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ROBERT FROST AT A GLANCE

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Abstract:

This manuscript presents a picturesque of Robert frost and his writings, his daily childhood , schoolings , adulthood and honors and titles he received . Robert frost was a poet who found success in both America and England. Frost was known for depicting his experiences in new England, but he explored philosophies and nature associated with human existence. Robert Frost engaged his career around the focus of nature. Since he resided in country side most of his life, he has taken many other aspects of nature in his poems to bring them as a picture of the story he is narrating. He has dwelt with the topics, acquainted with the topics, acquainted with the night, " Stopping by the woods on a snowy evening", "Rose family", "Road not taken", "Birches" "Going for water", "Winter" and what not.He also uses the natural elements like Calm, quite, dark nature of the forest or the starry or starless night sky to convey his idea of loneliness or isolation from the normally of lifestyle This article brings you the elements of poetry devices used in his poems and explains how nature is handled by him in a gentle way

Key words: Nature repetition, woods, laureate, poetic devices

Introduction:

Robert frost was a poet who found success in both America and England. Frost was known for depicting his experiences in new England, but he explored philosophies and nature associated with human existence. He won four Pulitzer prizes for his work. His



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famous works include 'Fire and Ice' 'Mending wall' 'Birches' 'Out and out' 'Nothing Gold can stay' and 'Home burial' "The road not taken" is often read at graduation ceremonies across the United states. As a special guest at president John F Kennedy's inauguration he recited one of his poems "The Gift Outright" hence became a poetic force and the unofficial 'Poet Laureate' of the United states. Robert Frost was an excellent English poet best known for his simple style of English writing but with complex social and philosophical themes in elegant language. He is a noted figure in the field of poetry for his picturisation of rural set up and depictions of country side living style and his command of American colloquial speech. He was honored and appreciated with titles and prizes. He is a popular and often quoted poet of early twentieth century.

Frost's School hood:

Frost was born in San Francisco, California to journalist William presscott Frost Jr. and Isabelle Moodie. His father was a teacher and later an editor of the San Francisco Evening Bulletin. After his father's death, in 1885 he moved across the country to Lawrence, Massachusetts under the patronage of William Frost sr. (an oversees at a New England Mill) his grandfather. He graduated from the Highschool in the same city in 1892 where he was fortunate enough to publish his first poetry, "My Butterfly; An Elegy" in his school's magazine. He came first and excelled well in academics. He attended Dart Mouth college long enough to be accepted into the Theta Delta chi Fraternity.

Adult hood:

At the age of 20 he sold his first poem for fifteen dollars. Having taken pride of this accomplishment he proposed marriage to Elinor Miriam White, his school mate who was second to him in academics. But she wanted to continue her and demurred later after having graduated they were married. He worked for a few years at Harward university but left to support his growing family. He did farming for nine years where he found the opportunity to enjoy the nature, Morning, Sunrise, Winter, Snow and Woods. He produced many of this first hand sensational experiences. It is clear that this personal



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hands on experience gave him the true color of beauty of nature and the esthetic sense that are the blood streams of the same, and delights the readers.

Career as a poet:

Ultimately finding his farming proved unsuccessful, he returned to education as an English Teacher and spent his life as a teacher for five years. He sailed to Great Britain after selling his farming. There he published his first book of poetry 'A Boy's Will' in 1913. He friended T.E. Holme and Ezra Pound who were the best writers and happened to be the first American to write a review of Frost's work. Encouraged by his scholastics company, he wrote some of his best work in England.

Owing to world war, he returned to America in 1915. He spent almost 40 years teaching and writing poems

Honours and Laurels:

- He received four Pulitzer prizes.
- He received Bollingen prize in 1962.
- Received honorary degrees from Harward university, Bates college, Oxford and Cambridge
- During his lifetime a middle school in Fairfon, Virginia and the Main library of Amherst college were named after him.
- He was 86, when he spoke and performed a reading of his poetry at the inauguration of president John F Kennedy on jan 20, 1961.
- The first Prime Minister of India, had the lines of the poem "Stopping by the woods in a snowy evening", "Miles to go before I sleep", Written on a board and kept it on his office table which was his drive for his achievements as an architect of Modern India. Jawaharlal Nehru was an ardent fan of Robert Frost. His poems are critiqued in "Anthology of Modern American Poetry" Oxford university press.



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Nature in Frost's Poetry:

Robert Frost engaged his career around the focus of nature. Since he resided in country side most of his life, he has taken many other aspects of nature in his poems to bring them as a picture of the story he is narrating. He has dwelt with the topics, acquainted with the topics, acquainted with the night, " Stopping by the woods on a snowy evening", "Rose family", "Road not taken", "Birches" "Going for water", "Winter" and what not.

