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Glorifying Nature in Four Selected Poems of Robert Frost(*)

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Glorifying Nature in Four Selected Poems of Robert Frost

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to show how Robert Frost glorified Nature by examining four selected poems of him: *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*, *Dust of Snow*, *The Tuft of Flowers* and *A Minor Bird*. In *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*, Robert Frost presented a traveler who stopped in the woods in a snowy evening to watch the woods. The poem *Dust of Snow* talks about a day in which the poet was working in a garden or a pasture. He shook down a tree when the dust of snow on that tree fell down on him. In this poem, the speaker says that the dust has changed his mood. He linked this change of mood with his heart. The poem *The Tuft of Flowers*, the poem shows how nature can send a message of joy toward the heart of a human being. The poem *A Minor Bird*, in this poem, the speaker talks about a bird that he wishes to leave. The speaker wishes that bird to leave because that bird annoyed him and became a source of disturbance to the speaker. The result revealed that Robert Frost used the theme of Nature as a background in which he could send his ideas and thoughts to the readers. By glorifying it, he could deliver great messages, thoughts, and senses to all people around the world about the importance of nature in our lives and the great effects of it on our minds and hearts.

Keywords: Nature, Robert Frost, *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*, *Dust of Snow*, *The Tuft of Flowers*, and *A Minor Bird*.

تمجيد الطبيعة في أربع قصائد مختارة لروبرت فروست

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الملخص

المهدف من هذه الدراسة هو إظهار كيف قام روبرت فروست بتمجيد الطبيعة من خلال فحص أربع قصائد مختارة له: التوقف عند وودز في أمسية ثلجية، وتراب من الثلج، وخصلة الزهور، وطائر صغير. في التوقف عند وودز في أمسية ثلجية قدم روبرت فروست مسافرًا توقف في الغابة في أمسية ثلجية لمشاهدة الغابة، وتتحدث قصيدة غبار الثلج عن يوم كان الشاعر يعمل فيه في حديقة أو مرعى لقد هز شجرة عندما سقط عليها غبار الثلج على تلك الشجرة يقول المتحدث في هذه القصيدة أن الغبار غير مزاجه. ربط هذا التغيير في المزاج بقلبه، وتُظهر القصيدة The Tuft of Flowers، كيف يمكن للطبيعة أن ترسل رسالة فرح نحو قلب الإنسان أما قصيدة عصفور صغير في هذه القصيدة يتحدث المتحدث عن طائر يرغب في مغادرته، ويتمنى المتحدث أن يغادر هذا الطائر لأن هذا الطائر أزعجه وأصبح مصدر إزعاج للمتحدث. وكشفت النتيجة أن روبرت فروست استخدم موضوع الطبيعة كخلفية يمكنه من خلالها إرسال أفكاره وأفكاره إلى القراء من خلال تمجيده يمكنه إيصال رسائل وأفكار وحواس عظيمة إلى جميع الناس حول العالم وحول أهمية الطبيعة في حياتنا وتأثيرها الكبير على عقولنا وقلوبنا.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الطبيعة، روبرت فروست، التوقف عند وودز في أمسية ثلجية، غبار من الثلج، خصلة من الزهور، وطائر صغير.



Statement of Problem

The poets have tackled variety topics from different angles, the most closed theme to the EFL students is the nature. Students are fond of nature and the works that related to nature, reviewing the literature and previous studies it was found that the poet Robert Frost interested in nature. The theme of nature is prevalent in Robert Frost's poems, and he often uses nature as a metaphor for life, death, and human experiences. Frost portrays nature as a force that is both beautiful and harsh, and his poems reflect his belief that nature has a profound impact on our lives. He explores the relationship between humans and nature and how it shapes our perception of the world. Through his poems, Frost captures the essence of nature and its impact on the human spirit.

The Aim of the Study

In this study, the aim is to show how Robert Frost glorified Nature by examining four selected poems of him: *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*, *Dust of Snow*, *The Tuft of Flowers* and *A Minor Bird*.

