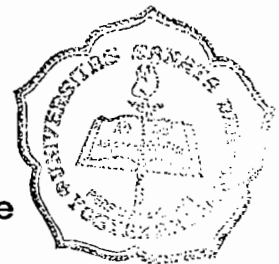


WORDSWORTH'S "MICHAEL" AND THE TEACHING OF POETRY



A Thesis
Presented to the English Department
Faculty of Letters and Arts
Sanata Dharma Teacher Training Institute



A Partial Fulfilment of
the Requirements of the Sarjana Degree
(S1 Programme)

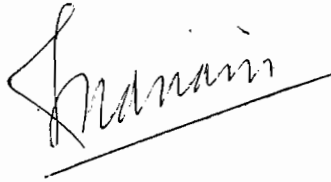
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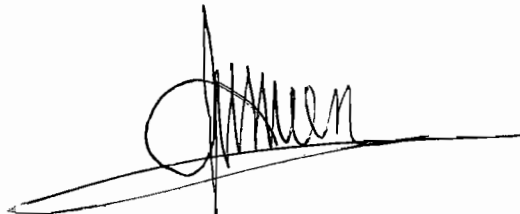
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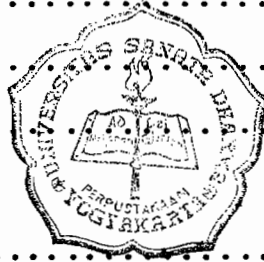
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INTRODUCTION

When the talked turn to poetry, sometimes most people turn away and say, "What good is poetry?" Such people believe that poetry gives nothing but bewilderment. It seems that their attitude towards poetry is unfair. However, they are not to be blamed. It is hard for one to love something she or he does not know, anyway. As an Indonesian proverb goes, "Tak kenal maka tak sayang."

My object in writing this thesis is to make it clear that poetry is such an important part of literature that it should not be dismissed easily. I specially choose a poem entitled "Michael" by William Wordsworth as an illustration in this thesis.

The second aim of this thesis is to exhibit what contribution poetry can give to the realm of language learning and how. I believe that the teaching of poetry gives a helping hand to teachers of language in developing the students' skills, knowledge, and character.

In analyzing those subjects, I collected data from books on literature, techniques of language teaching, and many kinds of dictionaries along with some reference books such as the Bible.

This thesis is divided into four chapters. The first chapter is to discuss briefly what poetry is. In the second chapter I try to go through the life of the poet, that is William Wordsworth, as to comprehend his work better. Chapter III gives the explication of "Michael". At last,

the teaching of poetry consisting its value, criteria used in selecting it, and method of presentation is described in Chapter IV.

I realize that this thesis is very far from being perfect, so I warmly welcome any correction and criticism from the readers.

CHAPTER I

WHAT IS POETRY ?

Now that the number of kinds of amusement becomes greater and greater, the interest to read poetry seems to be turning secondary. Why is poetry? Why must one choose poetry if his intention is merely to gain pleasure? Doesn't it look ridiculous for someone to take the difficult way while the easier ones lie ahead?

Those sorts of questions are likely to be the first to come when one deals with poetry for the first time. His mistrust arises upon the thought that poetry is always difficult. Some people are inclined to believe that poetry presents beauty as well as difficulty. As a matter of fact, poetry has a number of qualities of literary creation, such as musicality, sensory images, beautiful words, subtle descriptions, all expressed in language that is out of the ordinary. These things are, certainly, not so easy to be mastered all at once.

Another cause of reluctance in reading poetry is the expectation to gain moral lessons as the fruit of hardship in reading it. There are two false approaches often taken to poetry.¹⁾ The first approach always looks for a lesson or a bit of moral instruction, and the second expects to find poetry always beautiful. Having those

¹⁾ Laurence Perrine, Structure, Sound, and Sense, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., U.S.A., 1978, p. 550

two wrong concepts in mind, then one may easily judge that a poem is not good if it contains neither value nor beauty. The very person finds it useless to spend the time to read poetry. Accordingly, he chooses other alternative forms of amusement. This anonymous verse below is nonsense, yet it gives pleasure to the reader.²⁾

As I was going out one day
My head fell off and rolled away
But when I saw that it was gone
I picked it up and put it on.

And when I got into street
A fellow cried: "Look at your feet!"
I looked at them and sadly said:
"I've left them both asleep in bed!"

Beauty, philosophical truth, moral teachings, persuasion, are not the main concern of poetry. Poetry deals with experience. The aspects of experience can be beauty, philosophical truth, noble deed, strange or imaginary things. But it may also include the opposite of those, namely ugliness, disgraceful feat, common or actual things. The value and worth of poetry are determined by the value of the total experience, not by the truth or the nobility of the idea itself.³⁾ In the course of our life, we inevitably experience the sad and happy things. Poetry, as one of the literary works, communicates experiences; both those of others and our own experiences. The importance

²⁾ John Christopher Maher, "Poetry for Instructional Purposes: Authenticity and Aspects of Performance", English Teaching Forum Vol. XX, Number 1, January 1982, p. 20

³⁾ Laurence Perrine, op. cit., p. 681

of knowing all these things is to enrich and widen the horizon of our life.

Later in the subsequent chapters, we will see how William Wordsworth feels, senses, and appreciates the relation between the inner life of man and the world of nature. He believes that we learn more by communing with nature than by reading books. As a nature poet, he always talks about the beauty of nature in his poems. He sees the world with admiration, wonder, and awe; that nowadays are rarely done by modern people due to the skyrocketed growing of sophisticated technology.

CHAPTER II

WORDSWORTH AND THE WORLD OF POETRY

A. ROMANTICISM AND WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

A new direction called the Romantic Movement sprang up in some European countries especially in England in the late eighteenth century and lasted into the nineteenth century. The movement was marked by a series of revolutions in religion, philosophy, politics, economy, and industry as well as literature.

In 1730's, for example, Charles Wesley staged the Methodist Movement as a protest against the Church of England, which he considered to be lacking in social responsibilities. Then followed some other evangelical revolts that aimed at reform and regeneration within churches in England.

In the field of non-religious thought, the French philosopher Jean Jack Rousseau (1712-1778) introduced his famous influential theory of Naturalism. He said that man at the very beginning was essentially good, and was happiest and best in a state of nature. He believed that a natural state, unspoiled by artificialities and uncorrupted by the system of thought or that of government, would lead humanity directly to goodness, truth, and beauty.⁴⁾ This

⁴⁾ Alexander M. Witherspoon, The College Survey of English Literature, Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc., New York, 1951, p. 678

theory had a great effect on most people at that time. The French Revolution was seen as a practical example of Rousseau's doctrines. The revolution was one of the great political and social upheavels of France that developed into the Napoleonic Wars and effected the transformation of the old European order.⁵⁾ It was to oppose the outworn social order based on feudalism, the previleges of caste, bureaucracy, and despotism.

Another revolution as disastrous as those discussed above was the Industrial Revolution. It began as steam engine and mechanical inventions were put into use. Automatically, the industrial world was to change the agricultural pattern of life. This sudden transformation, certainly, resulted in the taking place of small holdings to large farm, inadequate wages, bad housing condition, increasing poverty, the skyrocketed growing of foodstuff that were beyond the reach of the poor, and so on. Shortly, the revolution created distress, injustice, and frustration everywhere.

The Romantic Movement in English literature was marked by a revolt against the conventionalized language and metres of Augustan poetry. It rejected the clear and ordered expression and form. The writers in this period insisted on giving place in their works a freedom to express their claims of passion and emotion, and the sense of mystery in life. Romanticism, therefore, is a tendency

5) _____, Cowles Volume Library, Cowless Education Corporation, New York, N.Y. 10022, 1968, p. 1006

towards inspiration and away from discipline (classicism) in the writer's approach to his material. It emphasizes passion rather than reason, and imagination and inspiration rather than logic.⁶⁾ William Wordsworth in his 'Preface' to the Lyrical Ballads (1800) says, "Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings." The Lyrical Ballads usually seen as the mark of the triumph of Romanticism. In general, Romantic qualities include sincere feeling, tender and pensive moods, love for the past, delicate treatment to nature. They are apparent in the works of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey -the Lake Poets- .

William Wordsworth was one of the great poets in the Romantic period, whose works were strongly inspired by the course of events during that time. It was while he was at Cambridge that the French Revolution broke out. He then stated his impressions of Cambridge through some lines from Book 3 of The Prelude. Wordsworth, like many other young Englishmen, was so impressed by the spirit of French Revolution that he even took side morally to the success of French arms when the war between England and France was in effect in 1793. However, when the revolutionaries turned excesses, creating a tyranny -apparent in the Battle of Waterloo- , Wordsworth found out that England whose government, church, he had once

6) _____, The World Encyclopedia Q.R Volume 16, Field Enterprises Educational Corporation, Chicago, 1971, p. 403

despised seemed to be the name of justice, freedom, and all the best moral values. His fear, bitterness, and disappointment were poured in The Prelude, and in "Poems Dedicated to National Independence and Liberty". The great distress and skepticism which coloured the whole England during the Industrial Revolution prompted him to write. He, in his story of Margaret in The Excursion, Book 1 shows the problem of unemployment caused by that evil revolution.

