

Derek Asirvadem

Michael Griffith, Associate Professor

ACU/ENGL104

01 Apr 15

## Analysis Essay

The Wattle Tree, Judith Wright

The subject of the poem is the author's *longing* for immortality.

The first of three themes in the poem is regeneration, summed up as the “word she would cry”, if she knew it. Second, the realisation of the goal: the tree, in full bloom, from the seed. Third, the amazing forces of nature, the four elements ‘welded’ together that produce the goal. Which she proposes, is ‘immortality’.

The author uses the many devices, very effectively. They include: attributing objects with qualities that they do not have (eg. a tree possesses neither knowledge nor immortality); good use of rhyme, that keeps the poem alive and appealing; and dramatic form, throughout, especially third stanza, to describe the action of the four elements.

Other devices are: image, the gold of the wattle in full bloom is carried through the poem; volta, between the third and fourth stanzas, where she switches from tree to herself, and gives the attributes of the tree to herself; and metaphor, the tree, as well as the regenerative action of the tree, and its attributed immortality.

Through that vehicle, she herself is enabled, and expresses herself and her self-created ‘immortality’.

However, the main *feeling* is her longing for God-given immortality (as distinct from the manufactured variety in the poem). This is confirmed in that three reviews<sup>1</sup> have identified the poem to be about the rightful variety and about God, despite the fact that her views and all her images are unashamedly pagan, and that she specifically defines her ‘immortality’ to be the naturalist variety, first attributed to nature, and then taken onto herself, from nature, not from God.

It is sad to read how the God-less deny their God-given gifts; then seek it outside themselves; and perceive it in things that do not have it. Her notion of ‘God’ is one that she creates herself, replete with pagan symbolism, in denial of scripture.

---

1 Christopher Barry at <http://leo.acu.edu.au/mod/forum/discuss.php?d=269682>, second-last paragraph. Retrieved 31 Mar 15.  
Scott Brennan at <http://leo.acu.edu.au/mod/forum/discuss.php?d=274669>. Retrieved 31 Mar 15.  
Richard Scutter at <http://richard-outoftheblue.blogspot.com.au/2011/09/wattle-tree-judith-wright.html>, last two paragraphs. Retrieved 31 Mar 15.