

**FORMALISTIC READING ON TENSION AND THEME IN TWO POEMS:  
CHARLES TOMLINSON'S *WINTER ENCOUNTERS* AND ROBERT FROST'S  
*THE VALLEY'S SINGING DAY***

Henrikus Joko Yulianto – Semarang State University

**Abstract**

A poetic text has its own aesthetic values through its form and language. This statement was proposed by a movement called Formalism and later was known as New Criticism. The movement assumed that the aesthetic qualities of a poem are revealed in its poetic devices such as imagery, meter, symbol, and the like. New Critics assumed that an interpretation of a poetic text in regard to the author or the historical background will bring about what they called as the Intentional and Affective Fallacies. Otherwise, a poetic text will convey a certain meaning through its own devices. New Critics assume that language devices of poetic works embody some paradoxes or discordant and contrary qualities. Not only focusing on ambiguity, irony, and paradox, the New Critics also find out a tension or a reconciliation of the conflicts through a close reading on the poetic devices of the works themselves. Meanwhile, a poetic work will also suggest a certain central idea or theme. In this case, a close reading of the two poems is meant to find similarities and differences of the tension and theme in both poems.

Key Words: Formalism, New Criticism, Tension, Ambiguity, Irony, Paradox, the Intentional and Affective Fallacies

**Introduction**

A literary movement that flourished in a certain period will set forth a particular perspective to literary genres such as Fiction but especially to poetic works. Romanticism as one remarkable movement in English Literature was especially famous for its poetic works of great poets such as William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Keats, and many others. Wordsworth in his manifesto "Lyrical Ballads" written together with Coleridge, stated that "poetry was a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" or "emotions recollected in tranquility" (Tilak 1999:15). As literary movement developed and moved forward in the following periods,

the views on poetry also changed. Modernism as the movement that came after Victorian Period was also prominent in its views on poetry. One of the famous modern poets, T.S. Eliot in his writing *Tradition and Individual Talent*, proposed some arguments that were contrary to Wordsworth's views. Eliot argued that poetry was not a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings recollected in tranquility, but it was "an escape from emotion and personality" (Baym & Gottesman, 1986: 1827). These two different views on poetry show a tension between the two perspectives on the aesthetic values of poetry.

In accordance with Wordsworth's notion on poetry, another British Romantic poet,

Samuel Taylor Coleridge stated that “poetry brings ‘the whole soul of man’ into activity” (Daiches 1982:105). In his manifesto, *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge discussed tension in poetry. As a work of literature, poetry is different from other works such as works of science in which the former proposes its object more on pleasure rather than truth and bases more on imagination rather than on fancy (Raine 1985:190-191, 195). Coleridge stated that a poet has tasks to reconcile the discordant qualities such as the general and the concrete, the idea and the image, the individual and the representative, and the like (Daiches 1982:104).

### **Literature Review**

Reading and appreciating a literary work can start at the literary text itself. One method of approaching a work will also correspond with the emergence of the literary movements or schools of thought especially when the experts or say, literary critics agree on adopting the literary approach as a method or an approach to the work. The way or method that a critic uses in approaching and analyzing a literary work is called ‘criticism’. Bressler defines ‘criticism’ as “a disciplined activity that attempts to describe, study, analyze, justify, interpret, and evaluate a work of art” (1999:4). He further elucidated that literary critics may

carry out their activities in two ways – theoretical criticism that deals with theories, principles, and tenets of the nature and value of art and practical criticism or applied criticism that adopts the theories and tenets of theoretical criticism to a particular work (1999: 5). With these two criticisms, a critic can appreciate, analyze, and evaluate a literary work.

A group of critics called new critics began to assert their criticism toward the previous literary views on literary works especially those which were propounded by Romanticism and Victorianism. The different views on appreciating poetry will influence the ways to interpret the meaning of poetry in general. Some literary approaches have appreciated a poetic text as an artifact that reflects the poet’s personality or a historical background in which the poem was written. The approaches also assumed that the poetic work embodies its own aesthetic qualities that one can not relate to other aspects outside the work. One of the movements and also criticisms focusing on the aesthetic intrinsic aspects of a poetic work is Formalism and later known as New Criticism.