William Wordsworth, being a 'nature poet' always tried to bring unity between the human spirit and the spirit of nature, which thus became the characteristics of Romanticism. His 'Lucy' poems, for example, explain the whole process of Lucy's growth which is similar to that of nature. He believed in nature. He also believed that conversations with simple peasants taught us more about moral truths than did discussions with learned philosophers and theologians.⁷⁾

B. THE LIFE OF WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

On April 7, 1770, in an old brick house at Cocker-mouth, Cumberland, in the Lake Country, a baby was born. The baby, named William Wordsworth, was later known as the great poet in the eighteenth century. His family was the distinguished one: His father, John Wordsworth was an

⁷⁾ _____, loc. cit.

attorney who worked as an agent for Sir James Lowther. His mother, Anne Cookson, was a daughter of a linen draper in Penrith, William Cookson.

Since John Wordsworth had to be away so often for his job, it was William's mother who primarily had great concern for the children, especially for William. The mother found it difficult to control William, who was considered the wildest among the four Wordsworth brothers. However, her good influence over William helped him to shape his personality.

In spite of his being away so often from his family, John Wordsworth also noticed the interest of William in literature. He, then, introduced William to many great works such as those of Shakespeare, Milton, and Spenser. In 1776 his father sent William to an elementary grammar school where he received his first education.

In addition to the warm and loving care of his parents upon William, the chance to stroll and play freely around the beautiful region of lakes and mountains made his childhood a pleasant moment. Wordsworth on the whole, glorified all his childhood, and most of his memories are totally happy.⁸⁾ No wonder that he experienced the first pain and loss when his mother died. The death of his father five years later, when William was only thirteen, resulted in the disorder of his home life.

⁸⁾ Hunter Davies, William Wordsworth, The Hamlyn Publishing Group Ltd, Middlesex, 1983, p. 10

Then, after the death of his parents William was sent to Hawkshead Grammar School. During his study, he stayed with the Tysons. It was very lucky of William to have Anne Tyson, the housewife, take care of his laundry, meals, and everything he needed. Apart from that, Hawkshead Grammar School that he attended was the most successful and distinguished school in London at that time. In the very school, William received a good classical preparation for college under the excellent tutelage of the young brilliant headmaster, William Taylor.

In 1787, when William was aged seventeen he entered the prominent institution, St. John's College, Cambridge University. But from the very first, he did not feel like studying, because he hated the curriculum. He seemed to be much more interested in reading books and hanging around to enjoy nature. Instead of staying at Cambridge and preparing for his comprehensive examinations, he set off with his friend, Robert Jones, to France. Eventually, however, he received his B.A. degree from his college in 1791.

After graduation, he stayed for a while in London, then made the second journey to France to learn French. In this very country he met two people who played a significant role in his life. The first was Captain Michael Beaupuy, who strengthened his sympathy towards the French Revolution. The second was his French-woman-teacher, Anette Vallon. The result of his love affair with this woman was the birth of his own real daughter

Carolyn. Those years were the hardest for him. Financial exhaustion forced William to return to England. Unfortunately, one year later war between England and France broke out. It prevented William from going back to France to marry Anette Vallon.

Torn by love and somewhat disillusioned by the revolution, which turned to be a bloody heartless game, he decided to become a poet. In 1793 he got his two poems published: "Descriptive Sketches" and "An Evening Walk".

In 1795 he received a legacy of 900 pounds from his friend that he cared when that person was sick, Haisley Calvert. The friend asked William to devote himself wholly to poetry. Then William settled down with Dorothy, his ever-inspiring beloved sister, at Racedown, in Dorsetshire. In the same year he met Coleridge. Two years later he moved to Alfoxden, partly as a result of his growing friendship with Coleridge. Then they began their monumental work and planned for their trip to Germany. In 1798 they published their Lyrical Ballads, the single most influential book of poetry in the history of English literature.

After returning from Germany in 1798, Wordsworth started a long residence in Dove Cottage at which he met his early playmate, Mary Hutchinson, and married her in 1802. He wrote "She Was a Phantom of Delight" which was probably the portrait of his wife, Mary. The years, roughly between 1798-1805, were the years of William's greatest and most poetic work. After the publication of Poems

in Two Volumes, he moved to Allan Bank in 1808.

In 1814 he moved again to Rydal Mount, a few miles from Grasmere, where he became a neighbour of De Quincey, Coleridge, and Southey. He also took a position as a Stamp Distributor for Westmoreland. Since then, he successively published his works: The Excursion (1814), The White Doe of Rylstone (1815), Peter Ball (1819), The River Duddon (1820), Ecclesiastical Sketches (1822), A new collected edition (1827 and 1832), Yarrow Revisited and Other Poems (1835), a new collected edition (1836), Collection of the sonnets (1836), Poems, Chiefly of Early and Late Years (1842).

One year after his resignation as a Stamp Distributor, he became a Poet Laureate upon the death of Southey (1843). In 1849 he made a last trip outside the Lake District with Mary. Not only his physical condition became worse and worse, but also his poetic powers declined sharply in his later years. His best work, The Prelude was not published until 1850, after his death. This poem is in fact his autobiography.

William died on Tuesday, 23 April 1850. He was buried at Rydal Mount, Grasmere. Though popularity came late to him, still William Wordsworth was recognised as the great and noble poet of his generation.

CHAPTER III

WORDSWORTH'S "MICHAEL"

A. THE TEXT OF "MICHAEL"

If from the public way you turn your steps
Up the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll,
You will suppose that with an upright path
Your feet must struggle; in such bold ascent
The pastoral mountains front you, face to face.
But, courage! for around the woisterous brook
The mountains have all opened out themselves,
And made a hidden valley of their own.
No habitation can be seen; but they
Who journey thither find themselves alone
With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and
kites
That overhead are sailing in the sky.
It is in truth an utter solitude;
Nor should I have made mention of this dell
But for one object which you might pass by,
Might see and notice not. Beside the brook
Appears a stragglng heap of unhewn stones!
And to that simple object appertains
A story -unenriched with strange events,
Yet not unfit, I deem, for the fireside,
Or for the summer shade. It was the first
Of those domestic tales that spake to me
Of shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men
Whom I already loved; not verily
For their own sakes, but for the fields and
hills
Where was their occupation and abode.
And hence this tale, while I was yet a boy
Careless of books, yet having felt the power
Of Nature, by the gentle agency
Of natural objects, led me on to feel
For passions that were not my own, and think
(At random and imperfectly indeed)
On man, the heart of man, and human life.
Therefore, although it be a history
Homely and rude, I will relate the same
For the delight of a few natural hearts;
And, with yet fonder feeling, for the sake
Of youthful poets, who among these hills
Will be my second self when I am gone.

Upon the forest side in Grasmere Vale

There dwelt a shepherd, Michael was his name;
 An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.
 His bodily frame had been from youth to age
 Of an unusual strength; his mind was keen,
 Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs,
 And watchful more than ordinary men.

Hence had he learned the meaning of all winds,
 Of blasts of every tone; and, oftentimes,
 When others heeded not, he heard the south
 Make subterraneous music, like the noise
 Of bagpipers on distant Highland hills.

The shepherd, at such warning, of his flock
 Bethought him, and he to himself would say,
 "The winds are now devising work for me!"
 And, truly, at all times, the storm, that
 drives

The traveller to a shelter, summoned him
 Up to the mountains; he had been alone
 Amid the heart of many thousand mists,
 That came to him, and left him, on the heights.
 So lived he till his eightieth year was past.
 And grossly that man errs, who should suppose
 That the green valleys, and the streams and
 rocks,

Were things indifferent to the shepherd's
 thoughts.

Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had
 breathed

The common air; hills, which with vigorous
 step

He had so often climbed; which had impressed
 So many incidents upon his mind

Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear;
 Which, like a book, preserved the memory
 Of the dumb animals, whom he had saved,
 Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts
 The certainty of honorable gain;

Those fields, those hills - what could they less?
 had laid

Strong hold on his affections, were to him
 A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
 The pleasure which there is in life itself.

His days had not been passed in singleness.
 His helpmate was a comely matron, old -
 Though younger than himself full twenty years.
 She was a woman of a stirring life,
 Whose heart was in her house; two wheels she
 had

Of antique form: this large, for spinning wool;
 That small, for flax; and if one wheel had rest
 It was because the other was at work.

The pair had but one inmate in their house,
 An only child, who had been born to them
 When Michael, telling o'er his years, began

ro deem that he was old -in shepherd's phrase
 With one foot in the grave. This only son,
 With two brave sheep dogs tried in many a storm,
 The one of an inestimable worth,
 Made all their household. I may truly say,
 That they were as a proverb in the vale
 For endless industry. When day was gone,
 And from their occupation out of doors
 The son and father were come home, even then,
 Their labour did not cease; unless when all
 Turned to the cleanly supper board, and there,
 Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed milk,
 Sat round the basket piled with oaten cakes,
 And their plain homemade cheese. Yet when the
 meal

Was ended, Luke (for so the son was named)
 And his old father both betook themselves
 To such convenient work as might employ
 Their hands by the fireside; perhaps to card
 Wool for the housewife's spindle, or repair
 Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe,
 Or other implement of house or field.

Down from the ceiling, by the chimney's edge,
 That in our ancient uncouth country style
 With huge and black projection overbrowed
 Large space beneath, as duly as the light
 Of day grew dim the housewife hung a lamp;
 An aged utensil, which had performed
 Service beyond all others of its kind.
 Early at evening did it burn -and late,
 Surviving comrade of uncounted hours,
 Which, going by from year to year, had found,
 And left, the couple neither gay perhaps
 Nor cheerful, yet with objects and with hopes,
 Living a life of eager industry.
 And now, when Luke had reached his eighteenth
 year,
 There by the light of this old lamp they sat,
 Father and son, while far into the night
 The housewife piled her own peculiar work,
 Making the cottage through the silent hours
 Murmur as with the sound of summer flies.
 This light was famous in its neighbourhood,
 And was a public symbol of the life
 That thrifty pair had lived. For, as it chanced,
 Their cottage on a plot of rising ground
 High into Easdale, up to Dunmail Raise,
 And westward to the village near the lake;
 And from this constant light, so regular
 And so far seen, the house itself, by all
 Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,
 Both old and young, was named the Evening Star.

