arouses complex questions, as well as suggests interesting solutions which render the reading an exciting experience indeed. We strongly agree with the author about the strategies the humans should undertake as they drift within the ever changeable stream of life. In order to move forward in life, one has to accept its transient and changeable nature. What is more important, it is necessary to be able to part with the former experiences and phenomena, as well as to find comfort in things which still remain. Such philosophical approach will help to comprehend the essence of life.

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