The word ‘formalism’ was derived from ‘form’ that refers to the shape and texture of a poetic text itself. Kennedy and Gioia call ‘form’ as “the design of a thing as a whole the

configuration of all its parts” (2002:213). Guerin & Labor (1999:74) said that form has meant more than sentence patterns. It includes the relationship of stanzas in a poem, or the interplay of an octave and a sestet in a sonnet. Meanwhile, Holman & Harmon (1992:202) stated that ‘form’ refers to “the organization of the elementary parts of a work of art in relation to its total effect.” They categorize ‘form’ into some kinds, such as ‘verse form’ that means the organization of rhythmic units; stanza form that refers to the organization of lines in groups (1992:202).

Formalism as a literary movement and one approach or criticism is defined as “a criticism that emphasizes the form of the artwork, with ‘form’ variously construed as generic form, type, verbal form, grammatical and syntactical form, rhetorical form or verse form” (Holman & Harmon, 1992 : 203). The movement began as a school in Russia around 1920 by members such as Viktor Šklovskij, Roman Jakobson, Vladimir Propp, Boris Tomaševskij, and so on (1992:203). New Criticism was a literary movement that sustained the literary practices of Russian Formalism and flourished in America in the 1930s by the critics such as John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, R.P. Blackmur, Robert Penn Warren, and Cleanth Brooks. The movement also prospered in England led by

critics such as T.S. Eliot, I.A. Richards, and William Empson (1992:316-317). Holman & Harmon defined the term ‘New Criticism’ as “the whole body of criticism that concentrates on the work of art as an object in itself; subjects the work to close analysis” (1992:317).

They further said that the movement was primarily a protest against certain conventional and traditional ways of viewing life and art. The New Critics were formerly protesting against the New Humanism and they insisted that the morality and value of a work are present in intrinsic qualities of the work. Their concern was with image, symbol, and meaning (1992:317). Leitch (1988:26) quoted Cleanth Brooks’ statement on characteristics of the New Criticism:

First, New Criticism separates literary criticism from the study of sources, social backgrounds, history of ideas, politics, and social effects, seeking both to purify poetic criticism from such “extrinsic” concerns and to focus attention squarely on the “literary object” itself. Second, New Criticism explores the structure of a work, not the minds of authors or the reactions of readers. Third, New Criticism champions an “organic” theory of literature rather than a dualistic conception of form.

Brooks gave some other characteristics of New Criticism as follows:

FIRST, New Criticism separates literary criticism from the study of sources or extrinsic concerns such as social

backgrounds, history of ideas, etc. SECOND, New Criticism explores the structure of a work, not the minds of authors or the reactions of readers. THIRD, New Criticism focuses on the words of the text in relation to the full context of the work: each word contributes to a unique context and derives its precise meaning from its place in the poetic context. FOURTH, New Criticism practices close reading of individual works, examining/taking account of nuances of words, rhetorical figures, and shades of meaning of a work. FIFTH, New Criticism distinguished literature from both religion and morality because many of its adherents have definite religious views and seek no substitute for religion, morality, or literature (Leitch, 1988:26-27).

By applying 'close reading' approach in a poetic analysis, one can find the diverse nuances of a poetic text as revealed in its elements. Tension as one aspect that New Critics focus on, means the resolution of opposites and especially concerns with its components, irony and paradox (Guerin & Labor 1999:90). The component is also called 'ambiguity' (Bressler 1999:44). The poem's meaning, therefore, is derived from the oscillating tensions and conflicts that come to the surface through poetic diction. The meaning of a poem does not reside in what the poet wants to say by his poem because

this assumption will bring what New Critics call 'the Intentional Fallacy'. In the same manner, the meaning is not found in the effects of the poem to the readers because this assumption will bring 'the Affective Fallacy.' The meaning of a poem is found in the elements of the poem (Belsey 1990:16-18).