Thus living on through such a length of years,

The shepherd, if he loved himself, must needs
 Have loved his helpmate; but to Michael's heart
 This son of his old age was yet more dear -
 Less from instinctive tenderness, the same
 Fond spirit that blindly works in the blood
 of all-

Than that a child, more than all other gifts
 That earth can offer to declining man,
 Brings hope with it, and forward-looking
 thoughts,

And stirrings of inquietude, when they
 By tendency of nature needs must fail.
 Exceeding was the love he bare to him,
 His heart and his heart's joy! For oftentimes
 Old Michael, while he was a babe in arms,
 Had done him female service, not alone
 For pastime and delight, as is the use
 Of fathers, but with patient mind enforced
 To acts of tenderness; and he had rocked
 His cradle, as with a woman's gentle hand.

And, in a later time, ere yet the boy
 Had put on boy's attire, did Michael love,
 Albeit of a stern unbending mind,
 To have the young one in his sight, when he
 Wrought in the field, or on his shepherd's
 stool

Sat with a fettered sheep before him stretched
 Under the large old oak, that near his door
 Stood single, and, from matchless depth of
 shade,

Chooosen for the shearer's covert from the sun
 Thence in our rustic dialect was called
 The Clipping Tree, a name which yet it bears.
 There, while they two were sitting in the shade,
 With others round them, earnest all and blithe,
 Would Michael exercise his heart with looks
 Of fond correction and reproof bestowed
 Upon the child, if he disturbed the sheep
 By catching at their legs, or with his shouts
 Scared them, while they lay still beneath the
 shears.

And when by Heaven's good grace the boy grew
 up

A healthy lad, and carried in his cheek
 Two steady roses that were five years old;
 Then Michael from a winter coppice cut
 With his own hand a sapling, which he hooped
 With iron, making it throughout in all
 Due requisites a perfect shepherd's staff,
 And gave it to the boy; wherewith equipped
 He as a watchman oftentimes was placed
 At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock;
 And, to his office prematurely called,

There stood the urchin, as you will divine,
 Something between a hindrance and a help;
 And for this cause not always, I believe,
 Receiving from his father hire or praise;
 Though nought was left undone which staff, or
 voice,
 Or looks, or threatening gestures, could
 perform.

But soon as Luke, full ten years old, could
 stand
 Against the mountain blasts; and to the heights,
 Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways,
 He with his father daily went, and they
 Were as companions, which should I relate
 That objects which the shepherd loved before
 Were dearer now? that from the boy there came
 Feelings and emanations - things which were
 Light to the sun and music to the wind;
 And that the old man's heart seemed born again?

Thus in his father's sight the boy grew up:
 And now, when he had reached his eighteenth
 year,
 He was his comfort and his daily hope.

While in this sort the simple household lived
 From day to day, to Michael's ear there came
 Distressful tidings. Long before the time
 Of which I speak, the shepherd had been bound
 In surety for his brother's son, a man
 Of an industrious life, and ample means;
 But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
 Had pressed upon him; and old Michael now
 Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture,
 A grievous penalty, but little less
 Than half his substance. This unlooked-for
 claim,
 At the first hearing, for a moment took
 More hope out of his life than he supposed
 That any old man ever could have lost.
 As soon as he had armed himself with strength
 To look his trouble in the face, it seemed
 The shepherd's sole resource to sell at once
 A portion of his patrimonial fields.
 Such was his first resolve; he thought again,
 And his heart failed him. "Isabel", said he
 Two evenings after he had heard the news,
 "I have been toiling more than seventy years,
 And in the open sunshine of God's love
 Have we all lived; yet if these fields of ours
 Should pass into a stranger's hand, I think
 That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
 Our lot is a hard lot; the sun himself
 Has scarcely been more diligent than I;

And I have lived to be a fool at last
 To my own family. An evil man
 That was, and made an evil choice, if he
 Were false to us; and if he were not false,
 There are ten thousand to whom loss like this
 Had been no sorrow. I forgive him -but
 'Twere better to be dumb than to talk thus.

"When I began, my purpose was to speak
 Of remedies and of a cheerful hope.
 Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel; the land
 Shall not go from us, and it shall be free;
 He shall possess it, free as is the wind
 That passes over it. We have, thou know'st
 Another kinsman -he will be our friend
 In this distress. He is a prosperous man,
 Thriving in trade- and Luke to him shall go,
 And with his kinsman's help and his own thrift
 He quickly will repair this loss, and then
 He may return to us. If here he stay,
 What can be done? Where everyone is poor,
 What can be gained?"

At this the old man paused,
 And Isabel sat silent, for her mind
 Was busy, looking back into the past times.
 There's Richard Bateman, thought she to herself,
 He was a parish boy -at the church door
 They made a gathering for him, shillings, pence,
 And halfpennies, wherewith the neighbours bought
 A basket, which they filled with pedlar's wares;
 And, with this basket on his arm, the lad
 Went up to London, found a master there,
 Who, out of many, chose the trusty boy
 To go and overlook his merchandise
 Beyond the seas; where he grew wondrous rich,
 And left estates and moneys to the poor.
 And, at his birthplace, built a chapel, floored
 With marble which he sent from foreign lands.
 These thoughts, and many others of like sort,
 Passed quickly through the mind of Isabel,
 And her face brightened. The old man was glad,
 and thus resumed: "Well Isabel! this scheme
 These two days, has been meat and drink to me.
 Far more than we have lost is left us yet.
 We have enough -I wish indeed that I
 Were younger- but this hope is a good hope.
 Make ready Luke's best garments, of the best
 Buy for him more, and let us send him forth
 Tomorrow, or the next day, or tonight;
 If he could go, the boy should go tonight."

Here Michael ceased, and to the fields went
 forth
 With a light heart. The housewife for five days

Was restless morn and night, and all day long
 Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare
 Things needful for the journey of her son.
 But Isabel was glad when Sunday came
 To stop her in her work; for, when she lay
 By Michael's side, she through the last two
 nights

Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep;
 And when they rose at morning she could see
 That all his hopes were gone. That day at noon
 She said to Luke, while they two by themselves
 Were sitting at the door, "Thou must not go;
 We have no other child but thee to lose -
 None to remember- do not go away,
 For if thou leave thy father he will die."
 The youth made answer with a jocund voice;
 And Isabel, when she had told her fears,
 Recovered heart. That evening her best fare
 Did she bring forth, and all together sat
 Like happy people round a Christmas fire.

With daylight Isabel resumed her work;
 And all the ensuing week the house appeared
 As cheerful as a grove in spring; at length
 The expected letter from their kinsman came,
 With kind assurance that he would do
 His utmost for the welfare of the boy;
 To which, requests were added, that forthwith
 He might be sent to him. Ten times or more
 The letter was read over; Isabel
 Went forth to show it to the neighbours round;
 Nor was at that time on English land
 A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel
 Had to her house returned, the old man said,
 "He shall depart tomorrow." To this word
 The housewife answered, talking much of things
 Which, if at such sort notice he should go,
 Would surely be forgotten. But at length
 She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.

Near the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Gnyll,
 In that deep valley, Michael had designed
 To build a sheepfold; and, before he heard
 The tidings of his melancholy loss,
 For this same purpose he had gathered up
 A heap of stones, which by the streamlet's edge
 Lay thrown together, ready for the work.
 With Luke that evening thitherward he walked;
 And soon as they had reached the place he
 stopped,
 And thus the old man spake to him: "My son,
 Tomorrow thou wilt leave me; with full heart
 I look upon thee, for thou art the same
 That wert a promise to me ere thy birth,
 And all thy life hast been my daily joy.
 I will relate to thee some little part

Of our two histories; 'twill do thee good
 When thou art from me, even if I should touch
 On things thou canst not know of. After thou
 First cam'st into the world -as oft befalls
 To newborn infants- thou didst sleep away
 Two days, and blessings from thy father's tongue
 Then fell upon thee. Day by day passed on,
 And still I loved thee with increasing love.
 Never to living ear came sweeter sounds
 Than when I heard thee by our own fireside
 First uttering, without words, a natural tune;
 While thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy joy
 Sing at thy mother's breast. Month followed
 month,

And in the open fields my life was passed
 And on the mountains; else I think that thou
 Hadst been brought up upon thy father's knees.
 But we were playmates, Luke; among these hills,
 As well thou knowest, in us the old and young
 Have played together, nor with me didst thou
 Lack any pleasure which a boy can know."
 Luke had manly heart; but at these words
 He sobbed aloud. The old man grasped his hand,
 And said, "Nay, do not take it so -I see
 That these are things of which I need not speak.
 Even to the utmost I have been to thee
 A kind and a good father, and herein
 I but repay a gift which I myself
 Received at others' hands; for, though now old
 Beyond the common life of man, I still
 Remember them who loved me in my youth.
 As all their forefathers had done; and when
 At length their time was come, they were not
 loath
 To give their bodies to the family mold.
 I wished that thou shouldst live the life they
 lived;
 But, 'tis a long time to look back, my son,
 And see so little gain from threescore years.
 These fields were burthened when they came
 to me;
 Till I was forty years of age, not more
 Than half of my inheritance was mine.
 I toiled and toiled; God blessed me in my work,
 And till these three weeks past the land was
 free.
 It looks as if it never could endure
 Another master. Heaven forgive me, Luke,
 If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good
 That thou shouldst go."