The Question

To achieve the aim, the following question was set "To what extent does the theme of nature significance our life?"

Introduction

Throughout history, literature addressed different ideas, thoughts, and themes. Those themes and ideas dealt with various issues and topics of our daily lives. Some of those themes are very common and different authors from different regions talked about them. For example, the theme of love and hatred is a very well-known theme that existed in almost every region. Also, the theme of revenge is another common one that was tackled in different ways. In addition, the theme of mortality as presented in 'Hamlet' which Hamlet's musings on suicide, especially the "to be or not to be" speech, are legendary and continue to direct discussions of the value of life and the mystery of death. Some authors devoted themselves in a certain field of issues. Some authors zoned their literary works toward certain ideas. For example, Anne Bradstreet's devotional poetry, also in the same field we have William Blake who loves lambs. His work 'The Lamb' which connects religion with both the human and natural worlds. Alice Walker wrote about women rights and equality between men and women and this theme can be clearly seen in some of her works such as the famous short story *Everyday Use*. Edgar Allan Poe is a famous author for his gothic-horror works such as his two masterpieces *The Black Cat* and *The Cask of Amontillado*.

One famous theme that dominated for a long time, and still dominating, is the theme of Nature. The theme of Nature can be seen in every region and



every time. Throughout history, different authors addressed Nature and glorified it. Back to the Greeks time, the poet Theocritus began glorifying rural life and nature in his famous poem *Lycidas*. Moving from Greeks to different stages and phases of human being history, one can find different authors that talked about the beauty of nature such as Ralph Emerson Waldo in his famous poem *The Snow Storm*, Ezra Pound in *The River-Merchant's Wife*, William Wordsworth in *Nutting*, in addition to many other authors from different countries. Robert Frost (1874-1963), the famous American poet, is well known for his interest in rural life and nature. He addressed nature in different poems. Most of his poems linked Nature with different life issues.

The Poem *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*

In *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*, Robert Frost presented a traveler who stopped in the woods in a snowy evening to watch the woods. The speaker, the traveler himself, was amazed by the scene there. He was tempted and wanted to stay and watch those lovely woods for the rest of the night. Frost, in this poem, linked nature with the heart. There was a conflict between the heart and the mind. The heart wanted the speaker to stay and enjoy his time watching those beautiful lands. The mind reminded him with his life issues and promises and that he has to leave and stop enjoying the scene in order to continue achieving those promises. Frost glorified nature by using simple language that shows the love that speaker had toward it. He described it as a 'lovely' thing. With the presence of mind and reason, the horse of that speaker wondered about the reason the speaker stopped there. The horse did not realize the beauty of nature and was wondering about stopping at that time and that night which was 'the darkest night'. Then, the speaker answers the horse by giving it the reason of stopping there; the lovely nature:

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.
He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.
The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,
But I have promises to keep,⁽¹⁾

Frost, in this poem, shows the love toward nature with the use of simple language. By examining the form, the reader could notice that the poet kept



his poem away from using metaphors, similes, and complicated use of language. Instead of that, he used simple language and simple words to give strong meanings and strong senses to the reader. The work itself was meaningful and can stand alone as a work of art in spite of the use of them.

Another important example of glorifying nature in Robert Frost's poems can be found in his poem *Dust of Snow*. In this poem, Frost talks about a day in which he was working in a garden or a pasture. That day, he shook down a tree when the dust of snow on that tree fell down on him. He says that this dust has done something to his mood. In this poem, the speaker says that the dust has changed his mood. He linked this change of mood with his heart. Heart is usually linked with emotional feelings. He chose to link the change of mood with the heart instead of the mind to show the beautiful relationship between the heart and nature; which is love. Glorifying nature can be recognized, in this poem, by realizing nature's healing effects on human beings. The author, as every human being, had some kind of dark mood that was changed to a good mood because of the beautiful nature:

The way a crow
Shook down on me
The dust of snow
From a hemlock tree
Has given my heart
A change of mood
And saved some part
Of a day I had rued⁽²⁾.