This brief paper deals with a formalistic reading on two modern poems: Charles Tomlinson's *Winter Encounters* (WE) and Robert Frost's *The Valley's Singing Day* (VSD). The first one is a modern British poet while the second one is a modern American poet. The two poems tell about seasons. The former describes some scenes in winter while the latter recounts a scene in the past of a rainy day. In Tomlinson's poem, the images reveal pairing elements such as house and hollow; village and valley-side; roof and cloud, and some others. Meanwhile, in Frost's poem, one can find ambiguity in denotative and connotative meaning of the imageries such as valley's singing day and some others related to the title.

### **Discussion**

Before discussing the tension and theme of the two works, let's read the poems:

WINTER ENCOUNTER  
by Charles Tomlinson

House and hollow; village and valley-side:

The ceaseless pairings; the interchange  
In which the properties are constant  
Resumes its winter starkness. The hedges' barbs  
Are bared. Lengthened shadows  
Intersecting, the fields, seen parceled smaller  
As if by hedgerow within hedgerow. Meshed  
Into neighborhood by such shifting ties,  
The house reposes, squarely upon its acre  
Yet with softened angles, the responsive stone  
Changeful beneath the changing light:  
There is a riding-forth, a voyage impending  
In this ruffled air, where all moves  
Towards encounter. Inanimate or human,  
The distinction fails in these brisk exchanges –  
Say, merely that the roof greets the cloud,  
Or by the wall, sheltering its knot of talkers,  
Encounter enacts itself in the conversation  
On customary subjects, where the mind  
May lean at ease, weighing the prospect  
Of another's presence. Rain  
And the probability of rain, tares  
And their progress through a field of wheat –  
These, though of moment in themselves,  
Serve rather to articulate the sense  
That having met, one meets with more  
Than the words can witness. One feels behind  
Into the intensity that bodies through them  
Calmness within the wind, the warmth in cold.

### The Valley's Singing Day by Robert Frost

The sound of the closing outside door was all.  
You made no sound in the grass with your footfall,  
As far as you went from the door, which was not far;  
But you had awakened under the morning star  
The first-song bird that awakened all the rest  
He could have slept but a moment more at best  
Already determined dawn began to lay  
In place across a cloud the slender ray  
For prying beneath and forcing the lids of sight,  
And loosing the pent-up music of over-night.  
But dawn was not to begin their 'pearly-pearly'  
(By which they mean the rain is pearls so early,  
Before it changes to diamonds in the sun),

Neither was song that day to be self-begun.  
 You had begun it, and if there needed proof –  
 I was asleep still under the dripping roof,  
 My window curtain hung over to sill to wet;  
 But I should awake to confirm your story yet;  
 I should be willing to say and help you say  
 That once you had opened the valley's singing day.

Firstly, let's talk about ambiguity. The term 'ambiguity' is defined as "the state of having more than one meaning, with resultant uncertainty as to the intended significance of the statement" (Holman & Harmon, 1992:14). Meanwhile, the term 'tension' was formerly introduced by Allen Tate. This latter word means "the integral unity that results from the successful resolution of the conflicts of abstraction and concreteness, of general and particular, of denotation and connotation" (1992:473). Other components, irony and paradox are defined as follows – "irony is a broad term referring to the recognition of a reality different from appearance" (Holman & Harmon, 1992:254). Meanwhile, Culler asserted a corresponding notion that irony would depend on the referentiality of the text. (1985:156). He classified irony into some types such as – situational or dramatic irony and verbal irony. The former presupposes two orders in contrast with one another and this type is usually found in fictional or dramatic works; whereas, the latter means "a set of expectations which enable the reader to sense the incongruity of an apparent level of

*vraisemblance* at which the literal meaning of a sentence could be interpreted and to construct an alternative ironic reading which accords with the *vraisemblance* which he is in the process of constructing for the text (1985:154-155). The term *vraisemblance* means the mask which conceals the text's own laws and also its relation to other texts (1985:139). 'Paradox' is another component of tension. Brooks once stated that 'the language of poetry is the language of paradox' (Culler 1985:162). Holman & Harmon define 'paradox' as "a statement that although seemingly contradictory or absurd may actually be well founded or true" (1992:342). Brooks assumed that a poetic discourse is ambiguous and ironical especially in its modes of qualification. The following discussion focuses on a comparison and contrast of the aspects in the two poems.

