

# Discuss robert frost's exploration of man's relationship to nature essay sample

[Environment](#), [Nature](#)



Robert Frost has an exceptional relationship to nature. Being a farmer in New England, he was surrounded by the beauty and tranquillity of nature. Frost, through his poems explores man's relationship to nature, capturing every detail, the importance of nature and how human's become sidetracked in worldly issues. In the poem 'The Road Not Taken' Frost uses the metaphor of the road to reflect on life choices, that in life we may come to "two roads" (1) and look back to see what life would bring if the other road had been taken. In the first stanza, the last word "undergrowth" (5) symbolises mystery and adventure through the woods. Frost uses the nature of the woods to show life is like those woods because no one can clearly see or predict what will happen in the future, only hope to choose a path that will lead to good fortune and happiness. Though the speaker takes the road "less travelled by" (19), he justifies himself "because it was grassy and wanted wear" (8). This can be seen that the speaker took the pleasant road or wants to discover something exciting, however after travelling down the road "the passing there / had worn them really about the same."

Unlike the title, clearly the road had been taken. The speaker feels deflated and less courageous, because many other people had taken the same path. In the first of the four stanzas, "and" appears on lines 2, 3 and 4. This repetition makes the speaker feel like he is questioning and justifying which road to take. It also gives a slow pace but a constant flow when reading. This is added by the rhyme scheme, each stanza apart from the fourth follows an abaab form, drawing emphasis to the last word. In the third stanza, the speaker explains "oh, I kept the first for another day!" This highlights the conversational aspect used alongside the rhyme scheme to show the

speakers longing for choice. The last stanza reveals much ambiguity " I shall be telling this with a sigh." The ' sigh' could mean happiness or regret; this signifies the overall feeling of the poem, the speaker wishes he could have had wider experience of life by taking both choices.

" Two roads diverged in a wood, and I -

I took the one less travelled by,

And that has made all the difference."

The speaker has come to the decision that, for better or worse, the choice he has made will be permanent and will affect him throughout his life. Also, nature determines what we do and where go, like the seasons and when to plant crops and bulbs. This is shown by the repetition of the " I", he looks back to the past and sees that the choice he made got him to where he is today. Along with the " sigh" another ambiguous word used is " difference," as we don't know what made the " difference." This is also the cliff-hanger as it leaves us in suspense and a sense of mystery.

[1]

Similarly, in the poem ' Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening' Frost uses the same structure and the same amount of stanzas. Contrastingly to the content of the poem, the rhyme scheme allows the poem to feel warm, continuous and creates an easy flow. However, the content and mood is very different. Unlike ' The Road Not Taken,' Frost uses simple words in the rhyme scheme which give it an easy and tranquil flow; again in ' Stopping by

Woods...' the rhyme scheme is the same. The first 3 stanzas have the same rhyme scheme, aaba, then bbcb and the 4th stanza is aaaa. The first stanza is simple and gives plain, thoughtful imagery for the reader's mind. The rhyme scheme in the first stanza shows how an easy pace the speaker is taking "to watch the woods fill up with snow" (4).

The speaker has as much time as he wants because the owner's "house is in the village," (2) contrasting to the rest of the poem, the first stanza isn't much of a sombre mood but a pondering mood. Ironically, Frost shows how nature becomes destructive and not so benevolent, the woods are filling up with snow, therefore he could become trapped and no one is going to be around to save him. Here Frost shows two sides of nature, the beauty and the beast. In the second stanza, the imagery is elaborated providing a definite time and location, "the darkest evening of the year" (8) which is the 21st of December. The first two lines take us deep into the woods, so far that his horse even finds it weird. The 4th line of the 2nd stanza shows that it is "the darkest evening" this could mean it is dark emotionally, as when it has been snowing the evening still seems light.

