CHAPTER II

WINTER IMAGERY

A substantial corpus of the poetry of William Carlos Williams is devoted to meaningful images of winter season as viewed and inwardly experienced by the poet in and around New Jersey. The poems, rich in botanical, zoological, geographical and astronomical images of winter, provide a rich scope for study, as the perceptive mind of the reader can experience and observe the positive as well as the negative aspects of winter. Winter—a phenomenon of nature has inspired many poets a number of times. For Williams it does not remain just a cold season but serves as a condition of the mind which in consonance with its harsh exterior form seems to usher in the allied images in his lyrical outbursts. At times Williams found it as the cruelest season with dark, dreadly despair and disappointment giving rise to dulling of senses when creative faculties of human mind too seemed to go in a period of suspended animation and deep hibernation. Strikingly it was, a black wintry cloud which had inspired Williams, too, as a poet to make an early attempt at versification to give it the form of a poem 'Black Cloud' and also at the same time to acquire a sense of criticism within him. He himself confesses this fact: "The first line I ever wrote came out of the blue, with no past."
A black, black cloud
flew over the sun
driven by fierce flying
rain.

The thrill, the discovery. At once, at the same instant
I said to myself, ridiculous, the rain can't drive the
clouds.' So the critical thing was being born at the
same time.¹ This "critical thing" only separated Williams
from Romanticism and he could develop in him a typical
American style of writing. This development of imagination
helped in burgeoning of his poetic traits.

In the descriptions of various seasons, specially
the botanical aspects of nature, trees seem to fascinate
Williams recurrently. However, among such images, a
voluminous representation of trees has its significant
important with relation to the winter season in both
light and dark imagery. A unique sample exhibiting serenity
can very well be analyzed with reference to 'Winter Trees':

All the complicated details
of the attiring and
the disattiring are completed!
A liquid moon
moves gently among
the long branches.
Thus having prepared their buds
against a sure winter
the wise trees
stand sleeping in the cold. (CEP, 201)
The trees depicted take on splendid attires. The introductory lines of the poem call for an interesting surveillance of the anxious plants that get ready to dress up properly for the occasion. Humanization, with easily distinguishable attributes of emotional phenomena, are associated with "attiring" and "disattiring," as if the trees, in the excitement of participating in the festival of the winter season, change their dresses repeatedly: hence the expression "complicated details" seems to be self-explanatory. The botanical imagery appears like a resplendent painting as the "liquid moon" is artistically placed in the background of the picture thus viewed by the poet. A closer examination of the image reveals a startling artistry of the poet who attributes to the moon, as juxtaposed to the static trees, a sense of smoothly flowing dynamicity, thus lending a unique synaesthetic dimension to the expression "liquid moon." In fact, here terrestrial objects in the foreground are romantically viewed against a distant astronomical component of nature, thus the sense of relativity causing the visual perception of the fluid movement of the moon seen in slow motion. The compositions of the visuals is highlighted in the seemingly vertical slow dynamicity of the moon as juxtaposed against the horizontal "long branches." The concluding part of the poem depicts the sense of completion of a project dealing with preparing the "buds" of the mother trees "against" a "winter" that
is "sure" to come. Such a sense of preparedness to welcome the "sure winter" seems to have the moonlit aura of a much coveted peace and quietude as the trees that are significantly "wise," seem to have a good sleep in spite of the "cold" winter. Obviously, scrutinized in terms of either an imagistic piece of painting or as a photographic image arrested in the lens of Williams, the poem justifies the poets' balanced art of meticulously blending a sense of romanticism in his poetic diction of imagism, the poem Meaningfully exhibiting his art of economy in using a relatively small number of words that explains the depiction of a seemingly large canvas of visuals condensed in such an engrossing poem of only ten lines.

On the other hand, the moon imagery of Williams may very well be utilized as being juxtaposed in imagination against woman imagery, as in 'The Cold Night':

It is cold. The white moon
is up among her scattered stars--
like the bare thighs of
the Police sergeant's wife--among
her five children...
No answer. Pale shadows lie upon
the frosted grass. One answer:
It is midnight, it is still
and it is cold... !
White thighs of the sky! a
new answer out of the depths of
my male belly: In April...
In April I shall see again—In April!
the round and perfect thighs
of the Police Sergeant's wife
perfect still after many babies.
Oya! (CEP, 203)
The persona, obviously, is the poet-doctor who stands out both as a poet and a physician who has responded to an emergency call at night time in the severe winter of New Jersey. The similarity between the moon and the lower limbs of his patient is drawn on the assumption that a poetic imagery can be composed in a simile in which the two different ingredients under comparison may have just a single colour in common in the visuals concerned. The moon, in its astronomical location, is surrounded by "her scattered stars;" similarly, the woman in our terrestrial location is visualized "among" her own Satellites—"her five children." Far fetched as the comparison may appear, the moon and the disrobed female "thighs" have, in the eyes of Williams, a common whiteness of colour. The visibility in the cold night seems to be fair because probably the present moon is approximately a full moon, as the physician "shall see again" soon in the month of April the same thighs that are "round and perfect" like the moon he sees tonight. It is worthwhile noting that as the doctor stands under the open sky outside the shut door, he remains oriented to his artistic inclination associated with the winter, the moon, the stars, the paleness of "shadows," the "frosted grass," and the romantic atmosphere created by the "midnight." Apparently, to his queries there is a single "answer" that he can hear. However, some time elapses before the inmates of the room can come
to the door to open it. During this period the physician-turned-artist juxtaposes the earthly female thighs against the unearthly feminine sky: "White thighs of the sky!" Imagistic economy of diction is punctuated here with a skyscraping emotive phenomenon as the typical sign of exclamation may signify. A poet has no hesitation in confessing blatantly the arousal "Out of the depths" of his "male belly" which is the outcome of his momentary fantasy associated with the female anatomy of the "Police sergeants wife," who is beautifully "perfect" even "after many babies." Autobiographical in its element, the poem brings home the revelation that how Williams maintains an unceasing correlation between the artist and the scientist, in spite of his apparent monotony of assignments concerned with his regular gynaecological and obstetrical duties performed at odd hours. His own aesthetics in giving recognition to the charm of womanhood is underscored meaningfully as he seems to wait eagerly for delivering the sixth baby of the sergeants' wife in spring time, although at present the solitary physician stands shivering outdoor in the wintry night. However, the rounded moon and its dream-like rays, together with the phantasmal imagination of the persona can be assessed in terms of a positive light sensation in spite of the paradoxically opposite elements of a tiresome visit by our physician poet on being called by his patient on a cold night. Structurally, according to Townley Rod:
"The repetition of particular words and syntactic forms, joined with the repetition of key sounds, produces in the reader the illusion of a physical sensation, such as one may experience while watching a dancer and empathizing with his or her movements. One has the same sensation reading the last few lines of "The cold Night." As always when he is at his best, Williams manages to steer the poem away from mere flatness on the one hand, and stilted diction on the other."²