### **Tension in *Winter Encounters* and the *Valley's Singing Day***

*Winter Encounters* (WE) and *The Valley's Singing Day* (VSD) both describe natural sceneries in a different season. The former

presents an ordering of two objects while the latter depicts one single object, that must be rain the poet calls 'singing day'. Both poems embody ambiguity including irony and paradox in their own form and language. The tension would be a reconciliation of the discordant qualities of the poetic devices. In a word, the ambiguity and tension of the two poems may be compared and contrasted in view of their devices such as form, imagery (denotation and connotation), and figures of speech.

*WE* has a unique form, consisting of 29 lines written in a free verse and the lines are arranged in a one-to-one indented line

House and hollow; village and valley-side:  
The ceaseless pairings; the interchange

while in *VSD*, the meter has iambic and anapestic pentameter patterns, as in lines 1 – 2:

The sound of the closing outside door was all  
You made no sound in the grass with your footfall

The metrical patterns of the two poems show a paradox – discordant qualities between iambic – trochaic; and anapestic – iambic/trochaic. The **rhyme scheme** of *WE* does not present a regular rhythmic sound; whereas, *VSD* does have a rhythmic sound, patterned in a certain rhyme scheme – a a, b b, c c, d d, e e, etc. The different rhyme scheme in *WE* is appropriate to the atmosphere of the poem in which various

showing the conflict of the qualities. The form of the poem represents 'encounters' or meeting of some objects as the title says. Meanwhile, *VSD* has 20 lines, written in a pastoral form. *WE* begins with a descriptive ordering of two objects – "house and hollow; village and valley-side; the ceaseless pairings" (lines 1-2); whereas, *VSD* begins its lines with a rather narrative mode, which tells about the sound of rain – "the sound of the closing outside door was all" (line 1). The similarity of the two poems is that both are not written in a certain **stanzaic** pattern. In terms of **meter**, *WE* has alternating metrical pattern between trochaic and iambic pentameter:

objects are described in encounters with each other in a linear and somewhat straightforward movement so that it does not need any harmonious sounds of its rhyme scheme. Besides, all the events of the encounters are described in the present. Otherwise, in *VSD*, the rhyme scheme has the similar ending sound because the poem is a recount of past events so that the lines of the poem are more harmoniously rhyme schemed

than the lines of WE. Moreover, VSD tells about 'singing day' in which the imageries mostly appeal to auditory sense so that the lines in the poem should produce harmonious sound effects especially in its ending lines.

In terms of form and meter, the two poems show some similarities and differences. However, the conflicting elements of the two poems have been reconciled in view of the subjects the poems deal with. WE tells about encounters in winter in which things of different qualities meet in such a mutually shifting relation – “meshed into neighborhood by such shifting ties” (lines 7-8); therefore, the form and meter of the poem should figure out the encounter of discordant qualities of objects. Likewise, VSD recounts a sense of gratitude of a rainy season that took place 'three days ago'. The poem is like a chant that thanks for the coming of the rainy season so that the form and meter of the poem has to express a melodious and chant-like song.

Ambiguity, irony, and paradox also appear in imageries of the two poems. These can be apprehended especially in the conflict between denotative and connotative meaning of the imageries. In view of denotative meaning, WE presents imageries that appeal to visual sense such as 'house' and 'hollow', 'village' and 'valley-side'; whereas, VSD

expounds imageries that appeal to auditory sense such as 'sound', 'footfall', 'valley's singing day' as well as to visual and tactile sense, as in 'dripping roof', 'dawn', 'pearly-pearly', 'diamonds'. The titles of the two poems suggest ambiguity and paradox. The encounters in WE can mean encounters among people but the preliminary lines of the poem present imageries of inanimate objects, though in the following lines, human is also included, such as 'inanimate and human' and 'a knot of talkers'. In the same way, the valley's singing day in VSD is also ambiguous since the title can mean a day for singing songs in the valley. By reading the lines, one can find out one possible argument that the singing day here refers to the coming of a rainy season. Another ambiguity of the poem is shown in the first line that says – “the sound of the closing outside door was all” but then the second line says otherwise – “you made no sound in the grass with your footfall.” It means that there is an incongruity between the former presence of sound and the latter absence of sound. The word 'footfall' itself means 'the sound of a footstep' but line 2 distorts the presence of the sound by saying 'making no sound with footfall'. The line actually means that the poet heard the footstep in the grass but probably the sound was soft and almost inaudible as if there was

no sound. The third and fourth lines also show a paradox between the lines 'as far as you went from the door' that means 'far' and 'which was not far' that means 'near'. Again there is an incongruity between what is meant by the images 'far and near'.