He uses Moon as a device in 2 of his poems and handles the sunset as a tool in the other. He gives a special effect to the natural happenings in the forest like Moon playing hide and seek with the children as it hides behind or in the middle of the clouds while children find it hiding behind the trees, in the poem "Going for water". In the poem "Stopping by woods...." as he enters the woods he imagines that he is trespassing the woods whose owner he knows who lives far and does not see him crossing the woods. He also uses the natural elements like Calm, quite, dark nature of the forest or the starry or starless night sky to convey his idea of loneliness or isolation from the normally of lifestyle. He also says that the horse is curious or strange about his stopping by the lake side where there is no farm house nearby, by bringing the shaking of the bells of the horse to the scene which actually is a normal attitude of a horse wearing a bell around its neck. But this adores beauty to the poem. When he uses the lines " "Miles to go before I sleep"two times, it is very clear that he stresses the idea that everyone has a long way to go to reach his goal or aim that too, one has to under go more struggle or hardships before he/she reaches his/her "big sleep".

In simple lines he stuffs his bundle of in a splendid manner. He also uses Moon and its light as his guides.

In the poem "Aquinted with the night" he uses the themes of night and isolation together. Here the picturises the Moon which floats on its own to express his opinion of loneliness and a sense of being with drawn from human relationships and social connections. He exemplifies lonesome lifestyle and pastoral living by using the concepts of night, woods and the moon.



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In all his poems Frost describes a frame of mind, for that he uses the natural objects as aids and paint the picture to that frame. He has used not only isolation and loneliness but also uses the themes of silence and solitude.

Literacy devices in Frost's poetry:

Robert Frost is even known for the usage of repetition in his poems. He can also be called man of repetition. Along with repetition he handles opposition as well beautifully. In "Stopping by the woods on a" he uses the repetition in the lines "Miles to go before I sleep" which depicts the highest philosophy of more commitment of a person before he meets his long sleep that is death. He also uses imaginary in almost all the poems by using the apt vocabularies to picturise or describe the sense of visionary, auditory, scent, taste and touch. He applies simile and metaphor exuberantly in the poem "Going for water". He also uses imagery and alliteration. He has also used assonance and anaphora in the lines. "Witho :ut the birds; in the poem "Going for water".

THEMES DEALT WITH BY FROST :HIGH LIGHTS

Isolation

In several Frost's poems, solitary individuals roam about a natural setting and encounter another individual, an object, or an animal. These encounters stimulate moments of revelation in which the speaker realizes his connection to others or, conversely, the ways that he feels sequestered from the community. Some poems feature speakers who actively opt solitude and isolation to learn more about themselves, while the other return focus to solitude, exploring how encounters and community only augment loneliness and isolation. This deeply pessimistic, almost misanthropic perspective sneaks into the most cheerful of late Frost poems.

The majority of the characters in Frost's poems are isolated in one way or another. Even the characters that show no sign of depression or loneliness, such as the narrators



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in *The Sound of Trees* or *Fire and Ice*, are still presented as detached from the rest of society, isolated because of their unique perspective. The old-style farmer in *Mending Wall* not only refuses to pull down the useless barriers but, to make matters worse, insists upon having the last word:

“Good fences make good neighbors”.

The girl in *The Fear of Man*, who walks breathlessly at midnight to her home, symbolizes man’s thronging for warmth and reassurance. The timid professor in *A Hundred Collars*, his unwarranted suspicion resulting up in isolation, dramatize a familiar human conflict. The struggle between the need for companionship and the innate fear of the unfamiliar becomes quite prominent. He dislikes isolation, but he sees its inevitability.

A concern with barrier is the dominant theme in Frost’s poetry. Man erects barriers----between man and man, between man and environment. To Frost, these barriers seem conducive to mutual understanding and respect. Frost stresses on recognizing these barriers instead of trying to tear them down And he even builds them wherever necessary.

Barrier between man and the universe:

there s exists the great natural barrier, the void, the space, which isolates man from the celestial stars. Man ,due to his idiosyncrosies tries to bridge this gap, but all his efforts in this respect are of no avail. Such efforts only make him more conscious of his triviality. In the poem entitled *Stars*, the poet discloses how man gets lured by nature only to be disillusioned by it. Here, the stars shining in the sky at midnight do not exhibit any glory or state to the gazer. Rather, they produce a note of disenchantment:

“And yet with neither love nor hate

Though the stars like some snow-white



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Mine roars snow like marble eyes

Without the gift of sight.

In another poem, we find how wise human plans to establish relationship with nature are thwarted. The protagonist of *The Star-Splitter*, purchases a telescope with the insurance money that he gets by burning his house down. He gazes at the stars but cannot escape the question that raises its ugly head towards the end:

We have looked and looked

But after all where are we?

