



Robert Frost's Poems: Picture of "Man"

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Abstract

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Historically, poetry has been the most beautiful language human being has. So, there was something about the beauty of language that poetry was the dream of every civilization. One such unique poet is Robert Frost. Below this article aimed to study the great American poet and the theme of man in his poetry. Robert Frost's poetry represents the themes that are still relevant to humanity today. So, this article examines how the theme of man is treated in Robert Frost's poetry and what wonders he reveals about a man. Also, the article briefly discusses the great poet and his poetry with quotes from the opinions of Frost's contemporary and later major literary figures. This study aims to analyze Robert Frost's attitude to human nature and how human reality is illuminated in his poetry. At the same time, in Frost's poems, it is necessary to show all the variability of human relationships and to come to some conclusions about the relative importance of human behavior through this humble research. The method used introduces the human theme in Frost's poetry and makes analytical comments. Then, in several of Frost's poems, the analysis and studies about mankind are provided. Finally, some concluding thoughts are shared.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The value of the poetry

The most beautiful thing about a man is language. Traditionally, poetry has been the most beautiful language humanity has. It is no secret that there is no human civilization in which poetry is not at the foundation of civilization. For instance, without the great poetry of Homer in the Iliad and the Odyssey, Plato and Aristotle's famousness perhaps would not exist; and there are a lot of such examples from history. So, there was something about the beauty of language that poetry was the dream of every civilization. And poets were highly respected in cultures. For example, with the great poets of Arabia, the tribes celebrated the birthday of a poet because they boasted as well as proud of his poetry.

1.2. Scope of this study

Poetry covers a wide range of subjects. Among them, the theme of MAN is special and appealing that allowing you to look at yourself and realize how you are living as mankind in society. The poet uses the fascinating and vast treasures of language to highlight such subtle and delicate aspects.

One such unique poet is Robert Frost. Below we will talk a little about the poet and talk about MAN subjects in his poetry.

Since a lot has been written and commented on about the poet, we believe that there is no need to deeply investigate Frost's autobiography. Instead, the article briefly discusses the great poet and his poetry with quotes from the opinions of Frost's contemporary and later major literary figures. Then, in several of Frost's poems – "The Death of the Hired Man", "Mending Wall", "An Old Man's

Winter Night”, “*Acquainted with the Night*”, “*Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*”, and “*Fire and Ice*” – the article presents the analysis and studies about MAN. Then, some concluding thoughts are shared.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Actually, in literary studies, many dissertations, papers, and paperbacks have been written about Robert Frost’s poetry. Because not only is the work of this great contemporary poet exciting and engaging, but it represents the themes that are still relevant to humanity today. Thus, this article examines how the theme of MAN is treated in Robert Frost’s poetry and what wonders he reveals about MAN. One of the studies analyzes the theme of man and nature in Frost’s poems in relation to the terrible consequences of human behavior on the whole planet (Miguel Lené, 2018). Another study examines the theme of making love in Robert Frost’s poetry. The work demonstrates the use of iambic pentameter lyrical structure (Isaac, 2012, pp.113-123). A discussion of the concepts of the natural world echoed in Frost’s poetry is analyzed in relation to the theme of nature and man in one study (Sharma, 2016).

2.1. Purpose of the study and method

This study aims to analyze Robert Frost’s attitude to human nature and how human reality is illuminated in his poetry. At the same time, in Frost’s poems, it is necessary to show all the variability of human relationships and to come to some conclusions about the relative importance of human behavior through this humble research. The method used introduces the human theme in Frost’s poetry and makes analytical comments.

III. GREAT CONTEMPORARY POET

One of the great poets of American civilization was Robert Frost, - he wrote and celebrates what stirs man’s soul, passions, and sensibilities, - and he was even honored by Kennedy at his presidential inauguration.

Many other literary critics have written about Robert Frost, for instance, S. Wilson describes him as just a *true American poet* (Nolan and Elizabeth, 1942). But *Untermeyer and Lowell* highlight his nomadism – monoculture, e.i., animal husbandry (Untermeyer, 1936; and Lowell Amy, 1917); for *J.Krenborg*, Frost is an outspoken (candid) *purely classical poet* (Allen, 1978). In addition, according to the observations by one of the literary critics, “*Frost is a poet not because he is affected by nature or because he has lived on a farm, but because he speaks to men about men*” (James Squires, 1963).