In the same manner, imageries in WE do not only suggest a literal or denotative meaning as the images say. The words 'house' and 'hollow'; 'village' and 'valley-side' do not only refer to the physical house and

hollow but they represent people, man and woman. The oscillation between the two imageries is that 'house' is a manufactured object while 'hollow' is a natural one. Afterwards, the poem says that all, either animals or human has moved towards encounters (lines 13-14). However, the conflict of the two objects has come to a reconciliation that is shown by the vanishing discordance between the two –

The distinction fails in these brisk exchanges –  
Say, merely, that the roof greets the cloud  
Or by the wall, sheltering its knot of talkers  
Encounter enacts itself in the conversation (lines 15-18)

The reconciliation of the conflict is reached in the encounter of the two qualities – the harmony of different aspects:

These, though of moment in themselves,  
Serve rather to articulate the sense  
That having met, one meets with more  
Than the words can witness. One feels behind  
Into the intensity that bodies through them  
Calmness within the wind, the warmth in cold.

An imagery in line 12, 'a riding-forth, a voyage that is impending in the ruffled air' appeals to sense of movement (kinesthetic). The image is like a motion that drives all things to move towards encounter (line 14). The energy, therefore, is a tension that reconciles the discordant qualities in a more agreeable and congenial encounter – "Encounter enacts the main object that people are describing and also appreciating. The image 'rain' appeals to

itself in the conversation on customary subjects" (lines 18-19).

Another imagery in WE that is also found in VSD is 'rain' (lines 21-22). This image in both poems is something that people in the two poems is waiting for. In WE, 'rain' is considered as a kind of guest that his coming is expected; whereas, 'rain' in VSD becomes visual as well as tactile and kinesthetic senses. In WE, 'rain' has been presented in

contrary to another image, 'tares' (line 22) that means 'weed resembling corn'. Just as 'rain' that keeps moving, the 'tares' are also described to be in progress through a field of wheat (lines 23-24). In VSD, 'rain' comes as the noisy sound outside the house. Rain is compared to pearls and diamonds (lines 11 &

13). The pearls suggest 'soft rain' while the diamonds represent 'hard rain'. If the tension in WE is reached by the reconciliation of the two discordant objects into one, the tension in VSD appears in the narrator's acceptance of the falling rain as the beginning of a rainy season –

I should be willing to say and help you say  
That once you had opened the valley's singing day (lines 19-20)

In summary, the imageries in the two poems reveal irony and paradox. The paradox appears in the conflict between denotative and connotative meaning. However, the conflicts are reconciled in the tension between the two aspects. WE reaches the reconciliation in the incorporation of one quality into another; whereas, VSD proposes an acceptance of the beginning of a rainy season. It means that the way of reconciling the discordant qualities of imageries of the two poems is different from each other. Nevertheless, the result of the reconciliation is similar in which the two poems resolve the conflict with some encounters.

In regard to figures of speech, both poems use metaphor and personification. Through these figures of speech, ambiguity, irony, and paradox are also revealed. In WE, metaphors appear in the pairing – 'house' & 'hollow'; 'village' & 'valley-side', 'the ceaseless

pairings'. The next images are 'hedges barbs'; 'lengthened shadows' 'a riding-forth', 'ruffled air'; 'knot of talkers'; 'customary subjects'; 'a field of wheat'. The ambiguity and paradox of these metaphors relate to denotative and connotative meaning. Metaphor is a figure of speech that compares one thing to another thing. In this case, the imageries are metaphorical phrases that have connotative meaning and they refer to other things that the words may suggest. Thus, 'house' and 'hollow' may refer to man and woman; 'hedges barbs' are metaphors that mean discordant qualities; 'ruffled air' means snowy weather; 'knot of talkers' means a group of people; etc. In VSD, a metaphorical expression appears firstly in the title, 'the Valley's Singing Day' that refers to a rainy season in the valley.