At this the old man paused;
 Then, pointing to the stones near which they
 stood,

Thus, after a short silence, he resumed:
 "This was a work for us, and now, my son,

It is a work for me. But lay one stone -
 Here, lay it for me. Luke, with thine own hands.
 May, boy, be of good hope- we both may live
 To see a better day. At eighty-four
 I still am strong and hale; do thou thy part;
 I will do mine. I will begin again
 With many tasks that were resigned to thee:
 Up to the heights, and in among the storms,
 Will I without thee go again, and do
 All works which I was wont to do alone,
 Before I knew thy face. Heaven bless thee, boy!
 Thy heart these two weeks has been beating fast
 With many hopes; it should be so -yes -yes -
 I knew that thou couldst never have a wish
 To leave me, Luke; thou hast been bound to me
 Only by links of love; when thou art gone,
 What will be left to us! But I forget
 My purposes. Lay now the cornerstone,
 As I requested; and hereafter, Luke,
 When thou art gone away, should evil men
 Be thy companions, think of me, my son,
 And of this moment; hither turn thy thoughts,
 And God will strengthen thee; amid all fear
 And all temptation, Luke, I pray that thou
 Mayst bear in mind the life thy fathers lived,
 Who, being innocent, did for that cause
 Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee well -
 When thou return'st, thou in this place will see
 A work which is not here: a covenant
 'Twill be between us; but, whatever fate
 Befall thee, I shall love thee to the grave."

The shepherd ended here; and Luke stooped
 down,
 And, as his father had requested, laid
 The first stone of the sheepfold. At the sight
 The old man's grief broke from him; to his heart
 He pressed his son, he kissed him and wept;
 And to the house together they returned.
 Hushed was that house in peace, or seeming
 peace,
 Ere the night fell; with morrow's dawn the boy
 Began his journey, and when he had reached
 The public way, he put on a bold face;
 And all the neighbours, as he passed their
 doors,
 Came forth with wishes and with farewell
 prayers,
 That followed him till he was out of sight.

A good report did from their kinsman come,
 Of Luke and his well doing; and the boy
 Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous news,
 Which, as the houswife phrased it, were
 throughout

"The prettiest letters that were ever seen."
 Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.
 So, many months passed on; and once again
 The shepherd went about his daily work
 With confident and cheerful thoughts; and now
 Sometimes when he could find a leisure hour
 He to that valley took his way, and there
 Wrought at the sheepfold. Meantime Luke began
 To slacken in his duty; and, at length,
 He in the dissolute city gave himself
 To evil courses; ignominy and shame
 Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
 To seek a hiding place beyond the seas.

There is a comfort in the strength of love;
 'Twill make a thing endurable, which else
 Would upset the brain, or break the heart;
 I have conversed with more than one who well
 Remember the old man, and what he was
 Years after he had heard this heavy news.
 His bodily frame had been from youth to age
 Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks
 He went, and still looked up to the sun and
 cloud,
 And listened to the wind; and, as before,
 Performed all kinds of labour for his sheep,
 And for the land, his small inheritance.
 And to that hollow dell from time to time
 Did he repair, to build the fold of which
 His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet
 The pity which was then in every heart
 For the old man - and 'tis believed by all
 That many and many a day he thither went,
 And never lifted up a single stone.

There, by the sheepfold, sometimes was he seen
 Sitting alone, or with his faithful dog,
 Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.
 The length of full seven years, from time to
 time,
 He at the building of this sheepfold wrought,
 And left the work unfinished when he died.
 Three years, or little more, did Isabel
 Survive her husband; at her death the estate
 Was sold, and went into stranger's hand.
 The cottage which was named the Evening Star
 Is gone - the ploughshare has been through the
 ground
 On which it stood; great changes have been
 wrought
 In all the neighbourhood; yet the oak is left
 That grew beside their door; and the remains
 Of the unfinished sheepfold may be seen
 Beside the boisterous brook of Greenhead Ghyll.

B. THE EXPLICATION OF "MICHAEL"

Wordsworth makes the first 39 lines of his poem to serve as an 'introductory passage'. Only in the fortieth line he begins to tell us who Michael is, where and when he lives, what kind of life he leads, how and why he lives that way.

To begin with, Wordsworth gives us an invitation as well as information about going to Greenhead Ghyll.

If from the public way you turn your steps
Up the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll,
You will suppose that with an upright path
Your feet must struggle; in such bold ascent
The pastoral mountains front you, face to face.
(1-5)

In those lines Wordsworth asks the reader to walk upstream along the brook. He also tells us that the journey will be difficult especially if we used to walk on the plain asphalted road that Wordsworth describes as the 'public way'.

But then he assures us not to give up easily because of the hard excursion, saying:

But, courage! for around that boisterous brook
The mountains have all opened out themselves,
And made a hidden valley of their own.
(6-8)

The poet wants to make us believe that we will not get lost.

Then the poet continues:

No habitation can be seen; but they
Who journey thither find themselves alone
With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and
kites
That overhead are sailing in the sky.
It is in truth an utter solitude;
(9-13)

Here Wordsworth describes the silence that occupies the

valley. But those who often visit that place will see some, if not many, sheep. These sheep give the idea that despite the solitude there are human beings there. The 'kites that overhead are sailing in the sky' are also the evidence of the existence of men.

So far, the poet admits that he need not tell all about the valley. But he feels important to draw our attention to one object we might pass but might not notice. Then he says:

Beside the brook
 Appears a straggling heap of unhewn stones!
 And to that simple object appertains
 A story -unenriched with strange events,
 Yet not unfit, I deem, for the fireside,
 Or for the summer shade.

(16-21)

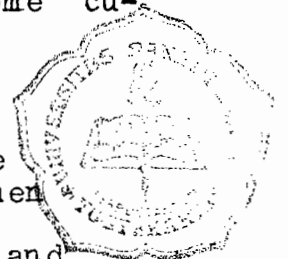
The shapeless crowd of unhewn stones that lie together, though simple, is pregnant with story. It is very clever of Wordsworth to say so as to make the reader become curious to read the next lines:

----- . It was the first
 Of those domestic tales that spake to me
 Of shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men
 Whom I already loved; not verily
 For their own sakes, but for the fields and
 hills
 Where was their occupation and abode.

(21-26)

Wordsworth means to say that he loves the life of the shepherd dearly, because of the place of their continued residence and work, namely the fields and hills.

In the lines below, the poet means to say that the tale of Michael, heard when he was still a boy, takes a root in the heart of Wordsworth. It impressed him so



much that in such early age he was able to think of and feel for human life. The lines are, as follows:

And hence this Tale, while I was yet a boy
 Careless of books, yet having felt the power
 Of Nature, by the gentle agency
 Of natural objects, led me on to feel
 For passions that were not my own, and think
 (At random and imperfectly indeed)
 On man, the heart of man, and human life.
 (26-33)

In the next three lines, Wordsworth decides to tell the very story to the others. He says:

Therefore, although it be a history
 Homely and rude, I will relate the same
 For the delight of a few natural hearts:
 (34-36)

Here, 'a few natural heart' means those who have a special feeling towards nature. In this case, Wordsworth is inclined to say that only certain people will be able to enjoy the pleasure of listening to his story.

However, ending his 'introductory passage', the poet expresses his hope to his successor poets to mold something from this tale of Michael. Let us have a look to what he says:

And, with yet fonder feeling, for the sake
 Of youthful poets, who among these hills
 Will be my second self when I am gone.
 (37-39)

Now, we come to the story of Michael itself. To start with, let us pay attention to these lines:

Upon the forest-side in Grasmere Vale
 There dwelt a shepherd, Michael was his name;
 An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.
 His bodily frame had been from youth to age
 Of an unusual strength: his mind was keen,
 Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs,
 (40-45)

From those lines, we learn that Michael is a physically as well as mentally strong and firm man. We are also told that he is able to handle any problem he faces in his life and work.

How he is different from others apparent in the subsequent lines:

And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt
 And watchful more than ordinary men.
 Hence had he learned the meaning of all winds,
 Of blasts of every tone, and, oftentimes,
 When others heeded not, he heard the South
 Make subterraneous music, like the noise
 Of bagpipers on distant Highland hills.

(46-52)

Unlike the other shepherds who seek refuge everytime they hear the sudden rush of wind, Michael keeps on working. To Michael who hears 'the meaning of all winds', the frightening sound is just the same as that of the bagpipes being played on the nearest hills. It drives out the travellers, peasants, and many others, but not Michael. Then the poet says further:

The shepherd, at such warning, of his flock
 Bethought him, and he to himself would say,
 "The winds are now devising work for me!"
 And truly, at all times, the storm, that drives
 The traveller to a shelter, summoned him
 Up to the mountains: he had been alone
 Amid the heart of many thousand mists,
 That came to him, and left him, on the heights.

(53-60)

Saying "The winds are now devising work for me!", Michael sets to work on the hill himself. He believes in nature. He is convinced that the whole universe and every created thing always do him good. Therefore, he has no reason to be afraid of any change in weather.

She was a woman of a stirring life,
 Whose heart was in her house: two wheels she
 had
 Of antique form; this large, for spinning
 wool;
 That small, for flax; and if one wheel had
 rest,
 It was because the other was at work.

(79-85)

Like Michael, his wife whose name is Isabel is described by Wordsworth as a frugal housewife who loves to stay at home doing her main duty, weaving.