Besides, Robert Frost has been called the translator of New England, but he can also be called the translator (and/or interpreter) of humanity reached with nature. Because his poetry shows the poet’s meticulous remark (i.e., observation) of man, illuminating the key elements that exist. Imaginably it is because Frost’s poetry is very based that some critics cannot accept that as it is, continuing to search for shady and hidden meanings, sometimes altering the original meaning. So, Frost uses dialect (i.e., slang expressions) rather than parlance – dialect to portray the English he uses. In fact, Frost was talkative and a very flexible counter.

IV. THEME OF MAN IN FROST’S POEMS

Robert Frost has a beautiful poem about MAN. In fact, Robert Frost has been called a poet of humanity. Frost sees humanity from an interesting perspective. His strengths and limitations, his ability to discern the forces of good and evil, and his ability to use his free will and natural instincts to make decisions against the backdrop of complex and complex cosmic encounters.

According to Louis Untermeyer – he was one of the great American poets - Robert Frost’s main subject is the man, he says, “*But Robert Frost’s poems are the people: they work and walk about and converse and tell their tales with the freedom of common speech*” (Untermeyer, 1936). In other words, Robert’s poetry depicts living people, it has its own enthusiasm. For instance, other poets write about people. But Frost’s poetry is about humanity that speaks and tells stories based on freedom of speech. Robert Frost’s poetry about the whole earth is eloquent in rural New England. Frost uses New England to emphasize concepts that transcend regional boundaries. Its rural setting is appealing because it ultimately represents the society, we live in. The priority is how he uses his reality as a metaphor for the entire human experience.

By the literal description, Frost’s “human world” is actually his own New England, where the Yankee rural population performs the modest occupations of farmers such as clerks, truck drivers, mechanics, and other New Englanders. But these kinds of people are not favorites in Robert Frost’s poetry. This may seem like looking for the perfect person, and it is not easy to find complex personalities and highly developed intellectual elites in society. But Robert Frost portrays every aspect of the lives and activities of New England farm people. If it is taken those poems, they are really amazing, that sincere, heartfelt, and compassionate concern reveals the humble joys and sorrows of a human being. And then Robert Frost identifies with the humble people he portrays. The poet does not adopt a superior patronizing attitude. Instead, he deals with

humanity without romantic overstatement, neither can it be said that Robert Frost presents pen and ink sketches for photography. Besides, the theme of relationships or interpersonal relationships and their consequences is the dominant aesthetic motif in his poetry.

British-American poet W. H. Auden writes, “Frost’s poems on natural objects are always concerned with them not as foci for mystical meditation or starting points for fantasy, but as things with which and on which man acts in the course of his daily work of gaining a livelihood. Nor is he, like Wordsworth, a poet with a vision in youth, which he can spend the rest of his life interpreting” (Auden, 1963, p.349).

Because the people in Frost’s poems are REAL, *breathing people*, whose reality and relevance have been repeatedly confirmed by those who have traveled in the poet’s specially created territories.

The characters illustrated in Robert Frost’s poetry can be divided into two categories. The first one is the deviant, in other words, *the layer of society*. Those people are frustrated, disillusioned, angry, alienated, detached neurotics, and hover on the brink of insanity. The second one is the people who are the normal, balanced, happy, lucky ones in the countryside. Those people look at life with courage and determination in the face of adversity. And they willfully resist and succeed, proudly feeling happy.

V. 5. Theme of MAN in the poem “The Death of the Hired Man”

In the poem called “*The Death of the Hired Man*”, one farmer discovers that he needs at least one refuge where the demands of strict justice are tempered by a spirit of charity. So, this poem illustrates many of the typical features of Frost’s poetry, especially the rural scenery and the everyday struggle of a farming couple over their relationship with a farmhand, which is a colloquial dialogue.

The blank verse form makes the text very clear. Frost uses dialogue to break up his poems, establishing the traditions of duty and work that he explores in many of his other poems. That is, the main characters of the poem are Mary and Warren. Mary begs Warren to take back the former farm. But Warren was disappointed with the farm. The servant (i.e., the farmhand) Silas is very ill and Mary is persuaded that he has returned to the farm to die. And farmer Warren (husband) does not see Silas (farmhand) in a sick state, and he is still angry about the contract Silas had broken in the past. That is why Warren does not desire to have Silas on his land. But Mary’s repeated requests for

mercy pressured Warren to bring Silas. Unfortunately, when Warren goes to get Silas, he was already dead.

5.1. The contrast between two human characters

The poem also creates a clear dichotomy (or contradiction) between Mary and Warren, between the farm lady’s compassionate willingness to help the farm and the farm owner’s resentment of the broken contract. The farm lady – Mary follows the *Christian model of forgiveness*. Because farmhand – Silas needs forgiveness, not because he deserves it. And farm owner – Warren does not need to help the farmhand because Warren doesn’t feel he owes the servant anything.