As noticed in the above two examples, winter imagery brings in often the astronomical elements in juxtaposition with geographical components of nature. 'Winter Sunset' seems to be a good example from this point of view:

Then I raised my head
and stared out over
the blue February waste
to the blue bank of hill
with stars on it
in strings and festoons—but above that:
One opaque
stone of a cloud
just on the hill left and right
as far as I could see;
and above that
a red streak, then
icy blue sky!
It was a fearful thing
to come into a man's heart
at that time; that stone
over the little blinking stars
they'd set there. (CEP, 127)

The residual "waste" piled up chaotically in the peak of the winter season does not disorient the poets' artistic
concept of colour-vision as the stretch of landscape upto the lower parts of the hill is envisioned in a stark blue colour. The picturesque quality of the image is highlighted by a cosmic arrangement of the stars on the horizon in "strings and festoons." The painting-like visual has a thick layer of cloud stretching out on both sides like a massive slab of stone that is positioned in between the lines of stars below and "a red streak" above caused by the rosy glimmer of sunset on the hill. The top layer of the visual comprises a pastel shade of "icy blue sky"—the imagistic synaesthesia underscoring the exhilaration of the viewer in the emotion-oriented terminal punctuation. One may find, on a closer examination, as many as six layers composed of different ingredients in the full corpus of the image: the blue residue of february month, the "blue bank" of the rough hilly terrain, the horizontal stretch of stars in delightful arrangements, the opacity of the stone-like cloud stretching all the way from "left" to "right," a layer of red glow of the setting sun, and finally, the topmost expanse of the "icy blue sky." Written in the first person, the adamic sensitivity of the persona stands out eminently as revealed in the poetic diction of Williams. However, the concluding part of the poem brings in an unavoidable possibility of a polarized dark sensation with reference to the sandwiching of the stone-like piece of "opaque" cloud in between the several other layers of light sensa-
tion. But such a spell of "fearful" anticipation is shown to belong to a transitory period of time as that dark thought was supposed to be present only "at that time." Hence it is right to interpret the 'Winter Sunset' in terms of a positive depiction of winter imagery. It is only the positive aspect of winter when "Williams, setting down in the warmth to write, would never get over his delight that the wind outside was raging ineffectually; and in his pronounced sense of comfort, he would write 'January,' (CEP,197)."

In fact the poet often tries his best to repel such fears bringing in recurrently an aura of silverlinings in visual containing cloudy associations, as in 'The Storm':

A perfect rainbow! a wide arc low in the northern sky spans the black lake

troubled by little waves over which the sun south of the city shines in
coldly from the bare hill supine to the wind which cannot waken anything

but drives the smoke from a few lean chimneys streaming violently southward (CLP,48)

Tangential references to dark sensation are quite a few in the poem. The "northern sky" is certainly a symbolic representation of winter imagery. The lake is "black" and is "troubled" by the waves. The sun, in spite of
its southern position in the sky, is perceptible "coldly."
The hill that is supinely juxtaposed "to the wind," is absolutely "bare," the wintry wind "cannot waken anything."
However, the emotive release constitutes the central focus with reference to the striking picturesqueness of the "rainbow" (the imagistic sign of exclamation following the expression) that is qualified as "perfect."
The clarity of the visibility of the rainbow is because of the commendable width of its "arc." Moreover, its "low" positioning spanning the vast lake seems to bring the rainbow closer to the eyes of the viewer for a delightful inspection of the same. That the poem should be studied keeping in mind primarily the colour-vision of the phenomenon is proved by the fact that the rainbow constitutes the very introductory light-imagery of the poem. Even at the concluding part of the poem the cloud like dark smoke from the chimneys is forcefully driven away by the fierce storm, thus repelling any encroaching impurity in the visuals concerned.

At times winter imagery is portrayed as a prelude to the light sensation associated with the first symptoms of the advent of the spring season, as in 'Della Primavera Transportata Al Morale':

APRIL
the beginning—or
what you will:
the dress
in which the veritable winter
walks in Spring— (CEP, 57)
The 'Winter' is imagined as "veritable," in spite of being clad in the "dress" which is common to the end of winter and the beginning of spring. However, in order to dissociate itself from the encroachment of the winter on its personality, the sprightly spring season is advised by the poet to shed off such a dress:

loose it!
Let it fall (where it will)
-- again (CEP, 57)

The disrobing clearly indicates that the adherence of winter to the physical structure of the spring is no longer necessary lest, the traditional concept of darkness associated with the winter pollute the conventional image of the spring. A similar juxtaposition of the last traces of winter against the onset of the spring season is noticeable in 'The Botticellian Trees':

The alphabet of the trees
is fading in the song of the leaves
the crossing bars of the thin letters that spelled winter
and the cold have been illumined with pointed green (CEP, 80)

Williams, in his visual imagination, can clearly decipher in the arrangements of the branches the spelling of the season that stands for the "cold" tactile sensation.
However, in the visuo-tactile image that follows, appears the "green" signals of the "illumined" baby spring. The "fading" of the earstwhile "alphabet" composed by the bare branches is caused by the singing "leaves" that declare musically a passage from coldness to warmth, darkness to light. The transfiguration is reinforced:

The strict simple principles of straight branches are being modified by pinched-out ifs of color, devout conditions the smiles of love— (CEP, 80)

The "straight branches" obviously denote the bareness of the winter that has just left the botticellian trees and the little leaflets add to them a "modified" colour vision as the present "conditions" are favourably "devout," the emotive core of the sensation cluster being signalized in the "smiles of love." The uncertainty associated with the dark-light juxtaposition is imagistically underscored in the "ifs of color." A further perusal of the poem may show the ripening of the spring into summer that involves a sense of auditory discrimination on the part of the poet:

until the stript sentences
move as a woman's
limbs under cloth

and praise from secrecy
quick with desire

love's ascendancy
in summer--

In summer the song
sings itself
above the muffled words--(CEP, 81)

Our focus is on the "muffled words," the expression representing the "fading" articulations of the departing winter that is replaced by a music of the warm season whose audio-visuo-tactile representation is alliterated: "In summer the song/sings itself." The woman imagery is adopted in a simile in which the "limbs" are "under" the cover of "cloth," primarily to guard oneself against the passing winter's bite. However, the movement from a comparatively lower to higher temperature is brought out in the nuances of "lower ascendancy," and the reinforcement of such a tactile transformation is earmarked in expressions such as "stript," "sentences," "more," climaxed by "quick with desire." Thus "The Botticellian Trees," with "Burning the Christmas Greens" is a notable venture into image conversion, alters the coming spring into a metamorphosis simultaneously from bare letters to words, to music and from skeletal tree limbs to women's bodies moving undulantly under their clothing. Spring
is venus born, as the title suggests, rather than landscapes restored.⁴

The poem analyzed above may very well be compared to the two versions of 'The Locust Tree in Flower.' The first version is remarkable for its slim structure:

   Among
   of
   green

   stiff
   old
   bright

   broken
   branches
   come

   white
   sweet
   May

   again (CEP, 93)

The poem, as analyzed by Mita Biswas, "when seen on paper, resembles the shape of a single branch of the locust tree."⁵ J.Hillis Miller refers to the stylistics of the poetic diction of Williams and points out the suggestion of the transformation from winter imagery to the spring season of May: "He is like a seal juggling thirteen brightly colored balls, and this is exactly what the poet wants. The poem is as much all these at once as the locust tree itself, in its tension of branches, leaves, and flowers. The poem is not a picture of the
tree, but it itself is something substantial echoing in its structure of verbal forces the birth of white blossoms from stiff boughs." Considering the visual representation of the poem as the change depicting the process of passage from dark to light imagery, Biswas scrutinizes the structural pattern with reference to the seasonal cyclic phenomenon concerned: "The white flowers of may have just started blossoming on the solitary green branch. Each line contains a single word representing the thinness of the branch. The first and the last words, together with the middle word, are di-syllabic, in order to give a visual of the slightly thicker knots on the branch; all the other ten words are meaningfully mono-syllabic. The cyclic process is indicated in the expression "again."

The second version represents probably the same tree when it becomes somewhat more developed in girth:

Among
the leaves
bright

green
of wrist-thick
tree

and old
stiff broken
branch
Focussing her attention on the art of juxtaposition of Williams, Mita Biswas comments upon the spring time appearance of the "blossom" on the winter-struck "old/stiff broken/branch" of the locust tree:

Seen from our angle of vision, the second version of the poem, in its structure on paper, shows a definite maturity of the plant after a passage of time, and the image has larger dimensions... The very length of the poem represents a taller tree, several di-syllabic and some tri-syllabic lines showing larger dimensions, even "wrist-thick" at intervals. The blossoms hang in "clusters" now, and some blossoms "fall" down-- they "spill" out as May, in its fullness, is juxtaposed on the growing locust tree, and at the same time the parts of the plant exhibit a growing juxtaposition with each other. A clarity of details is enveloped in "bright" light in both the versions-- true images of the imagistic poetic art?
Although focussing on the art of juxtaposition of the poet, the critic traces the progress to light imagery as against the background of dark sensations implied in the third stanza of the poem. Here "words as things incarnating their meanings become a set of fluid energies whose life exists only in the present. Such words, isolated and cleaned, can be put down on the page like splashes of paint on a canvas and allowed to explode into the multitude of meanings which emerge from their juxtaposition, one version of the 'Locust Tree in flower' is an extreme example of this use of words." 9

In 'The Trees' the botanical imagery is viewed in the state of to-and-fro movement:

The trees-- being trees
thash and scream
guffaw and curse
. . .

wha ha ha ha

Wheeeeee
Clacka tacka tacka
tacka tacka
Wha ha ha ha ha
ha ha ha

Knocking knees, buds
bursting from each pore
even the trunk's self
putting out leafheads-- (CEP, 66)

The animated trees here experience the severe onslaught of the last of the winter storms and they knock and
rub against each other in order to create the energy that leads to their own perception of the generating force of the oncoming spring. The poem starts with the painful and enraged articulation of the trees as audio-visually imaged in "thrash," "scream," "guffaw," and "curse." In the next stanza quoted, the visual is eclipsed by the auditory in which only onomatopoeic expressions represent an empathic encounter between the final winter storm and the violently moving trees that try their best to adhere to the ground. In the stanza that follows, the style of diction continues in the expression "knocking knees" in which the sense of onomatopia blends with alliteration, and the same figures of speech represent the forceful parturition imagery in the expression "buds bursting." The spring time birth of "leafheads" from the solid "trunk's self" effectively introduces the approach of spring as juxtaposed against the last unsuccessful battle of the winter for its own survival. So far as the sensory art of Williams is concerned, the encounter between winter and spring is effectively portrayed by a discriminating utilization of the poetic tools of tactile imagination. Next follows a primarily tactile invitation to the fading remnants of the winter wind.

Loose desire!
we naked cry to you--
"Do what you please."

You cannot!
The monologue of the trees is seeped in a peculiar sensation-emotion complexity in which the "naked," "desire" of the trees are juxtaposed against the present "ghosts" of winter that is unfortunately "sapped of strength."