Then the poet continues the lines to tell us that:

The pair had but one inmate in their house,
 An only child, who had been born to them
 When Michael, telling o'er his years, began
 To deem that he was old, -in shepherd's phrase,
 With one foot in the grave.

(86-90)

The last line above is meant by the poet to stress that Michael is really very old when his son was born. The shepherd feels that he is approaching his death when God gives him Luke.

Living in the valley is not very easy for the family. Therefore, they all have to work together to make the life go round. The way they work is stated by the poet with the words 'endless industry'. Following are the lines that describe the activities done by the family:

When day was gone,
 And from their occupations out of doors
 The son and father were come home, even then,
 Their labour did not cease; unless when all
 Turned to the cleanly supper-board, and there,
 Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed milk,
 Sat round the basket piled with oaten cakes,
 And their plain home-made cheese.

(95-102)

Returning home, they still have many things to do. Hardly do they have time to sit idle. The only intermission is the supper-time. By that time, they all get together encircling a table and have their meal, the frugal home-made meal of pottage and milk.

Then the poet continues:

Yet when the meal
 Was ended, Luke (for so the son was named)
 And his old father both betook themselves
 To such convenient work as might employ
 Their hands by the fireside; perhaps to card
 Wool for the housewife's spindle, or repair
 Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe,
 Or other implement of house or field.

(103-109)

By looking at those lines, we can conclude that the family never stop working. Having finished eating, they are exposed to a bundle of work that lies awaiting.

Then Wordsworth draws our attention to the lamp that the housewife lights every evening. The old lamp has been faithfully making a company to the family for years. It is also because of the very lamp, which gives its continuous light, that Michael's house is then named the Evening Star.

So far, the poet tells that old Michael loves his wife allright. But then he declares that the 'son of his old age' is even dearer to him. It is apparent from the lines that say:

Than that a child, more than all other gifts
 That earth can offer to declining man,
 Brings hope with it, and forward-looking
 thoughts,
 And stirrings of inquietude, when they
 By tendency of nature needs must fail.

(146-150)

Here, we are also told about the reason Michael gives to behave so. It is simply because above everything in the world, a son is the most important gift as to bring the hope of the continuance of generation and occupation. For this reason, Michael shows the tenderly woman's care to his son. To feel his 'act of tenderness', let us pay attention to the following lines:

Old Michael, while he was a babe in arms,
 Had done him female service, not alone
 For pastime and delight, as is the use
 Of fathers, but with patient mind enforced
 To acts of tenderness; and he had rocked
 His cradle, as with a woman's gentle hand.
 (153-158)

The desire of Michael to be always together with Luke continues in the next lines:

And, in a later time, ere yet the Boy
 Had put on boy's attire, did Michael love,
 Albeit of a stern unbending mind,
 To have the young-one in his sight, when he
 Wrought in the field, or in his shepherd's
 stool
 Sat with a fettered sheep before him stretched
 Under the large old oak, that near his door
 Stood single, and, from matchless depth of
 shade,
 Chosen for the shearer's covert from the sun,
 Thence in our rustic dialect was called
 The Clipping Tree, a name which yet bears.
 (159-169)

Not a moment passes when Michael is not having his son in his side. The boy had not yet been able to wear his clothes himself, when his father brought him to work. Then the father and son sit under the large old oak tree while watching their sheep. Then the poet goes on with:

There, while they two were sitting in the shade,
 With others round them, earnest all and blithe,
 Would Michael exercise his heart with looks

Of fond correction and reproof bestowed
 Upon the child, if he disturbed the sheep
 By catching at their legs, or with his shouts
 Scared them, while they lay still beneath the
 shears.

(170-176)

It is under the very tree that old Michael instructs his child in the art of shearing sheep. From the very first Michael has taught his son to be good to animals. Michael tells Luke not to torture or scare the sheep.

God blesses the child so that he becomes a healthy lad. The time comes for Michael to pass on the task of guarding the sheep to the lad. Then the father makes a tool from a thicket of underwood and small trees to equip the boy with. Of course the falling heir of occupation to Luke is only a matter of ceremony. It is impossible for a boy of his age to do the work. Yet, Michael, being very happy and proud on seeing the growth of his son, becomes unaware that Luke is not that helpful. As the poet puts it:

There stood the urchin, as you will divine,
 Something between a hindrance and a help;
 (188-189)

Day by day the son grows bigger and bigger. Now that he is ten years old, he is strong enough to guard the sheep. Nobody is happier than Michael. So says the poet:

-----that from the Boy came
 Feelings and emanations -things which were
 Light to the sun and music to the wind;
 And that the old man's heart seemed born again?
 (200-203)

Saying 'light to the sun', the poet means that like the

sun, Luke enlightens the world and makes everything bright; and not the sun that bakes the world with its merciless heat. And 'music to the wind' suggests the idea of melodious sound of the wind's blow. To Michael, Luke is that kind of wind; And not the wind whose blow frightens and spans people. In other words, Luke brings happiness and delight to Michael who has 'one foot in the grave'

Accordingly, Michael becomes even happier to see Luke growing into an adolescent. These two lines explain it:

And now, when he had reached his eighteen year,
He was his comfort and daily hope
(205-206)

Then the poet tells us that Michael now falls on evil days, and is called upon to discharge a huge debt which he has guaranteed.

Now let us try to look at Michael's development of thought as he faces this problem through these lines:

----- . This unlooked-for claim,
At the first hearing, for a moment took
More hope out of his life than he supposed
That any old man ever could have lost.
(217-220)

Here, the stout-hearted Michael seems to lose his hope and become desperate. But, let us continue seeing the next lines:

As soon as he had armed himself with strength
To look his trouble in the face, it seemed
The shepherd's sole resource to sell at once
A portion of his patrimonial fields.
(221-224)

First Michael thinks of selling a portion of his patrimo-

nial fields. But then he realizes that the loss of the fields would be for him an equivalent to betrayal in any other occupation or trade. The poet continues saying:

Such was his first resolve; he thought again,
And his heart failed him.

(225-226)

Here, Michael gains a new strength. His heart is full of hope upon the thought of sending his only son, Luke, to work for a kinsman in the city. The unlucky shepherd then tells his plan to his beloved wife in such a way that the simple woman does not feel sad. Gently and lovingly Michael says:

"When I began, my purpose was to speak
Of remedies and of cheerful hope.
Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel; the land
Shall not go from us, and it shall be free;
He shall possess it, free as is the wind
That passes over it.

(242-247)

Then Michael also talks about another relative who promises to give his help to Luke as soon as the boy arrives in the city. The very thought is really a consolation for the couple. They become even happier when suddenly their minds run through Richard Bateman. To know who he is, let us have a look at these lines:

There's Richard Bateman, thought she to herself,
He was a parish-boy; -at the church-door
They made a gathering for him, shillings, pence
And halpennies, wherewith the neighbours bought
A basket, which they filled with pedlar's wares;
And, with this basket on his arm, the lad
Went up to London, found a master there,
Who, out of many, chose the trusty boy
To go and overlook his merchandise
Beyond the seas; where he grew wondrous rich,
And left estates and monies to the poor,
And, at his birth-place, built a chapel, floored
With marble which he sent from foreign lands.

(258-270)

Here, they learn that a young man has gone to the city and has prospered and grown 'wondrous rich'. He is the person whom the village people respect to and proud of. Being rich, he does not forget his homeland and fellow people. The quick-wandering of their thoughts lead them to the final decision: Sending Luke to town as soon as possible. It was apparent in the line that says:

If he could go, the boy should go tonight."
(282)

Then Isabel is busy preparing everything for their son's journey. Describing this, the poet says:

----- . The housewife for five days
Was restless morn and night, and all day long
Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare
Things needful for the journey of her son.
(284-287)

However, the poet means to say something when he writes these lines:

But Isabel was glad when Sunday came
To stop in her work; for when she lay
By Michael's side, she through the last two
nights
Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep:
And when they rose at morning she could see
That all his hopes were gone.
(288-291)

Here, we can see that the decision to send Luke to town is only a harsh, for later it is proved to be a trouble. Michael is restless in his sleep; He knows that with the son's departure, the established pattern of the family life will surely turn to be out of order. But now, let us first continue tracing their development of thought by looking at these lines:

----- . That day at noon

She said to Luke, while they two by themselves
 Were sitting at the door, "Thou must not go:
 We have no other child but thee to lose,
 None to remember; -do not go away,
 For if thou leave thy father he will die."
 (293-298)

Isabel is not unaware of what is troubling her husband. She than asks their son not to leave them for if he does otherwise, Michael will die of misery. However in the next lines, we are told that Isabel becomes re-assured by her son's confident answer. And also a letter sent by the kinsman about promising the pair to guarantee Luke's welfare leaves Isabel not even a bit of doubt. She becomes so happy that she reads the letter again and again. She even shows it to the neighbours.

Now we come again to the 'heap of stones' that in the very beginning is already pointed at by the poet. The father and son are to say good-bye here. At first, Michael tells his son the story of their own lives. Here Michael means to tell his son how important he is to Michael. Therefore his departing to town is too hard for Michael, because it might loosen their relationship. Let us see these lines:

And thus the old man spake to him: -"My son,
 Tomorrow thou wilt leave me: with full heart
 I look upon thee, for thou art the same
 That wert a promise to me ere thy birth,
 And all thy life has been my daily joy.
 (331-335)

These farewell words however move the manly heart of the boy. Luke than cannot help crying. Old Michael certainly feels sorry for this, yet he goes on:

Even to the utmost I have been to thee

A kind and good father: and herein
 I but repay a gift which I myself
 Received at other's hands; for, though now old
 Beyond the common life of man, I still
 Remember them who loved me in my youth
 (361-366)

Michael tells his son that he still remembers his father's love upon him. And now Michael loves his son in turn. The shepherd, therefore, expects his son to appreciate that kind of love. The poet continues:

Both of them sleep together: here they lived,
 As all their forefathers had done; and when
 At length their time was come, they were not
 loth
 To give their bodies to the family mold.
 I wished that thou should'st live the life
 they lived:

(367-371)

Here, Michael claims, by implication, the son's loyalty and devotion to continue the task. Michael then asks Luke to lay one stone of the sheepfold with his own hand. This gesture, according to Michael, is very important. So he repeats the request again and again. The first time is in the lines that say:

----- . But, lay one stone, -
 Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own
 hands.