Amazingly, only Mary sees Silas throughout the poem. She found him wrapped up in his barn and immediately realized the extent of his sickness. As a result, Mary literally begins to show him compassion. But Warren, who has never seen Silas in his current state, perhaps sees the situation more rationally. If Warren were to find Silas first, his reaction to his former valet undoubtedly would be more kindhearted.

So, it can be clearly seen through this poem that Robert Frost can use symbols and apply various wonderful poetic ways in his poetry. Because symbolism makes it easier to express ideas and characteristics. It can be observed that this involves giving a person or thing a symbolic meaning that differs from its literal meaning. It is in this poem that the servant’s death represents the dark side of humanity or the unforgiveness of oneself or others.

There is another amazing thing that Frost shows us an expression of two different things through two different images of the main characters – Warren and Mary – divergences of attitude, philosophies of life, and opposing views of the man on other people and life.

So, the expression of love and sympathy, feeling and imagination are explained by the image of Mary, so that people are judged not by reason, but by feelings mostly. As the above-mentioned, a kind farm lady - Mary feels pitiful for the farmhand’s miserable condition and influences her husband to let go of what he once did. And the image of Warren shows the picture of a “*modern man*”, a “*hand*” who values and especially respects people in terms of their work, values, contributions, etc. As a case where Warren refuses to accept the farmhand as an authorized chief or master. Thus, the poet represents utilitarianism, practicality, and rationality through Warren’s role in the poem. So, all in all, the poem also speaks of forgiveness and the workings of power.

VI. THE THEME OF MAN IN THE POEM “MENDING WALL”

So, another poem is “Mending Wall” which embodies the image of dialogue that started with the stone wall repairing between the two neighbors. The wall is actually a symbol of an important boundary that separates the property. In the context of the poem, those two neighbors walk along the wall and meet to repair the wall together. According to one neighbor, there is no reason to keep the wall - there is no need to keep farm animals like cows, but only apple and pine trees are enough.

6.1. *The rapid change of the human character and “Mending Wall”.*

If you look closely at this poem by Frost, you can see that what begins with the simplicity of the common people ends with a complex ambiguity. In this poem, Frost suggests that there are two types of people: wall builders and wall breakers. In this case, one stubbornly insists on building additional walls, while the other refuses to do so. But actually, the wall building is old and long-lasting. Metaphorically speaking, *rules and laws* are walls. *Justice* is the process of rebuilding walls. The ritual of maintaining the walls emphasizes the duality and complementarity of human society. In other words, one individual’s rights (i.e., property boundaries, reasonable boundaries) are confirmed by other individuals’ rights claims. This shows another advantage of a “*communal act*” or a “*civic game*”. The wall building is sociable in the sense of “social” and “communicative”. Paradoxically, what appears to be antisocial restraint can be interpreted as a grandiose social gesture.

Some say, the construction of the first wall marked the founding of the society, literally and figuratively. Now, of the wall, maturity and universal fraternity can be understood through the language of a neighbor who sees it as a barrier. The neighbor claiming a wall means fear and worry.

Therefore, the other neighbor, mentions the old saying, but he appears to his neighbor as a person who is stuck with old foolish thinking. But, in fact, he was only repeating the proverb. So, the core meaning in this dialogue is not the difference in human experience and belief, but the changeability inherent (i.e., characteristics) during human communication. In fact, those two neighbors do that dialogue out of tradition, out of the ordinary.

6.2. *“Mending Wall” calls to solve “common problems”*

Thus, many interpretations can be made depending on the communication between those neighbors. One is a symbol of *modernity* and the other signifies *traditionality*. Another interesting thing about the man in this poem is that the moods of human life are brought to the fore. And, in the poem, the speaker provides a *good pretext* for communicating with neighbors. The fact that, although there

are disagreements between two neighbors, the poem draws the reader’s attention to the need for dialogue: mutual respect and understanding in human relationships. The spirit of solidarity that the poet articulates to avoid is a central element of the poetic teaching. So, for instance, the poet’s personality *stands side by side* with the neighbors to solve a *common problem*.

Thus, on a universal level, Frost talks about common problems facing all of humanity. This means that people must accept and sometimes face the realities and challenges of this world. Life sometimes forces us to choose between seemingly disparate and interesting situations: love, marriage, career, and religion. Choosing another point of view in the middle is not easily forgotten or unwilling to leave. And Frost shows us that the idea of what was or was not will last forever. In fact, he states, “*for ages and ages hence*”.