In the third stanza, the horse "gives his bells a shake." (9) Like death comes unexpected, the reader feels shaken from the trance; the rhyme scheme has sent the reader into. The bells' loudness contrasts the quietness and gentleness around where the only other sounds are the eerie silence, "wind" and "downy flake." The final stanza brings all the emotions of the poem together, an intense awe of love and nature. The "lovely, dark and deep" (15) woods seem to reflect the speaker and invite him in. Line 15 is very

contrasting, " lovely, dark and deep" the speaker is contemplating death. The speaker realises it is not his time to die as he has " promises to keep" (16) maybe to his family or to his horse. His relationship with the horse brings about his responsibility.

Here Frost shows that he is caring and this time nature is relying on him. By saying " my little horse" this gives a sense of ownership and he would feel guilty if he left it. By the repetition of " And miles to go before I sleep / And miles to go before I sleep" (17-18) it seems as though the speaker is grieving, not looking forward to a life of unrest. Equally ' The Road Not Taken' uses repetition and the speaker feels a similar sense of loss and regret. In the poem ' The Road Not Taken' the woods are travelled through and are an opening in life, contrastingly ' Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening' is about contemplating the end of life, how death was inviting when the speaker had a chance without interruption.

Unlike the previous two poems, ' After Apple Picking' has a completely different structure, this is one continuous poem.

[2]

The structure of this poem weaves in and out for example line 1 is very long " my long two-pointed ladder's sticking through a tree" (1) contrasted to line 32 which is very short " for all" (32), it feels like the speaker is drifting in and out of sleep. There are twenty end rhymes throughout the poem, with the repetition of sleep occurring often. The season of apple picking is coming to an end and the speaker has been hard at work all day, so the speaker is

exhausted and he becomes dreamy. However, because of the length of the lines the reader is kept alerted and doesn't experience the sleepiness. The speaker is growing old and is unable to harvest like he used to "ladder's sticking through a tree / toward heaven still" (1-2), as he is unable to fill all the barrels, leaving "apples I didn't pick upon some bough" (5). The speaker could be using this as a metaphor that he hasn't achieved all he would have like to in life, similar to 'The Road Not Taken' he still has many ambitions and hopes to fulfil.

The speaker suggests the world is different and has changed looking back, "I cannot rub the strangeness from sight / I got from looking through a pane of glass" (9-10) or perhaps the speaker has changed as a person, that he has matured and looks back on his foolishness. The speaker shows how life can be magnified by using apples, opportunities appear and disappear "magnified apples appear and disappear" (18). The speaker shows this as being an allusion drifting in and out of sleep. The speaker also looks at missed opportunities "there were ten thousand thousand fruit to touch / cherish in hand, lift down and not let fall" (30-31). Wishing, like he now does with apples, to grasp them and not let go, the speaker shows sadness that the opportunities were not cherished more. Letting them go they become worthless.

In the last six lines "sleep" appears four times, emphasising the "long sleep" (41), although the "woodchuck" (40) is getting ready to hibernate, maybe the speaker is getting ready to fall into the eternal sleep like he hopes to. However the poet does not know the actual nature of his sleep

whether his sleep will be the long sleep of the woodchuck or one night long human sleep. Referring back to "heaven" the apple could signify the Bible story of Adam and Eve, before the apple was introduced they were in paradise in a state of bliss, but when the apple was introduced it tempted them and they were happy no more. The speaker could be feeling like Adam and Eve, longing for "heaven", repenting. In 'After Apple-Picking' Frost is working with and relying on nature, "Cherish" (31) is significant in the way Frost has to look after and be careful of each and every apple, or else it becomes of less worth. For many farmers if nature doesn't provide then man simply cannot survive.

In conclusion, I feel Frost is expressing through his poems, which man must maintain and not take for granted, nature. Nature determines the quality and way of life we lead, Frost obviously has built up a great relationship with nature and through his poems he is telling us the reader, how vital it is to build a relationship with nature. In each of the three poems I have analysed, Robert Frost shows how nature affected his life. Nature leads the way, for example in 'The Road Not Taken' if there had been no "undergrowth" and the road that he eventually took was "grassy and wanted wear," (8) Frost may have taken the other road. And going down this road he may have had a different future, but as the "sigh" suggests we just won't know.