(386-387)

The two persons then promise each other to do their own parts; And the stone becomes the witness of their 'vow'. Again, Michael, Michael asks his son to lay the stone for the second time, saying:

----- . But, I forget
 My purposes. Lay now the corner-stone,
 As I requested,-----

(403-405)

In front of the very stone Michael reminds his son to

pray as to avoid any temptation and evil he might encounter in the city. Luke then lays the corner-stone, the father weeps over him, and he departs for the city.

Then, in the next lines that follow, Wordsworth gives us the impression that everything seems to be going on very well, saying:

A good report did from their kinsman come,
Of Luke and his well-doing: and the boy
Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous news,
Which, as the housewife phrased it, were
throughout
"The prettiest letters that were ever seen."
(431-434)

Accordingly, both parents are very happy. They now work with all their hearts.

But then, suddenly the poet reports to us that Luke begins to neglect his duty. And we are briefly informed that he commits several crimes. The boy, then, has to hide out as far as possible.

Now let us see what the poet says about this through the lines that say:

There is a comfort in the strength of love;
'Twill make a thing endurable, which else
Would upset the brain, or break the heart:
(448-450)

Those lines suggest the idea that the power of love turns everything good and bearable. And it is proved to be true to Michael as we go on to the next lines:

He went, and still looked up to sun and cloud,
And listened to the wind; and as before,
Performed all kinds of labour for his sheep,
And for the land, his small inheritance.
And to that hollow dell from time to time
Did he repair, to build the fold of which
His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet
The pity which was then in every heart

For the old man -and 'tis believed by all
 That many and many a day he thither went,
 And never lifted up a single stone. (453-466)

Here, we learn that old Michael, despite his heartbreak, still does his daily work. The tragic thing here is the fact that he 'never lifted up a single stone'. We cannot see any use of his continuing to build the sheepfold. For whom then the sheepfold built? His son will never come back, and Michael himself, no matter how strong and stout he is, will be unable to keep on struggling against the hardness of the world.

And then, as the story goes on, old Michael always sits on the sheepfold with a faithful dog keeping him company. Finally, he died and left the unfinished -or never finished- sheepfold. The poet continues his tragic tale as follows:

Three years, or little more, did Isabel
 Survive her husband: at her death the estate
 Was sold and went into a stranger's hand. (473-475)

The word 'survive' suggests that the death of Isabel, on the contrary, does her good. It takes three years for her to assume the burden of being a widow. Accordingly, an outsider takes the advantage of her death, that is, occupying the small inheritance.

Ending his poem, Wordsworth describes the significantly-changed-place results from the departing of Luke. The Evening Star is darkened and darkened and finally disappeared. Yet the Clipping Tree remains there. And the unfinished-sheepfold -to which the tale of Mi-

chael developed- is still left on the other side of Greenhead Ghyll stream.

If we observed this poem thoroughly, hardly do we find the poet's own comment on the character of Michael. Wordsworth simply plays the role of narrator. Through many details that he gives to us, we learn what kind of life Michael leads and the reason why Michael is closely attached to it. The poet makes the story of Michael flow as naturally as it is and lets the readers get the dramatic effect of the poem by themselves.

Talking about Isabel, for example, Wordsworth plays with words cleverly that we get the impression that Isabel is a simple, faithful, and diligent housewife who likes to stay at home running their small industry.

And also when the poet describes Michael, he gives us as many details as possible to show the great courage of Michael. At the very beginning, we are told that Michael runs his own small land by himself. He has to work hard in spite of the rain, thunder, and bad weather. Yet he never complains for he loves his work and his small estate. He deeply believes that he should maintain the work and the land he inherits from his forefather. His intention becomes even stronger when God gives him a son to whom Michael is to pass on the occupation.

Then we learn that Michael is forced to agree to stand surety for his nephew. However, he does not want to break up and sell off his small estate which his son will inherit soon. So Michael decides to try to pay off

this forfeiture by sending his son, Luke, off to work in the city. Here, one may accuse that poor Michael being selfish when he 'sacrifices' his son to work in town. But such prejudice or accusation is entirely not true. Conversely, Michael always makes any effort for the sake of his beloved son. He, therefore, never expects that the result of sending Luke to the city turns up to be the opposite -the unwanted one- .

As mentioned above, Wordsworth makes the story of Michael go as naturally as possible. He does not make up or overdramatize Michael's course of life. From the very first we have got the idea that Michael is a physically and mentally strong person. Wordsworth does not attempt to give us contradictory impressions upon Michael, for instance, by saying that he died of heart-break. As a human being, Michael is also capable of being sad, disappointed, and grieving. But Michael, our hero, does not leave at that and easily give up. A hero is also a man of his words. He had said to Luke before the boy went to the city that he would always love his son ever after, no matter what sort of life Luke led. We'd better look at the lines that say so:

-----; but, whatever fate
 Be fall thee, I shall love thee to the last,
 And bear thy memory with me to the grave,
 (416-418)

Therefore, Michael does not react with anger or savage manner when he hears the news about Luke's misbehaviour. Here, Wordsworth tries to be consistent in describing the character of Michael. And then, the shepherd's action of

'never lifted up a single stone' shows two attitudes. First, he is not angry at the son in spite of his disappointment. And the second attitude is his being faithful to his own 'vow' to do his part in building the sheepfold. Times and reality may change, but values or things that Michael firmly believes in should remain the same.

And by way of summary, there are some values which Wordsworth wishes us to learn from. Wordsworth believes that enduring affection towards the homeland helps someone to maintain the family structure. A person with shaky personality may easily forget the already-established family structure once he is dissolved by the city life. We can compare Richard Bateman with Luke. The first has strong domestic affection. He is convinced that his heart is still in his homeland, therefore he feels responsible to share his property for the welfare of his own village and fellow people. Whereas the second person, Luke, becomes so much absorbed by the way city people live that he neglects his main duty and his parents, too.

Wordsworth also tells us that individuality of people living in the city makes them less civilized. The only thing they want to grasp is power and wealth. In order to obtain that thing, they feel justified to forbid any manner which sometimes are out of the humanitarian grounds. Michael's family, for instance, becomes the victim of such people.

Finally, the poet comes to the opinion that love conquers all. Besides the strong and firm person-

ality of Michael, there is love that enables him to bear the suffering to the rest of his life.

CHAPTER IV

THE TEACHING OF POETRY

A. THE VALUE OF TEACHING POETRY TO ENGLISH LEARNERS

Literature always relates all aspects of man with the world in which the man exists. It does not give us certain concrete knowledge, such as chemistry, physics, mathematics, and so forth. Therefore, we will find it meaningful only after we analyze it, scrutinize it, and dig the deepest meaning out of it.

Poetry as a part of literature has a simple form but a deep meaning. The study of poetry gives to the students a wider outlook to the world and all the problems faced by its society. It provides the students with the understanding of many different meanings and implications of his or her own culture and those of foreign culture. The importance of imparting to each individual, in any system of education, a comprehensive insight into cultures is strongly suggested by H.L.B. Moody in his The Teaching of Literature.⁹⁾

Apart from that, the language of poetry which is brief and musical, gives enjoyment to students. Thus it may remain longer in their mind. The message conveyed in poetry will take root in the heart of the students more

⁹⁾ H.L.B. Moody, The teaching of Literature, Longman Group Ltd, London, 1971, p. 8

deeply than the long tiring explanation, which might leave them bewildered and bored. When tiredness or boredom occupies the students, teacher's explanation becomes useless. Here, the teacher would be better to find out the cause or causes why the students behave so. Maybe the topic is too difficult or uninteresting. If the topic being discussed is at all interesting, and if is comprehensible, much of the pressure normally associated with a language class will be off, anxiety will be lowered, and acquisition will result.¹⁰⁾

So far, the study of poetry always involves the four skills, namely Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Writing. In the skill of Reading, for example, our ultimate goal is to enable the students to 'read everything'. The extraordinary language of poetry trains the students to interpret, theorize, and sense many structural and lexical meanings of sentences.

Poetry is a verbal art form which needs to be read aloud if one wants to comprehend it. To listen to a poetry reading, one needs attentiveness, concentration, and total attention. And it is not an easy job; one needs a lot of practice. If he gets used to listening to such reading as poetry, automatically, he improves his listening skill. The students usually get difficulties in comprehending English utterances. As we know, spoken English

¹⁰⁾ Stephen D. Krashen, Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition, Pergamon Press Ltd., Oxford OX3 0BW, England, 1982, p. 74

shows a marked contrast between its stressed and unstressed syllables which largely accounts for its characteristic rhythmic-pattern.¹¹⁾ The students find it hard to distinguish which words are stressed and which are not. As a result, the ideas they get sometimes differ from what are actually meant. So, listening for correcting pronunciation is important. And also, all elements contained in a poem such as alliteration, assonance, intonation, rhythm, and so on help to create the total aesthetic impression and inform the students about the speech patterns of English.¹²⁾

What the students listen, then affects their ability to speak. Not only do they increase their vocabulary, but also their ability to pronounce the English words in a correct way.