Expressions such as "heartbreak," "desire dead," and "memory broken" suggest collectively the passing away of winter in order to give place to the positive spring in the seasonal cycle. Mita Biswas, however, argues in terms of the preponderance of the visual that encroaches over the tactile in the empathic presentation in the poem. As their bodies move with the jerks of their shouts and wild laughter, their knees knock against each other heavily and the impact causes the "bursting" of buds from the pores and leafheads from the trunks.

Although the sensation perceived by the observer is of strong tactile orientation, it is the visual of the physical phenomena and the emotional outburst of the trees that make the empathy strongly felt at the receptive end. The critic also correctly points out the negation of any scope of humanization in the introductory stanza of the poem. In spite of the strongly perceptible
animation designed by the poet, any humanization is negated as the trees, in their physical and emotional phenomena of organic and physiological nature, are polarized against 'the race of men' (CEP, 66). Rather the winds of winter are humanized in the concluding part of the poem:

There were never satyrs never maenads never eagle-headed gods-- These were men from whose hands sprung love bursting the wood--

Trees their companions --a cold wind winterlong in the hollows of our flesh icy with pleasure--

no part of us untouched (CEP, 67)

Here the orientation of our argument is reinforced as it is from the "hands" of humanized components of winter, springs the "leafheads" in the image of "bursting the wood," the human emotion of "love" playing a primordial role in the poetic imagination of Williams. Hence the justification of the tactile in which the physical perception of "cold wind winterlong" in the "hollows" of the "flesh" of the trees aroused the paradoxical "pleasure" which isicy" and such a sensation is perceived in every "part" of the trees.
In the foregoing discussions we have analyzed only those images of winter in which one may trace certain aspects of light sensation. Further, in several cases we have found that winter as juxtaposed against the spring season, may very well signify the qualities that dampen the spirit of destructiveness that is usually associated with the cold season. However, the winter imagery of Williams often presents the stark realities of dark sensation. For example, in tree imagery, the starkness of winter is devoid of any positive factor in 'The Bare Tree':

The bare cherry tree
higher than the roof
last year produced
abundant fruit. But how
speak of fruit confronted
by that skeleton?
Though live it may be
there is no fruit on it.
Therefore chop it down
and use the wood
against this biting cold. (CLP,51)

The skeletal anatomical description is in consonance with the barrenness of the cherry tree as against its past fruitfulness of "last year." That fruitfulness is impossible to be associated with the "skeleton" of the tree, is underscored meaningfully in the diction. A paradox is pointed out in the barrenness, in spite of the tree being "live." The darkness of the imagery
is really grim in the suggestion of termination of the
tree—the dead wood to be used only in the fireplace
to ward off the "biting cold." Although the advent
of the spring is supposed to mollify the fierceness
of the winter (as discussed with reference to a few
images earlier in this chapter), such phenomena are
associated with occasional mixed feelings of the poet
or of the persona concerned. In the poem entitled 'March,' the winter imagery is presented through certain
negative characteristics of the cold wind that is des-
cribed with reference to the time associated with the
oncoming spring:

Winter is long in this climate
and spring—a matter of a few days
only,— a flower or two picked
from mud or from among wet leaves
or at best against treacherous
bitterness of wind, and sky shining
teasingly, then closing in black
and sudden, with fierce jaws.
...

But! now for the battle!
Now for murder-- now for the real thing!
My third springtime is approaching!
Winds!
lean, serious as a virgin,
seeking, seeking the flowers of March.
Seeking
flowers nowhere to be found,

they twine among the bare branches
in insatiable eagerness--
they whirl up the snow
seeking under it--
they-- the winds--snakelike
roar among yellow reeds
seeking flowers--flowers.
I spring among them
seeking one flower
in which to warm myself!

I deride with all the ridicule
of misery--
my own starved misery.

Counter-cutting winds strike against me
refreshing their fury! (CEP, 43,45-46)

The seasonal imagery is picturized here in the complexity of polarized emotions in which the winter approaches its termination and the hopes of the spring season cause the origin of certain emotive phenomena in the behaviour pattern of the super-sensitive mind. The search for the spring like conditions need not be interpreted in terms of the possibility of a positive character of the wind as it is certainly "treacherous." In its own "bitterness" the wind can grab a few sick "flowers" that can be traced in the midst of either "mud" or "wet leaves." Even the sky, in spite of its momentary light sensation, encroaches upon the advent of the polarized spring, like an animal "with fierce jaws," thus, marking the image with some "black" and "sudden" irritants. The prelude to the spring, which is "a matter of few days only," is punctuated with a nervous behaviour of the winds in the act of "seeking" the "flowers" that are "nowhere to be found." Their "insatiable eagerness" to search for the flowers is again a "treacherous" character and the poet has no hesitation in portraying
such winds with reference to a reptile imagery that may help us to cut a meaningful window into the deceptive mind of such a "snake like" atmospheric component of nature. The simile "serious as a virgin," reinforces the ironic portrayal here. However, the deceptive means adopted by the winds motivate even the persona to jump into the "yellow reeds" in search of any stray flower in an attempt to mollify his own "starved misery." However, such a hope on the part of the persona is rudely shattered by the vehemence of the furious winds that "strike against" him. Such an exercise, seen in its totality, conveys objectively his sense of repelling the approach the spring season at the end of winter. Such a wind, this time figuring in the month of January, can affect even the distant astronomical objects of nature as depicted in 'Moon and Stars':

January! The beginning!
A moon
Scoured by the wind
Calls

from its Cavern. A Vacant eye
stares. The wind howls.