Barrier between man and nature:

There prevails the barriers, between man and the immediate natural world,—the barren and desert places—which man must conquer, reclaim and cultivate. He must constantly wage a war against such wildernesses, if he is to survive in an environment which seems hostile to him, which at least, is not meant for him and in which he is an alien. Says Marion Montgomery, "*there are those souls, of course, who are content to have a barrier stand as a continual challenge which they never quite accept; such is the old teamster of The Mountain who lives and works in the shade of the mountain he always intends to climb but never does. And there are those who accept the challenge and go down in defeat; the deserted village of the Census Taker with its gaunt and empty buildings is evidence of such failure*". The woman in *A Servant to Servants* has lost out to the wilderness by losing her sanity. Her days are spent in caring for the house while the men are away, and the emptiness of the world has overcome her. There are others on the border line of tragic failure. The Hill Wife, though not out of her mind, still has a fear of her house once she has left it, deserted it, and has to return to it. When she comes back she has to reconquer it:



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They learned to rattle the lock and key
To give whatever might chance to be
Warning and time to be off in flight.

The Otherness of Nature:

Man's physical existence itself is a barrier which divides man from the soul or spirit of nature. While Wordsworth denied the very existence of barriers between man and nature, for Frost a wide gulf separates man and nature, spirit and matter. In a number of poems he stresses the *otherness* and *indifference* of Nature, and shows that it is futile to expect any sympathy from the spirit of soul which moves or governs the world. Individual man and the forces of nature are two different principles, and the boundaries which separate them must be respected. A *Minor Bird* also stresses the active barriers between man and nature. The poet is bored by the bird which sings at his window and wishes it away:

I have wished the bird would fly away,
And not seen by me have of day
Have clapped my hands at him from the door
When it seemed as if I could hear no more--

Barrier between man and man:

Fourthly, there are barriers which separate man from man. Such barriers come in the way of social communication and *lack of communication* leads to social alienation and emotional isolation and loneliness. *Mending Wall* is an ironic comment on those who raise walls between themselves and their neighbors, because they think, "*good fences make good neighbours*". Read symbolically, the poem is a comment on racial, religious,



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national and ideological barriers which divide and separate man from man. Such barriers come to the way of human relationship; generate tensions, which result in neurosis and emotional imbalance verging on insanity. North of Boston is full of such emotionally isolated and alienated people. In the *Home Burial* there is a grievous lack of communication between the husband and the wife, and the mother's grief deepens into insanity. The shadow of their dead child is the barrier which divides them and alienates them from each other. The essential loneliness of the human spirit is also expressed convincingly in poems like *Acquainted with the Night*, *An Old Man's Winter Night*, *Stopping by Woods*, etc.

Provide, Provide evokes an agonizing emotion of alienation which no amount of bantering can attenuate or overcome. No one can miss the pronounced tragic tone of the ironic lines:

Die early and avoid the fate
Or if predestined to die late
Make up your mind to die in state.

Isolation/Separateness from God:

Man's reason and intellect is the barrier that alienates him from God, his Maker. His rational bias deprives him of the bliss of communion with God. The theme of the Masque of Reason is that reason imbued with faith alone can lead to understanding and wisdom. It is only through faith that man can work out his own salvation and make life complacent..

Though barriers and alienation loom large in the poetry of Frost, it does not mean that he is against democracy or the brotherhood of man. Speaking psychologically,



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Frost's obsession with loneliness is an expression of his gravely felt thirst for human love, compassion and fellowship.

Communication:

Communication or the lack thereof, appears as a significant theme in several of Frost's poems, as Frost presents it as the only possible escape from isolation and despair. Unfortunately, Frost also makes it clear that communication is extremely difficult to achieve. For example, in "*Home Burial*," Frost describes two terrible events: the death of a child and the destruction of a marriage. The death of the child is tragic, but inability of the husband and wife to communicate with each other and express their grief about the loss is what ultimately destroys the marriage. .

I have stood still and stopped the sound of feet
When far away an interrupted cry

But not to call me back or say good-bye
(Acquainted with night)

Conclusion:

Robert Frost stands tall among the poets who loved and worshipped nature and decorated his poems with the streaks of the same. His poems are honoured, appreciated, enjoyed and critiqued all over the world. His writings are ever living as nature and he is without doubt an ever cherishing poet in the world of poetry. It is great to know that when he died at 86, 1963, Jan 29, he was buried at Bennington, Vermont, where his epitaph reads, " I had a lover's quarrel with the world". This proves how much Frost loved his career and nature. Frost's poems are critiqued in the "Anthology of Modern American Poetry", Oxford University Press, where it is mentioned that behind a sometimes charmingly



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familiar and rural façade, Frost's poetry frequently presents pessimistic and menacing undertones which often are not recognized nor analyzed.

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