By examining the form of this poem, Frost chose again to give strong meanings and senses to the readers by using simple language. This poem is considered as one of the shortest poems by Robert Frost. In spite of that, readers can guess the idea the great poet wanted to share. He gave the floor to the reader to imagine the way shaking the tree took place by not clearly stating it.

The third example that will be examined in this essay is the famous poem *The Tuft of Flowers*. This poem was written in the late 90s of the 19th century. It is considered as an early poem of Robert Frost. In this poem, Frost talks about a day he spent in a field. He went there to turn the grass that has been mowed by his friend. The poem shows how nature can send a message of joy toward the heart of a human being.

The speaker, in this poem, feels lonely working in that field. During his work, a butterfly got his attention. That butterfly was seeking a flower to step on. It went away and then came back as if nature sent it and wanted to free the speaker from his loneliness. By examining that butterfly, his eyes



were led toward a tuft of flowers. The mower left those flowers undamaged. The speaker says implicitly that he and the mower share the love for nature by leaving those flowers without damaging or cutting them. As a reward, I believe, he was sent a beautiful butterfly to break his loneliness and raise inside him some kind of joy. That butterfly is like a messenger between him and the mower. They both share the admiration for that lovely tuft of flowers and this butterfly helped the speaker escaping his loneliness.

As we can see in this poem, Frost considered nature as a great source of delight. It awakens the kinship inside the speaker and makes him feel as if he is working with the mower side by side at that time and he is not alone anymore:

That made me hear the wakening birds
around,
And hear his long scythe whispering to
the ground,
And feel a spirit kindred to my own;
So that henceforth I worked no more
alone;⁽³⁾.

By tackling the form of this poem, the reader can notice the change in the level of the language from the previous poems. Frost, in this poem, used a masculine rhyme scheme, i.e., the majority of the lines ended with a stop or a comma. The author gave that butterfly some personification in order to indicate its importance at that day since it, the butterfly, was like a messenger of joy and gladness. Also, the use of some words gave the poem a higher level of sense and meaning.

The last poem that will be focused on in this essay is *A Minor Bird*. Throughout his life, Frost was called 'The Poet of Nature'. However, he insisted that he is not a poet of nature only rather he is a poet that talks about life with all of its issues. In this poem, the speaker talks about a bird that he wishes to leave. That bird kept singing on his window every day. The speaker wishes that bird to leave because that bird annoyed him and became a source of disturbance to the speaker. After sending him away, the speaker regrets that and realizes that the problem is in himself and not in that bird. The problem is that some people want to silence nature which is something wrong, as the speaker says:

And of course, there must
be something wrong
In wanting to silence any
song⁽⁴⁾.

The message of that poem can be explained in different ways. The speaker regrets sending that bird away because he realizes that it is not the



bird's fault. It kept singing and it is a source of relaxation to human beings. Nature is a source of delight and human beings are mistreating nature by trying to silence it. Also, another interpretation for that poem can be added by overextending the meaning to political context. People try to silence things that they do not like. This idea can be related to political issues, I believe.

By bringing the form of this poem into discussion, readers may notice that Robert Frost wrote a short meaningful poem without bringing in metaphors, similes or any complex elements in the language. The form of this poem was written in order to take the reader through different phases. First, the speaker was annoyed by that bird. Then, he realizes that the problem is in himself and not in the bird. With that regression, the speaker states that it is wrong to silence voices around us.

Conclusion

The theme of nature stood side by side with every culture and every era. Throughout history, this theme was a well-known one that was talked about in every country and every time by different authors. Robert Frost used this theme as a background in which he could send his ideas and thoughts to the readers. By glorifying it, he could deliver great messages, thoughts, and senses to all people around the world about the importance of nature in our lives and the great effects of it on our minds and hearts.

By tackling those great poems, the reader can realize that a work of art can be so meaningful and effective in spite of being short. A well-known Arabic proverb that can be mentioned here is 'the less said the better'. Frost, by the use of simple language and simple words that carried meaningful senses, could present us some great works than can be so moving and touching.

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