Among bones in rose flesh
singing
wake the stormy stars. (CEP,462)
The physical laceration on the moon caused by the cold wind is in consonance with the imaginary cavernous location of the astronomical sphere. The staring of the "vacant eye" of the moon ascribes to the art of humanization of Williams a sense of multi-faceted negative phenomena associated with the winter imagery. Such a "vacant" organ of sight is described by the poet a number of times in the whole corpus of his poetry and this lends a special dimension to his imagery of visual sensation. In fact, the "seeing" eye of Williams can pick up for analysis several such instances of the organ of sight associated with a host of non-human objects of nature in his visual imagination. In addition, the howling sound of the wind, which is so common in his sensory presentation of nature, adds to the visual a much coveted dimension of the auditory ingredient. The concluding stanza of the poem presents an unusual sensory cluster of audio-visuo-tactile elements because of the juxtaposition of expressions such as "bones," "rose-flesh," "singing," "stars," -- the expression "stormy" lending to the picturization of the stars an additional emotive facet of psychological nuances. As against the happy and peaceful co-existence of night-time objects analyzed earlier in this chapter, this particular night imagery of Williams presents a polarized dark encounter between the objects of nature viewed in space far away from our terrestrial terrains.
It may seem that an air of illusion dilutes the strength of the winter wind when Williams refers to its effects on very distant objects in space as illustrated above. However, the powerful encounter between the wind and the terrestrial objects is of recurrent importance in the poet's negative portrayal of typical winter imagery, as in 'Approach of Winter':

The half-stripped trees
struck by a wind together,
bending all,
the leaves flutter drily
and refuse to let go
or driven like hail
stream bitterly out to one side
and fall
where the salvias, hard carmine,—
like no leaf that ever was—
edge the bare garden. (CEP, 197)

The image gives a sense of a forceful mass disrobing of the partly denuded trees by the mischievous wind that blows its trumpet declaring the brutal strength of winter. Even the grouping "together" of the plants cannot arm, them sufficiently for withstanding the impact of the wind that bends them "all." The pain of the "leaves" may very well be imagined in the alliterative onomatopoeia in the expression "flutter drily" the auditory adding to the visual a considerable sensory significance in strengthening the empathic content of the image pattern. The directional image of the leaves that "stream bitterly out to one side "is reinforced in the simile "driven like hail." The final location of the falling leaves
is in the midst of small flower plants, thus causing a chaotic displacement in the natural botanical order at the "edge" of the "bare garden." The destructive force of the wind is vividly perceived in relation to the stubborn opposition offered by the group of trees that "refuse to let go" their indispensable anatomical parts.

Such dark characteristics of winter wind are spelled out at length in the poem entitled 'The Black Winds' in which the northern blast is juxtaposed against the symbolic darkness in the mind of human beings, as articulated in the very introductory lines of the poem:

Black winds from the north
enter black hearts. Barred from
seclusion in lilies they strike
to destroy--

Beastly humanity
where the wind breaks it-- (CEP, 245)

Symbolically paired, the wind and human beings are visually darkened with reference to their emotive orientations. These winds here do not get full satisfaction by destroying the tender "lilies" only. Instead of such "seclusion," limited to small areas of flowery location, they enter "black hearts" as well. Their chief function is concerned with breaking upon men who have instincts of lower animals. The winds acquire
the additional corroding character of the salt:

Salt winds-

Sold to them men knock blindly together
Splitting their heads open (CEP,245)

The passage is self-explanatory in depicting the "splitting" of human bonds of brotherhood and neighbourliness. However, a cumulative human experience changes the pattern of perception of the wind and a play of the tactile imagination of Williams brings out a relative sobriety in the concluding passage of the poem:

Black wind, I have poured my heart out
to you until I am sick of it--

Now I run my hand over you feeling
the play of your body-- the quiver
of its strength--

The grief of the bowmen of Shu
moves nearer--There is
an approach with difficulty from
the dead-- the winter casing of grief

How easy to slip
into the old mode, how hard to
cling firmly to the advance-- (CEP,246)

The dark perception is discarded as the persona is "sick of it." The tactile perception is possible because of the concretization of the abstract wind; the transfiguration of the wind allows the physical anatomy to
be caressed by the persona who seems to wipe out the blackness symbolically. The expression grief is coined with reference to the "dead" and the "winter," but the negative quality of the image is definitely more mollified than that in the image of the black winds that enter the "black hearts." Finally the poet delineates upon the effortlessness of adopting the "old mode" of human values of life as compared to the difficulty to "cling firmly" to the more advanced, more enlightened ones that can repel darkness and bring about a sense of peaceful co-existence with reference to an ideal human relationship. In one of his letters, while fighting with winds, he writes to Floss, "the wind catches the crests and tears them apart right and left in great showers of pure white spray like driven snow. The wind in the rigging is whining and whistling and has a force to it that it is almost impossible to stand against. I wish you and the boys were here."¹⁰

Images of snow occupy a major portion of winter imagery in the poetry of Williams. The second poem of the 'Three Sonnets' depicts a photographic image of snow-covered mountains in the background of a juxtaposition of quite a few different categories of objects in which ice is also included as an important component:
The silent and snowy mountains
do not change their
poise— the broken line,
the mass whose darkness
meets the rising sun, waken
uncompromised above the gulls
upon the ice-strewn
river.  (CLP,30)

The staticity of the "poise" of the winter-bound mountains holds the background of the image together with the early sun that is visualized in very slow motion. The juxtaposition of the geo-physical and the astronomical elements of the winter season also holds within the parameters of the visual almost a symbolic co-existence of dark and light sensations as the "darkness" "meets" the "rising sun." The expression "vacant" also symbolizes the beginning of another new day after several hours of darkness of the night. The foreground of the visual consists of objects in motion-- "gulls" above the flowing "river" which is "ice-strewn." In the next stanza the poet isolates the "ice" at a second thought:

You cannot succor me,
you cannot change. I will
open my eyes at morning even though
their lids be sealed
faster by ice than stone!  (CLP,30)

Here again the negative image of winter is set against the will of man, the latter overcoming the former in the eventual melting of the ice. The persona accepts that the power of the ice is stronger than that of "stone."
However, the poetic empathy associated with a painful physical process of the opening of the eyes that are apparently sealed by the cold solidity of the ice is unique in the sensory art of Williams who juxtaposes the winter against man in an image of nature-man encounter. In 'Approach to a City,' the snow has been attributed an emotive element of modesty although it is a natural component of the negative winter season:

. . . the dirty
snow-- the humility of the snow that
silvers everything and is

trampled and lined with use-- yet
falls again,. . . (CLP,177)

The "humility" of the snow is because of its recurrent fall punctuated by the obliteration of the silvery image by the trampling of the same by human beings. In the final passages of the poem the persona discovers in the perseverance of the snow a sense of courage:

The flags in the heavy
air move against a leaden
ground-- the snow
pencilled with the stubble of old

weeds: I never tire of these sights
but refresh myself there
always for there is small holiness
to be found in braver things. (CLP,177)

In the image of winter the air is "heavy" and the ground is "leaden," and the snow crystals hang like pencils
encroaching over the dried "weeds"—a typical imagistic juxtaposition of vertical objects, the cold crystals hanging in between the erect "stubble" of hardened weeds. The snow is portrayed as "braver" than several other adjacent objects of winter and the persona is never tired of noticing the phenomena in which the snow is projected as an important natural element. "Here would belong his many poems that, by the very accuracy of their descriptions, testify to his delight in scattered, improvised bits of beauty as with things one can see during that most dismal of transitions, "Approach to a City." (tracks in dirty snow, "snow/pencilled with the stubble of old/weeds," "dried flowers" (in a bar-room window) while "The flags in the heavy/air move against a leaden/ground").

However, in majority of the cases the snow gives a true representation of the winter imagery in which one may find the seasonal severity of several categories. Williams utilizes his sensory tools in his visuo-tactile presentation of the cold season in the poem entitled 'Winter':

Now the snow lies on the ground and more snow is descending upon it— Patches of red dirt hold together the old snow patches
This is winter--
rosettes of
leather-green leaves
by the old fence
and bare trees
marking the sky--

This is winter
winter, winter
leather-green leaves
spearshaped
in the falling snow (CEP, 89)

The undisturbed falling of the snow is presented in the first stanza in which the "old" snow seems to have a compromising deal with the "patches" of "red dirt" in holding themselves "together," till "more snow" brings along a uniform shape of the surface of the earth. This is followed by a visual of the togetherness of "leaves," "fence," and "trees" in a colour vision of different shades of nature, the expression "rosettes" marking the poet's orientation to geometrical patterns as seen in nature. The concluding stanza signalizes the shape of the colourful leaves that brave the "falling snow" of the seemingly ceaseless "winter," latter expression being triplicated within the small space of a couple of tetrasyllabic lines in which as many as six syllables are given to the reinforcement of the cold season. The gradation of the severity is spelled out more vividly in "Blizzard! Blizzard 'tells' about me, the doctor. I had to go out in the snow to make a night call." The poem shows the authenticity of winter imagery as recollected
by the physician poet in 'Blizzard':

Snow:
Years of anger following
hours that float idly down--
the blizzard
drifts its weight
deeper and deeper for three days
or sixty years, eh? Then
the sun! a clutter of
yellow and blue flakes--
Hairy looking trees stand out
in long alleys
over a wild solitude.
The man turns and there--
his solitary tracks stretched out
upon the world. (CEP, 198)

The imagery presented has its thermotactile release in the emotive core in the extended sensation cluster. The snow seems to give vent to its emotion of anger accumulated in the time scale of not only "hours" but possibly "years," and this illustrates the fierce force of the "blizzard" that is empathically portrayed as carrying its own "weight" consistently "deeper and deeper." The end of the chaotic atmosphere is marked by the appearance along with its warmth of the sun, the rays of which create a strange audio-visual complexity in the "clutter" of "yellow and blue flakes" of snow. The visual of the trees presents a "hairy" look arranged in a geometrical pattern of "long alleys" in the midst of a "wild solitude." The isolation of the trees is set against that of the man who looks back at his long linear pattern of foot-marks on the snow.
Snow, when viewed by the poet with dreamy eyes in the poem 'January Morning' adds picturesque beauty to the colourful components of nature:

Long Yellow rushes bending
above the white snow patches;
purple and gold ribbon
of the distant wood:
What an angle
you make with each other as
you lie there in contemplation (CEP,165)

Here the study lies at close range, as against the background of a distant vision with a background of "wood." Meditating in leisure is as if portraying a word picture, where eyes are acting as the photographic lenses. Colourful image of plants is juxtaposed against the "white" "patches" of "snow." But due to the distance, the individuality of the trees is lost completely— even the green colour is no longer perceptible. It is a "ribbon" of "purple and gold"— the colour alien to the trees of the wood in reality. Here "snow patches" are adding a unique beauty to the other colourful components of nature. Thus they are only participants among other components. On the other hand the description of the insignificant "rushes" on equally unpoetic "snow patches" attains a poetic coherence and beauty because of the juxtaposition envisioned. The objects, yellow upon white, make fascinating angles of a great range and variety with each other,
their humanization being made immaculate as they "lie there in contemplation." Such colourful visual imagery is the result of an "angle of vision" like a photographers' camera held at an angle to capture the scenic beauty. Such synaesthetic colour imagery is also rich in the poem entitled 'Conquest' (CEP,172).

Snow is not a barrier to artistic creativity of human beings as seen in 'Note to Music: Brahms Ist Piano Concerto':

We falter to assurance in despair
hearing the piano pant to
the horns' uncertain blow that
octaves sidelong from the deafened
windows crescendo, rallentando,
diminuendo in wave- like dogmas
we no longer will. Let us sob
and sonnet our dreams, breathing
upon our nails before the savage
snow. . . (CLP, 111)

The personas are not interested in the trembling thin waves of "piano pant" which travel out the window making "octaves" around the ears. This slim music is unable to produce the desired soothing effects in the depression. The human solace trembles in that "uncertain" "blows" of piano. But still the peace and solitude created by the "savage snow" cannot stop one from creativity. Let the persona come out of his "despair" through the "sob" and "sonnets" of the "dreams." Let him utilize his silent energy into creativity without caring for the "savage snow." From this artistic creativity-- In 'Promenade,'
he calls upon his little son to take a "walk down the road" in search of material for composing a poem: they brave the cold wind of winter morning, and Williams accosts the junior:

Come, we'll walk down the road
till the bacon will be frying.
We might better be idle?
A poem might come of it?
Oh, be useful, Save annoyance
to Flossie and Besides-- the wind!
It's cold. It blows our
old pants out! It makes us shiver!
see the heavy trees
shifting their weight before it.
Let us be trees, an old house,
a hill with a grass on it!
The baby's arms are blue.
Come, move! Be quieted! (CEP,132)

Williams, alongwith his little son 'Sonny,' goes out for a morning walk before the breakfast, leaving his wife Flossie to work in peace. As they walk down the road in the cold. The poet's wish-fulfilment for creativity for "A poem might come out of it" is very natural. Williams wants to get away from "Flossie's annoyance" and forget about the fierce "wind." Cold winter wind is juxtaposed against the image of the "shifting" "trees" which is making them "shiver" in their "old Pants." The persona wishes to be a "tree" and "an old house" to resist this cold, on seeing the weighty trees in a tussle with the cold wind, Williams utters his wish to
"be" a botanical element of nature. "Blue" colour of the "baby's arms" is due to cold, but the poet tells him to "move" silently. In the innermost recesses of poet's mind, the winter is to be chased away to give in an air of creativity.

At times it becomes difficult to distinguish from Dr. Williams— the physician and Dr. Williams— the poet. The subject matter of many of his poems depicts the experiences of a busy doctor often engaged in clinical work at hospital. The poems perhaps penned from the busy table of a doctor seem to bound with life and its urgency, the fury with which life continues despite the hardships and anxiety, the patient has to undergo. He stresses the psychology of the doctor- patient relationship, the exchange of feeling between healer and diseased. He stresses the psychology of the doctor- patient relationship, the exchange of feeling between healer and diseased. The comedy and tragedy, and always the humane concern of birth and death which Williams, the poet, observes daily is the theme of the poem 'Complaint':

They call me and I go.
It is a frozen road
past midnight, a dust
of snow caught
in the rigid wheeltracks.
The door opens.
I smile, enter and
shake off the cold.
Here is a great woman
on her side in the bed.
She is sick,
perhaps vomiting,
perhaps laboring to give birth to
a tenth child. Joy! Joy!
Night is a room
darkened for lovers,
through the jealousies the sun
has sent one gold needle!
I pick the hair from her eyes
and watch her misery
with compassion (CEP, 199).

"Money. As much on Williams' mind as everyone else's
as the Depression settled into a condition of life, a
winter's nightmare, with always the promise of spring
giving way before the long shadows of ice." It was
the depression in life, when social and economic conditions
were riddled with corruption and gangsterism - the winters
nightmare. "Practice too in the winter of 33 was "plumb
shot to hell." Such hardships of the physician (Williams)
are seen in this poem.

At "past midnight," there is a "call" to
the physician-poet in the "snow" wrapped winter. The
poem deals with the parturition imagery where the patient-
"the great woman" is suffering with the "miseries" of
birth-pangs. Physician poet is in "smile" even at that
odd hour of an unexpected visit in "cold" "frozen road"
with a "dust of snow," flowing away with "rigid wheel-
tracks." The poet, like a responsible physician faces
this "cold" with a generous "smile." The woman is "labor-
ing/to give birth to/ a tenth child." At this knowledge,
the exclamatory romantic notion of a poet's heart over-
powers the physician's brain. The romantic poet within
him imagines the dark cool "night" as a warm "room" "for
lovers" till the dawn, when "the sun" through its jealousies
would send away the first ray to disperse them. The poets'
romanticism goes towards the morning while the physician
all the time was helping the "great woman" "with compassion"
for her miseries. Most of the poems of this great doctor-
poet seem to be unadorned and unstylized because he uses
his eyes, ears and mind only for such basic experiences
as death, pain, force, tenderness, lust, exaltation and
other vital movements.

The Autobiography of William Carlos Williams gives
several detailed references of the physician at work at
odd hours of a tough winter. "Another time, on a cold
winter's night, in a tiny house of two rooms, one above
the other, I had a good common down across the bed, her
husband holding her in the armpits across from me and
I with forceps on the infants' head doing my best for
her."^{15}

Typical American poetic image is seen in the next
poem where winter is seen in a simile. Superb blending
of the poet and physician is clear in the poem.

"... "Arrival" starts off with four near perfect
lines:

And yet one arrives somehow,
finds himself loosening the hooks of
her dress
in a strange bedroom--- (CEP,215)
The picture of a mind suddenly waking from its automatisms to find itself in a here and now has seldom been more unforgettably drawn. Williams' romanticism here shows itself in the reflection of a typical image, where the persona romantically views itself into a "strange bedroom" loosening the covers of femininity—"her dress." "The next three lines, lapsing into easy metaphor, are a let down:

feels the autumn
dropping its silk and linen leaves
about her ankles. (CEP, 215)"

The body of the woman patient after "dropping its silk and linen" gives the dry "autumn" feel inspite of the power of the erotic image with which the beginning and the romance of spring is made to disappear. Williams does not leave this poem incomplete for the imagination of the reader but seems to be determined to give a definite end and the last three lines are a good try:

The tawdry veined body emerges
twisted upon itself
like a winter wind. . . ! (CEP,215)

The eccentric punctuation at the end suggests an embarrassed attempt to hide the poem's inadequacies under the most of "spanish" spontaneity (read a silent oya! or cesa! where the three dots stand). "Apparently we learn the poem's unity is to be achieved by paralleling seasonal change with the woman's disrobing. A clever substitute for a lost inspiration-unworthy of Williams." The last lines
of the physician-poet give the human anatomy vis a vis winter. The lean "veined" body "emerges" before the physician like a "winter wind." Winter wind is compared with a deformed lean body of the woman due to disease. Williams, the physician points out correctly in his selected essay, "we have lived by the seasons. It is in winter that illness occurs here mostly. It is then that the going is hardest. I have never taken a winter vacation. Perhaps the time is coming when that will have to be changed. Winter is a tough time for a doctor." 19