The following imageries also figure out metaphorical expressions – 'sound' that refers

to the rain; 'door' referring to 'house' (synecdoche); 'morning star' is the sun; 'the slender ray' is a 'dim sunlight'; 'the lids of sight' refers to 'fog'; 'pent-up music of overnight' refers to 'all-night rain'; the rain is compared to pearls and diamonds; 'dripping roof' means 'a leaking roof'. The conflict appears on the one hand in the narrator's complaint about the rain that has made his window curtain soaked wet because his roof was dripping, but on the other hand, he has to wake up and proclaim his gratitude for the rainy season. Just as in WE, ambiguity and paradox appear in the conflict between

denotative and connotative meaning of the imageries.

The second figure of speech, *personification* appears in some lines in both poems. This figure of speech gives human attributes to inanimate objects. In WE, the lines such as 'the house *reposes*' (line 9) uses personification. The verb 'repose' is used for people. The verb means 'to lay to rest'. Another line, 'the roof *greet*s the cloud' (line 16), the verb 'greet' is also used for people. Meanwhile, in VSD, most of the lines use personification in which the verbs used for people are addressed for inanimate object, the rain –

You *made* no sound in the grass with your *footfall* (line 2)  
 As far as you *went* from the door, (line 3)  
 But you had *awakened* (line 4)  
 That once you had *opened* (line 20)

Metaphor and personification in the two poems create ambiguity and paradox between the denotative and connotative meaning. However, one can decipher the meaning of the figures of speech to achieve the reconciliation of the ambiguity by finding out the relation between the words as denotation and their possible nuances in figurative expressions.

### **Theme in *Winter Encounters* and *the Valley's Singing Day***

Before discussing the theme of the two poems, let's firstly find out what the term

'theme' means. Holman & Harmon define 'theme' as a central idea. They further state that in literary works such as poetry, fiction, and drama – *theme* is "the abstract concept that is made concrete through representation in person, action, and image" (1992:475).

Looking back at the previous discussion on the intrinsic elements of the two poems, the writer made a statement on the theme of the two poems. One of the possible central ideas of WE is "the need for everyone to live in a good relation with his fellows and surroundings regardless of any difference in

social background and other aspects.” Another possible corresponding statement is that “there is no other meaningful thing in life but being with others.” The statement can be deciphered in the elements such as form, imagery, and figures of speech. This

statement is already suggested by the title of the poem ‘winter encounters’ that means the meeting of one with others and also with their surroundings. In the following lines, the idea on the meaning of the encounter is also asserted –

There is a riding-forth, a voyage impending  
In this ruffled air, where all moves  
Towards encounter. Inanimate or human  
The distinction fails in these brisk exchanges –  
Say, merely, that the roof greets the cloud  
Or by the wall, sheltering its knot of talkers  
Encounter enacts itself in the conversation  
On customary subjects, (lines 12-19)

The image ‘riding-forth’ means a kind of motion that moves either human or inanimate beings to encounter with one another. The image ‘ruffled air’ as a metaphor refers to ‘snowy weather’. In the same manner, the image signifies a busy or hectic atmosphere,

the setting where human and inanimate beings have encountered. Thus, the encounter is like a reconciliation of the discordant qualities in congenial and neighborly terms, as stated in the following lines –

Encounter enacts itself in the conversation  
On customary subjects, where the mind  
May lean at ease, weighing the prospect  
Of another’s presence, rain (lines 18-21)

The last line of the quotation above shows the highest point of tension where the encounter of discordant aspects has brought forth reconciliation and an expectation of some prosperity.

The last lines of the poem assert the idea on the need for encountering in favor of reconciliation of the different qualities –

That having met, one meets with more  
Them the words can witness. One feels behind  
Into the intensity that bodies through them  
Calmness within the wind, the warmth in cold (lines 26 – 29).