VII. THE THEME OF MAN IN THE POEM “AN OLD MAN’S WINTER NIGHT”

“*An Old Man’s Winter Night*” is a poem by Robert Frost that examines the problems of memory and aging from the perspective of an elderly man on a winter night. Frost emphasizes that *it cannot be found comfort in man’s silence* continues throughout the poem. His favored method of communication is stomping rather than speaking. Frost’s intention is clearly to give the audience the same sense of loneliness that older man experience by muting him. The title of the poem suggests the story of an old man relaxing in front of a roaring fire. This comforting assumption is dismissed, and instead of a sad story, the old man’s inner feelings are pictured. The poet uses a *forgetful* old man living all alone in a cold room as a metaphor for the fleeting nature of man’s life, and everybody ends up in the same place, that is death.

*“All out of doors looked darkly at him
Through the thin Frost, almost in separate stars,”*

It starts by describing the scene, noting that all the doors are closed, the room is dark, and an elderly man is the *only occupant* of the room. It shows the dejection (i.e., unhappiness) and raw spirituality of an older man in the dark. It is very dark outside, and many fear it:

*“What kept him from remembering what
it was*

*That brought him to that creaking room
was age”.*

The only obstacle that hinders his memory is the man’s advanced years. Frost begins his poem by describing an elderly man sitting near a window who can only look out

of the window because he holds a flashlight in his hand. The poet attempts to show how the older man's moods compare to the darkness outside, followed by a description of the room describing their experience.

"He stood with barrels round him -- at a loss.

*And having scared the cellar under him
In clomping there, he scared it once again
In clomping off; -- and scared the outer
night,
Which has its sounds, familiar, like the
roar
Of trees and crack of branches, ordinary
things,
But nothing so like beating on a box".*

Negative thoughts can be seen in the man's attitude, which can be seen in his "I'm at a loss" attitude. The darkness outside and the basement are the two realms that scare him, and he uses only negative terms to describe them. Both areas contain unknown territory. It's also dark and cool as it's surrounded by doors and floors. Additionally, a lion's roar can be heard in the darkness outside above the crackling of twigs and the rustling of leaves, suggesting the social unrest of the time. Yet the sound of his boots, which mimics the sound of a box, does not frighten the older man. Despite being an old man, he refuses to give in to the difficulties he faces and fights for his life.

*A light he was to no one but himself
Where now he sat, concerned with he
knew what,*

Being socially awkward and lonely, the man is too preoccupied with what he knows. From the outside, he looks like a completely different person. He can show a penchant for cold, melancholy, and calm by preferring the lack of warmth radiated by the moon to the bright light of the sun. He is pessimistic about the future. An older man says it doesn't matter if the moon rises later than the sun. In winter he enjoys the cool, gloomy, and peaceful nature of the moon. Even after spending some time in the dark room, the old man still feels lonely. If he cannot fill the space or live alone, darkness, pessimism, and loneliness can overwhelm him and test him. This is the central theme of this poem. People need to work together, build relationships, and live in communities where other people live. The ending of the poem has a positive side, but it also has a dark side.

Despite his fear of the unknown, the man manages to "drive it away" and sleep peacefully. He can maintain a person's presence and "housework" even when he is alone and isolated. Although Frost focuses on an older man, this

theme can be seen as an assessment of the human condition, using the elderly as an example.

VIII. INNER AND OUTER THINGS IN HUMAN

8.1. Being wise and not being hasty.

Human capacity can be limited in that man has no way of knowing the result of the decisions he/she makes or must make, nor of understanding the full extent of his/her own decisions. This is the essential (i.e., lynchpin) of the below poem's discussion, and perhaps why this poem remains one of the most interesting and memorable of Frost's texts:

*"... I could not travel both
... Long I stood
... I kept the first for another day
... I doubted if I should never come back
... I shall be telling this with a sigh
... I took the one less traveled by". (NAMP, p. 196)*

8.2. Human psychology: the poem "Acquainted with the Night"

The poet's account of the dark side of human psychology is supported by many additional works. For example, the reader is put inside the heads of the characters in the story. A disturbing detachment permeates the memories of the characters of "Acquainted with the Night". Robert Frost's poem "Acquainted with the Night" was published in 1928. So, this poem is one of Frost's greatest poems (Yvor Winters, 2001). Both the main character and all people were depicted in the poem. In addition "the poem's overarching tone is one of grief, despair, and loneliness, the mood is established immediately by the use of symbols like "night" and "rain", which are readily linked with sadness, agony, cheerlessness, loss of faith, and other undesirable sensations" (Poetry IV: Society). Its use sets the mood all at once. The speaker's familiarity with the term *night* also reflects having experienced these emotions throughout his life.