Finally, in the part of Writing skill, the study of poetry plays an important role in developing the students' power of imagination. We know that to most of English learners, Writing skill is the hardest activity. The students do not know what and how to write. Having read, retold, and listened to the works of many poets, the students obtain enough materials to be reproduced in the written form.

¹¹⁾ W. Stannard Allen, B.A., Living English Speech, Longman Group Limited, London, 1974, p. 1

¹²⁾ John Christopher Maher, op. cit., p. 18

B. THE CRITERIA FOR CHOOSING POETRY

The criteria for choosing poetry may be grouped under the headings of 'formal' and 'cultural'. The first is to point out the characteristics of the language used in a poem. And the second refers to the value of the poem.

I. Formal Criteria

1. Structure

The structure should be simple enough so that a student can understand the poem on a level which satisfies him or her. The structure used should enable the student to react to the poem with pleasure, not bewilderment. The poem entitled "The Twins" by an anonymous author below is a good example.

The Twins¹³⁾
(anon.)

I have two friends,
Named Peter and Paul,
And Paul's as tall as Peter,
And Peter's as tall as Paul
Each one has freckles in his nose
And one tooth missing
In each of his rows;
You can't even tell them
By their clothes-
They're the same with Peter and Paul
When you say, "Hi, Peter!" It's never he -
It's Paul
Paul and Peter, and Peter and Paul
They look the same, and no one at all
Can tell Paul from Peter,
Or Peter from Paul
Excepting Paul and Peter.

¹³⁾ Kathryn Jackson, The Bedtime Book of 365 Stories, Hamlyn Publishing Group Limited, London, 1977, p.163

2. Vocabulary

The students must understand the meaning of, at least, 50% of the vocabularies used in a poem. The unfamiliar words should appear only in a small number -about 10 words- on every poem given. Jan Struther's "The Policeman" has six new words which the teacher needs to explain. They are 'solemnly', 'blunt', 'kipper', 'crib', 'gait', and 'jovial'. The rest are already known by the students.

The Policeman¹⁴⁾
by Jan Struther

Every few hours
Throughout the night
He comes to see
That the square is all right
Slowly and solemnly
Round he goes
On his great blunt toes,
Shifting his very
Portentuous weight
From side to side
With a rolling gait,
He flashes his lantern
Up and down;
His brows are bent
In an ominous frown;
To see him you think
No thief would dare
To crack a crib
In Sycamore Square.
Yet when he is at home
You'll probably find
He's a jovial man
And extremely kind
Who likes his pint
And a kipper for tea
The same as you -
Or, at any rate me.

¹⁴⁾ A. Rita Kaye, B.A. (Hons.), Happy Lines Fourth Book, Cassell and Company, LTD., London E.C.4, p. 13

3. Brevity

The poem should be short enough to be presented in 10 or 15 minutes, otherwise the students will show their boredom. Take as an example the "Dust of Snow" by Robert Frost. It is brief but interesting.

Dust of Snow¹⁵⁾
by Robert Frost

The way a crow
Shook down on me
The dust of snow
On a hemlock tree

Has given my herat
A change of mood
And save some part
Of a day I had rued

II. Cultural Criteria

1. Moral Value

The next thing should be taken into account after dealing with the formal constraints mentioned before is the content of the poem. We should present something worth learning to our students. Let's have a look at Joyce Kilmer's poem entitled "Trees". The words of wisdom in that poem may excite the students. So, the moral value of a poem may simply be defined as the lessons, experience, or events that we can learn from. It may teach us wisdom, good behaviour, loyalty, adoration to God, and so on. We need to select poems which enable the students to get a better sense what is worthwhile and what is not.

¹⁵⁾ Cleanth Brooks, JR and Robert Penn Warren, Understanding Poetry, Henry Holt and Company, Inc., New York, 1938, p. 175

Trees¹⁶⁾
by Joyce Kilmer

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.



The Interest of the Students

The following are some factors which influence the interest of the students in the poem we choose.

2.1. Topic

Firstly, we should choose the most suitable topic. Its suitability is largely determined by (a) its relation to the material suggested in the curriculum, (b) the age of the students, and (c) the background of the students.

A student from the Biology Department, for example, might be excited as he is given a poem entitled "Gallant" by Diana M. Buttershaw which describes a complete details of a dog in a very simple but interesting choice of words. Another student from the Language Department might find it boring. A curriculum, therefore, is designed to alleviate that problem. So, the teacher has to find poems

¹⁶⁾ B. Juhn Meyer, An Anthology of Poetry, Van Goor Zonen, Den Haag, 1965, p. 94

having relationship with the topic given in the curriculum according to the departments the students belong to.

Gallant¹⁷⁾
by Diana M. Buttershaw

You played so clumsily, stood with such easy
grace,
A naughty, bouncing puppy, with a lovely face.

Long ears you had, and big bewitching eyes,
So sad they were, and very, very wise.

Great floppy paws, strong legs, heavy and tough,
You pounced with them, yet you were seldom
rough.

Happy you scampered down the paths and lanes,
Free from the kennel's bars, the coupling
chains.

Deep snowy chest, proud noble look which said,
"I shall be lord of the pack" -now you are
dead.

Eating and sleeping and playing, not dreaming
of dying
To Peter the Saint you have gone, in his arms
you are lying.

SMA students, for example, are mostly aged between 15 and 18 years. Therefore, nursery rhymes, if they are childish or have childish associations, may not be suitable for them to learn. But not all nursery rhymes are childish, anyway. Take as an example this nursery rhyme: "I Had a Little Nut Tree". There is a slight of political satire implied in that poem. However, the SMA students are mature enough to understand it. Now, let's enjoy it.

I had a little nut-tree¹⁸⁾
Nothing would it bear
But a silver nutmeg

¹⁷⁾ A. Rita Kaye, B.A. (Hons.), op. cit., p. 30

¹⁸⁾ John Christopher Maher, loc. at.

And a golden pear;
 The King of Spain's daughter
 Come to visit me,
 And all for the sake
 Of my little nut-tree

We should see the background of the students from many aspects, such as genus, religion, socio-economic, and so on, In a class which has Moslem student majority, then Christmas poems seem to be uninteresting to them.

2.2. Uniqueness

Usually, students are interested in something new, something different from the others -something unique-. Unlike the other literary works, a poem is unique in its style, form, music, etc. It says more in fewer words. Also, a poem is unique in the way it presents the topic or content. It has many various ways. In his poem, "The Mer-ry Fellow", Charles Kingsley makes an earnest request to human beings to protect nature. He personifies a bird for that purpose. Another author, the anonymous one, appeals the same thing to us through a poem entitled "The Park". Although we give the students the same topic, they hardly become fed up as they get something different from the previous given poem. They find something new. The students have read the importance of preserving the beautiful, fresh, and healthy environment in the newspapers, magazines, slogans, and so forth. The time is now, to teach them that thing through poems. It sounds like a propagan-da, but it is not bad to try. And now let us look at the following two poems and see how they are different one to another, yet they convey the same message.

The Merry Fellow¹⁹⁾
by Charles Kingsley

Oh! I wish I were a tiny brown bird from the
south,
Settled among the alder-holts, and twittering
by the stream;
I would put my tiny tail down, and put my
tiny mouth,
And sing my tiny life away in one melodious
dream.

I would sing about the blossoms, and the
sunshine and the sky,
And the tiny wife I mean to have in such a
cosy nest;
And if someone came and shot me dead, why then
I could but die,
With my tiny life and tiny song just ended at
their best.

The Park²⁰⁾
(anon.)

If I owned the park,
If the park were mine,
I'd never put up a single sign
That said, "Don't pick flowers!"
Or, "Don't climb trees!"
Or, "Please don't feed
The animals, please!"
I'd just put up one that said, "Hello!
Please go wherever you'd like to go,
And do whatever you'd want to do-
If the park were yours,
And the animals, too."

2.3. Surprise

The poem we choose should satisfy the students' curiosity. It should enable the students to get excited with. People at their age usually like something mysterious, surprising, and challenging. Let's see the following poem written by Ogden Nash.

19) A. Rita Kaye, B.A. (Hons.), op. cit., p. 62

20) Kathryn Jackson, op. cit., p. 76

The Purist²¹⁾
by Ogden Nash

I give you now Professor Twist,
A conscientious scientist.
Trustees exclaimed, "He never bungles!"
And sent him off to distant jungles.

Camped on a tropic riverside,
One day he missed his loving bride.
She had, the guide informed him later,
Been eaten by an aligator.
Professor Twist could not but smile.
"You mean", he said, "a crocodile."

Having finished reading the first stanza of the poem, the students are eager to know what the next stanza is about. They want to see the proof of the prudence of Professor Twist. But they will surely burst into laughter as they read the last line of the poem. They are satisfied.

2.4. Rhyming

To begin with, let us have a look at this poem:

Pease-porridge hot,²²⁾
Pease-porridge cold,
Pease-porridge in the pot
Nine days old.

Nothing very important is being said, but the students may enjoy the music of those lines. The poem presents rhythmical pleasure and opportunity for fun with words. A harmonious combination of music, symbols, and choice of words in a poem makes it attractive to the students. They can sing it with delight everyday for a considerable time because they are interested in it. By repeating it with enjoyment, they will keep the poem sticking in their mind.