On the contrary, the theme of VSD is somewhat different from the one in WE. Though both poems tell about an experience in some seasons, the imageries of the two are somewhat different. In WE, the idea on the meaning of man's recollection with his surroundings is expressed through the encounter of objects of different qualities. In VSD, the similar idea is expressed in the narrator's appreciation of the coming of the rainy season. Thus, one possible statement of the latter poem's theme is "one should nourish an awareness of carrying out his duty while being persevering and enthusiastic about seizing delightful moments in his life." The metaphor 'valley's singing day' or 'a rainy day'

I was asleep still under the dripping roof,  
My window curtain hung over the sill to wet;  
But I still awake to confirm your story yet;  
I should be willing to say and help you say (lines 16-19).

In this case, the awareness of one's duty and willingness to do oneself a favor correspond with his gratitude to the nature for showering the rain to the valley. The tension between disenchantment as stated in lines 16-17 and the awareness of one's duty as expressed in lines 18-19 shows an irony and paradox of the poem. The reconciliation of the conflict is by an agreement and appreciation of the narrator for showing his gratitude for the rainy day. This reconciliation is almost similar

means a blessing or success that everybody wishes to achieve.

In some ways, the idea is also suggested in WE where people also expect the coming of rain – "weighing the prospect of another's presence. Rain and the probability of rain, tares" (lines 20-22). In VSD, the image 'rain' is described as pearls in the beginning of a day (dawn or daybreak/line 11) and as diamonds in the afternoon (line 13). The 'rain' is a metaphor of 'singing day' and the image refers to moments of delight and joy that people wish. The idea on 'perseverance' and 'awareness of one's duty' is revealed in the lines –

to the one in WE in which the two discordant qualities fuse into one – 'calmness in the wind, warmth in cold.' In a word, the two poems convey an idea about one's wishes for delightful moments in his companionship with his surroundings.

### **Conclusion**

After reading the two poems in terms of formalistic approach, the writer concludes that tension and theme in the two poems are relatively similar. The two poems show

similarity and difference in form, imagery, and figure of speech. In topic, both poems tell about seasons. The difference is that WE describe a hectic encounter during winter, while VSD recounts a past scene of the coming of a rainy day. In form, they are similar. Both are not written in certain stanzaic pattern. But they are also different. WE has 29 lines while VSD has 20 lines. The former is written in one-to-one indented line showing an encounter of one and another object and indicating an irony and paradox of the discordant qualities. The latter is written in a pastoral poem. In rhyme scheme, the poems are also different. Since WE is written in the present, it does not present a certain rhyme scheme, while VSD is in the past and is has a rhyme scheme.

In imagery, the poems are similar in certain ways. First, both poems use certain imageries such as 'valley' and 'rain'. The image 'rain' is the one object that makes a central idea of the two poems. One imagery in WE, 'a riding-forth' seems to correspond with one image in VSD, 'a slender ray'. These two images appeal to sense of kinesthetic and mean a kind of flux or motion that in the former poem, it moves all towards encounter and in the latter one, it evaporates humid things and renews a day. Another difference is that WE presents imageries that appeal to

visual and tactile senses; whereas, VSD has imageries that appeal to visual and auditory senses. In figures of speech, WE uses metaphors while VSD presents personification. The metaphors in WE especially those that relate to the tension and theme of the poem are expressed in the last line – "calmness within the wind, warmth in cold." These metaphors embody a paradoxical but also a harmonious relation of the discordant qualities. Personification in VSD relate to the giving of human attributes to the rain, as the valley's singing day.

In summary, the tension in the two poems is expressed in the components - ambiguity, irony, and paradox and they are revealed in the form, imagery, and figures of speech of the poems. In WE, the ambiguity has been resolved in a reconciliation of the discordant qualities, while in VSD the reconciliation is achieved by the narrator's joyful and grateful expression for the rainy day. The theme of the two poems can also be deciphered in these elements. The similarity of the possible central idea of the two poems is that man should nourish a sense of compatibility with his fellows and his surroundings to make his life worth living. In a word, the two poems share a great idea about the importance of socializing with each other regardless of any background. The poems assert that the need for

intermingling with each other is for maintaining a convenient and compatible living.

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