8.3. Image of "isolation" in man's character

Frost is a faithful supporter of *self-determination*. Although there are some limitations imposed by nature, man must do his best with the abilities he has been given. Frost thinks that isolation is a *barrier to human progress*. Self-centeredness and even madness can develop because of such isolation. Individuals and groups must always be reconciled in Frost's role as a moderator.

According to Frost, it is difficult to succeed if he or she is isolated. Man's egocentrism might be exacerbated

by his isolation. Frost has no patience for people who are unable to accept others. The apparent truth is that men must face their shortcomings head-on. Man, despite his imperfections, tries to be flawless. He devotes all his time and energy to achieving apparently impossible goals.

Man's isolation and loneliness are strongly depicted in the three poems. On the other hand, Frost's poetry views loneliness as a necessity for a person's ability to feel a connection to the cosmos or nature. Frost's poetry is characterized by a focus on the individual. Anyone who attempts to run long distances at night must confront the immense riddles of time and space. Each of his poetic feminine heroes stands out for some reason. For men, being alone might be energizing, but for women, it can be devastating (i.e., tragic).

And then, Robert Frost examines the idea of estrangement (or distancing, like unfriendliness), even if he does not agree with it or condemn it. With this technique, the poet creates an emotionally charged picture of loneliness. He despises (perhaps hates) aloneness, but he knows it is the only option. Some of his poems appear negative to the reader, yet they are actually quite realistic. Aside from describing physical, mental, and emotional isolation (*such as terror and the otherness of nature*). The backdrop is made more touching by the poet's sense of isolation, which is exacerbated by his sympathy with Nature's anger.

8.4. Difficulty and Experience before humans

Thus, Robert Frost's other poems deal with various human predicaments (i.e., embarrassing situations or difficulties) and experiences. For instance, in a poem called "Birches", Robert Frost contemplates the contrast between the *material* and *spiritual* worlds, and spiritual salvation softens life's turmoil. In "*Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*", the poet takes the horse and somehow suddenly stops to understand the beauty of the *night*, the *snow*. In the beautiful epigrammatic namely "*Fire and Ice*", Frost tells of mankind's (eternal) fear of how the universe will finally come to an end:

*"Some say the world will end in fire,
Some say in ice.
From what I've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favor fire.
But if it had to perish twice,
I think I know enough hate
To say that for destruction ice
Is also great
And would suffice". (NAMP, p. 204)*

So, Robert Frost recognizes MAN's strengths and limitations, as well as its ability to follow one's own natural instincts and act according to independent free will. Poets understand the complexity of the universe. As a result, he sees humans in the context of several variables, such as unique emotions, knowledge of good and evil, contrasting qualities, and position in the context of life and death. As Randall Jarrell says of Frost, "*No other living poet has written so well about the actions of ordinary men*" (Randall Jarrell, 2001, p.28).

IX. CONCLUSION

Robert Frost exemplifies humanity by showing the ways of contemporary poetry, showing that Frost's poetry has a unique form. So, from the above analysis and commentary, Robert Frost is an inquisitive observer of THE MAN, the fact that great humanity is renowned in his poetry.

Robert Frost's poetry is a collection of realistic images of humanity, revealing the complex tension in human relationships. Combines internal fears and external problems with the most interesting results. A man's relationship to the world is clearly shown - it indicates that love, inner feelings, and psychological relationships occupy a central place in a MAN.

So, in his poems, Frost expresses that MAN must have a strong desire to be independent and free while dealing with premises of isolation, fear, and acceptance (later, becoming tolerant). As well as there is an explanation through those poems on MAN that one should have a strong belief in himself/herself.

Also, the inner meaning – behind the content of the poems – is the frustration of empty houses and the declining the amount of inhabits. Frost's poetry makes you feel like you have hope life goes on. One has the joy of being a spectator and watching life progress. Because it is not difficult to learn from the images of the characters in the poems that Frost was a person who paid close attention to people and their difficulties (i.e., problems, harshness in life, etc.). This means that Robert Frost was not a rude person, the poet's heart is not stone, instead, his heart is full of noble feelings, and Frost was always sympathetic and compassionate towards the man(kind) – people. So, due to Frost's brilliant character portrayals, it is easy to see that he has a great talent for creating such realistic characters.

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