21) B. Juhn Meyer, op. cit., p. 106

22) Laurence Ferrine, op. cit., p. 639

2.5. Sensuousness

The choice and use of words, style or manner of saying something used by a poet determined the sensuousness of his poem. A poem is sensuous as it appeals to the reader's mind. Using figures of speech in his poem, a poet affects us, makes us sense and feel what is said in the poem. "The Eagle" by Alfred, Lord Tennyson is an excellent example of a sensuous rhythmical poem. The poet uses diction such as 'claps', 'crag', 'crooked'-all begin with 'c'- that have the connotations of grandeur, greatness, and majesty of the eagle. Tennyson says, 'The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls' instead of saying 'The bird flies over the sea'. Here, the word 'crawls' gives a sense of complete surrender of the sea under the magnificence of the eagle.

The Eagle²³⁾
by Alfred, Lord Tennyson

He claps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ringed with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

3. Culture

In foreign-language learning, two language, and indeed two cultures, come into contact. No doubt that sometimes misunderstanding arises, especially when the learner does not have sympathetic understanding of the culture

²³⁾ Laurence Perrine, op. cit., p. 549

setting of the target language.²⁴⁾ The smaller the difference between the two languages is, the easier it is for the students to understand that foreign language in terms of culture. Langston Hughes in his "Sharecroppers" talks about the lot of the African farmers. They have to work hard in the fields, yet all the harvest goes to the white men. And the Negroes then have nothing left. The same thing happened to Indonesian farmers during the Dutch colonialism. The similarity between those two events helps the Indonesian students to understand the poem better. But it does not necessarily mean that we reject every culture that is strange to us. As we discussed before, it is the many different cultures that can enrich our view. However, we have to tell our students 'step by step' in order not to make them startled or even shocked.

Sharecroppers²⁵⁾
by Langston Hughes

Just a herd of Negroes
Driven to the field,
Plowing, planting, hoeing,
To make the cotton yield.

When the cotton's picked
And the work is done
Boss man takes the money
And we get none

Leaves us hungry, ragged
As we were before,
Year by year goes by
And we are nothing more

²⁴⁾ Qin, Xiu-bai, "Some Reflection on the Teaching of vocabulary", English Teaching Forum Vol XX, Number 3, July 1982, p. 38

²⁵⁾ B. Juhn Meyer, op. cit., p. 105

Than a herd of Negroes
 Driven to the field
 Plowing life away
 To make the cotton yield.

C. THE METHOD OF PRESENTING POETRY

After selecting poetry, we can move to the next step, that is presenting it to our students. H.L.B. Moody suggests six stages of which the first two of them are selecting steps.²⁶⁾ The six stages are Preliminary assessment, Practical Decisions, Introduction, Presentation, Discussion, and Reinforcement.

Preliminary assessment and Practical Decisions are activities done by the teacher at home. He should study first what kind of poetry he wants to teach, which aspects of poetry he likes to stress. He, then, can make a list of questions to discover the 'approach' of the poem such as whom the poet addresses his poem to -a particular person or human being in general-, in what form does the poem represent -a conversation or an internal monologue-, does the poem have symbolic meaning or entirely explicit one, and so on. Having discussed those questions, he can make a choice. Here, the length of the poem, the emotional and intellectual maturity of the students, and some other aspects should be taken into account.

At the stage of Introduction, the teacher needs to find some informations about the students for instance,

²⁶⁾ H.L.B. Moody, op. cit., p. 30

their physical condition, the activities they have been doing recently, their interest, etc. The purpose is for helping the teacher to introduce the poem to the students. The ability of the teacher to relate the current-events or recently-done-students' activities with the poem he is going to present greatly influences the curiosity and interest of the students upon the poem. Therefore, at this stage, the teacher is to make an 'approach' as interestingly as possible.

The fourth stage, namely Presentation, involves the teacher and the students. The teacher reads the poem or makes use of recording of poetry spoken by famous actors or the teacher himself. The teacher has to pay attention to the pronunciation, sound, stress, rhythm, tone, and clarity of the voice. Then the students read the poem two or three times. Here, the teacher is not allowed to make any comment on the poem. It will be discussed later in the next step.

At the stage of discussion, the teacher follows this sequence: General (first impressions), then Particular (detail), and then General (conclusions). Firstly, the teacher asks the students to see the general idea of the poem by asking such questions as: Who is speaking in the poem? What is he thinking about? How is the situation? The teacher can go through the details of the poem after all those questions have been already answered. He can ask about the syntax, metaphor, allusions, and many other elements used in the poem. Afterwards, the discussion should

be directed to the final stage of generalization. Unlike generalizing the first impressions, here the teacher gives the students some evaluative questions. The questions are more 'why' rather than 'what' the poet writes. The point is to make the students active, sensitive, and critical towards their environment. Moody gives the example of questions such as: Why did the poet choose this subject? Do many people experience the same thing/feeling/thought? How could this problem be illustrated in our own country? What effect does the poem have on you?

The last stage, Reinforcement, is an optional activity. It is done only if there is a favourable reaction from the students towards the poem. The activities can be carried out either orally or practically. The examples of the first form of activity are reading, memorizing, and dramatizing the poem. Whereas through practical activities the students can rewrite/paraphrase the poem, interpret the intercultural theme, make research or further reading concerning the poem, and so on. Those activities can be done individually or in group.

Besides Moody's method, there is another possible method to present poetry to our students.

Step 1:

The teacher reads the poem twice to the class while the students follow. The students, then, repeat line per line. Here, the teacher does not need to explain anything about the poem. The purpose is to let the students enjoy first and get accustomed to the rhythm, sound, and 'music' of

the poem. After repeating for several times, the students are asked to read the whole poem by themselves. The teacher listens and corrects the wrong-spoken-utterances.

Step 2:

If the first step aims at enabling the students to master 'beautiful poetry reading', then the following steps are meant to make the students understand what is said in the poem. The teacher asks the students to read the poem once again silently. Meanwhile, the teachers writes on the blackboard some questions to help the students grasp the general idea of the poem. Being able to read in a good way, it would not be too difficult for the students to anticipate what the poem is about. A good and correct reading helps much in understanding the text. Only significant key words that are essential to the understanding of the poem should be explained. The rest will be learned by the students themselves through context.

Step 3:

Before dealing with the details of the poem, the teacher has to make sure that all the students have understood the general idea of the poem. Then, the teacher gives several more-detailed-questions about the poem. Now the students cannot easily copy the answers from the words or phrases from the text. The questions are comprehensive ones which need to be worked out seriously. In order to answer those questions, the students have to relate their own knowledge or experience with the content of the poem. Since it is a little bit difficult task to do, they can

work in groups. Each group consists of not more than 5 students as to make sure that everybody in the group is working. Then the spokesman of each group comes up to report the result of the discussion. Concerning group-work, there is another technique as follows: There are, for instance, 10 questions to be answered. The teacher divides the students into several groups of 10 students. If there are 40 students in class, then there will be four groups. Each group is to discuss all the ten questions given. To guarantee that everyone is working, the teacher can then make new groups. When the four groups have finished discussing, the teacher chooses randomly one student from every group. The four students then get together to make a new group to rediscuss question number 1. The teacher then chooses again another students from every group to form a group to answer question number 2, and so on. Every single student of the new group has to say something based on the points he or she has already discussed in his or her 'old group'. By doing so, the teacher can easily recognize who works and who does not.

Step 4:

Finally, at the end of the lesson, the teacher is to ask the students to read the poem once again or to memorize it as to enrich their stocks of vocabularies.

Step 5:

This step can be carried out in class immediately if it is possible. However, if there is not enough time, we can give it to the students as home assignment. If the stu-

dents seem to be excited with the poem learned in today's lesson, the teacher can give them homework concerning the very poem. We can ask the students to collect articles from the newspapers or magazines about the current-events related to the topic of the poem. As a matter of fact, there are still so many kinds of activity which can be done by using the poem as stimulus. Besides writing essay and compiling articles as mentioned above, the teacher can hold writing-poem competition, reading-poem contest, drama basee on the poem, and so forth.

Sometimes the students do not give good response towards the poem given in today's lesson. Maybe the topic is not interesting for the students, or maybe the poem is too difficult. If it is the case, then the teacher should not get upset and stop giving poem because of that 'failure'. Instead, the teacher can offer the students to choose a poem for the next lesson. Usually the students are happy when their choices or ideas are taken into consideration. This attitude encourages them to study the subject wholeheartedly.

CONCLUSION

It does not seem to be very easy to awaken the love to read poetry, when it has to compete with beautiful books, radio, television, VTR, and many other alternative forms of entertainment. Most people tend merely to accept the fact that poetry whose language is out of the ordinary is difficult to master. They just leave to that and make no effort to deal with it. Instead, they prefer to take delight in having the instantaneous-enjoyable-amusements.

Despite its difficulty, poetry offers us worthy, deep, and profound experiences to enrich our lives. Thus, poetry affords us to see the world and its various problematic matters with wider outlook and greater understanding.

Through his poem entitled "Michael", William Wordsworth tries to show us that domestic affection is the only moral cement to maintain the family structure. He also tells us that self-interest and indifference of people living in the city may destroy the so-called civilization. Being a nature poet, he strongly believes that the rural life, though simple and backward, is really a high life in which cooperation, love, and mutual understanding grow rapidly among its people. Finally, the poet feels certain that the power of love strengthens people in their suffering, sorrow, and misery.

Regarding the value of poetry that gives purpose and direction to human life, the writer is convinced that

poetry is also aplicable to language teaching. Besides its capability to broaden the students' knowledge and character, the teaching of poetry, if rightly undertaken, will also facilitate the needed skills in language learning.

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