Thus the poems which have been discussed in detail depict the winter imagery filled with despair as the poet himself confesses. "All the poems are poems of disappointment and sorrow. I felt rejected by the world. But secretly I had my own idea." 'Sour Grapes' are just, as beautiful as any other grapes. The shape, round, perfect, beautiful. I knew it-- my sour grape-- to be just as typical of beauty as any grape, sweet or sour. But the world undoubtedly read a sour meaning into my title. I remember one woman, a notorious baroness who lived in a filthy apartment in Greenwich Village. When she saw the title she pounced on it. "You know what that mean-- you are a disappointed man"-- as if she had made a brilliant discovery." 20
Images of winter as a state of mind can be seen in 'Labrador':

It is ice to this body
that unclothes its pallors
to thoughts
of an immeasurable sea,
unmarred, that as it lifts
encloses this
straining mind, these
climbs in a single gesture. (CLP, 68)

Here the persona is experiencing winter in a psychic way. This state of mind is caused by the contact of 'ice' with human body, where the mind is engulfed in the "immeasurable sea of thoughts." Oceanic labrador currents—cold and dynamic—arouse empathic response in the viewer because of winter like perception or condition. The physical "limbs" are in association with the "thought" of the "straining mind." With such a mind "Williams was painting his own portraits of Depression America, composing a book of objectivist details of his environ in an attempt to get the 'Paterson' thing finally under way." 21

Similar case is portrayed in 'The Mind Hesitant':

Sometimes the river
becomes a river in the mind
or of the mind
or in and of the mind

Its banks snow
the tide falling a dark
rim lies between
the water and the shore
And the mind hesitant
regarding the stream
senses
a likeness which it

Will find—a complex
image; something
of white brows
bound by a ribbon

of sooty thoughts
beyond, yes well beyond
the mobile features
of swiftly

flowing waters, before
the tide will
change
and rise again, may be (CLP, 188)

Snowy banks of river, like the dark sensational thoughts
of "mind" take the form of "tides" going from one "shore"
to the other, thus striking the 'rim' of the rivery mind.
Here the mind always with the new "streams" of thought is
nervous and "hesitant" due to the "complex image" resembling
the winter like conditions. In between is the purity
of "white" innocent thoughts going away "swiftly" as a
current of water, before the "tide" would change its direction.
These confused dry thoughts of the "hesitant mind" give
winter as a state of mind of the persona.

Towards the conclusion let us give a close
look towards the suffering of an author in winter as given
in the poem 'Portrait of the Author':

My rooms will receive me. But my rooms
are no longer sweet spaces where comfort
is ready to wait on me with its crumbs.
A darkness has brushed them. The mass of yellow tulips in the bowl is shrunken.
Every familiar object is changed and dwarfed
I am shaken, broken against a might
that splits comfort, blows apart
my careful partitions, crushes my house
and leaves me--with shrinking heart
and startled, empty eyes--peering out
into a cold world. (CEP, 229)

The poem is concerned with personal dreams, worries, struggles, sorrows, sufferings and repeated frustrations in the persona's life, encountered by the creative writer--a universal phenomena of creation. The dark sensation of cold is experienced by the author in the above given passage, where the eyes of the author are "startled" and "empty." It is not the image of pathetic fallacy here, but the "yellow tulips" are actually withered, as the persona has neither the time, nor the patience or mood to water them. Due to his "shaken" self, there is a change and dwarfing of every "familiar" object around him--and with it a change in his values of life. His "shaken psychology has caused a "shinking" in his heart as well. As a result, the world that is viewed by his "startled" and "empty" eyes is sympathetic, rather than antagonistic--"cold." Such a state of mind or depression and despair would either hamper or negate creation.

According to Mariani, the depression experienced by Williams was sickness, in the last winters of his life, rather due to the strokes, he suffered when he was old and frail. "All that winter and spring Williams
continued to feel depressed and sick; clearly now the stroke in October '58 had come to have a debilitating and lasting effect on him. If he was still writing it was only to keep busy, for his mind was not at all "happy." ...He was confused by his condition, did not understand what was happening to him: stroke, depression, apparent recovery (at least partially), and then... another stroke."\textsuperscript{22}

Though often a victim of depression, strokes leading to brain's self-betrayal, neglect and other frailties in the last winter of his life: his vitality and undeviating attention to his immediate environment which could give rise to the creation of a poem, another poem, and yet another poem, was astonishing "Self-lacerating, self-contemptuous, determined to survive, Williams would dance for them, maintaining in their very faces that, in spite of indifference, in spite of neglect, in spite of his brain's self-betrayal, he was still a poet:

\begin{quote}
I am a poet! I am, I am. I am a poet, I reaffirmed, ashamed.\textsuperscript{23}
\end{quote}

He might never have been a formal judge of his subject but he never stopped as a writer, even at the tail-end of his life, because the will and the mysterious urge would come again and again. He remained poetic from start to finish. He could not adopt himself like an avant-grade of alienation. He was uncomfortable without Flossie,
his medical work, his income, his feet shivered on familiar grounds; at the same time he was unable to accept any or all of these rootings as sufficient occasion for his writing. Despair functions as a paraphrase of descent in Williams' later poems. The creativeness truly engendering contact and invention is one necessarily bereft of solace or substitute, which leaves no alternative other than the art of invention. "Williams had winged, pivoted, and dipped into the flux of his own river, his own time, too often, returning again and again with poems, to doubt that he knew his own aim." Williams' poetry embodies this creation from counterpoint to harmony as the poet transforms reality into art. Thus his poetic canon personifies the process of renewal as it successfully transcends destruction, desolation, and conflict to attain wholeness and continuity. The basic desire of the poet seems to repel darkness out of its wintry zone and to bring about peaceful co-existence in the plant, animal and human kingdom.
NOTES


8. Ibid.


17. Ibid., p. 123.

18. Ibid.


20. Edith Heal., p. 33.


23. Ibid., pp. 635-36.

24. Ibid., pp. 510-11.