

Identity in dead poets society and frost's poetry

Profession, Poet



Discovery is the process of unveiling a fresh or renewed understanding of the world which may be the result of an unexpected journey or experience. While relinquishing societal norms can result in the most profound revelations which may be unforeseen yet wonderful, this experience may generate a heightened appreciation for the world around them with a brighter perspective on their outlook of life. Robert Frost's 'The Tuft of Flowers' (TT) and 'Stopping by woods on a snowy evening' (SB) explores that an understanding of place and the intellectual experience may result in a greater experience of self through the ramifications of the romanticist settings and the persona's isolation. Similarly, Peter Weir's film *Dead Poets Society* (DPS) explores literature as an outlet for individuals to attain the intellectual and self discoveries with a renewed understanding of their surroundings in a suppressive society. Thus, through these texts, Frost and Weir demonstrate their characters to abandon established ways and embrace new outlooks that provide a profound understanding of an individual's identity.

Natural and romanticist settings are often the catalysts for the sudden and unexpected journey of place discovery for individuals to generate a heightened self-perception. Frost's simplistic use of heroic couplets in 'TT', "I went to turn the grass once after one/who mowed it in the dew before the sun" creates the tone of peace and tranquillity, which resonates a natural and romantic setting. This resonation reinforces the individual's ideal setting to furnish a catalyst for the sudden and unexpected discovery, facilitating a place discovery that may not have been achieved anywhere else. Frost continues to portray the persona's sudden natural discovery "A leaping

tongue of bloom the scythe had spared...feel a spirit kindred to my own" by using action verbs; Frost gives life to the natural setting. The unexpected discovery allows the persona to discover a connection through nature that was previously unknown. Correspondingly in 'SB', the woods' allure and beauty entice the persona, though conflicted between giving into nature or endure society's burdens. This notion is prevalent through the portrayed symbol of snow as a representation of beauty. "The only other sound's the sweep/Of easy wind and downy flake" to use the sense of hearing to convey the beauty of nature. Although the persona is in an uncomfortable place "between the woods and frozen lake/the darkest evening of the year", he paused to contemplate the beauty of nature. Hence, through the natural and romanticist settings, the personas have revealed a place discovery which has been able to form a new understanding as a result of abandoning established ways.

An individual's isolation may facilitate moments of epiphanies that lead to the intricate self-discoveries and the employment of unique outlooks. In Frost's 'TT' the butterfly motif facilitates a connection between the mower and persona, in turn transform the persona's sense of isolation and outlook on life. It is the butterfly who leads the persona to the flowers "He turned first, and led my eye to look/At a tall tuft of flowers beside a brook" which causes his discovery and epiphany. Additionally, the juxtaposing couplets "The butterfly I had lit upon, /Nevertheless, a message from the dawn" expresses the shift in attitudinal tone; from perceiving isolation negatively, to one embracing the loneliness of the connection between man and nature. However, through the character development in DPS, isolation is revealed as

a catalyst for individuals to enhance their understanding of themselves. Weir reveals Todd, a shy and uncomfortable character to be disoriented through his discovery process when Mr Keating forces him to describe what he sees when his eyes are closed. After uncovering his talent for poetic verse, “ from the moment we enter crying t-to the moment we leave dying, it’ll just cover your face as you wail and cry and scream” the reverted camera angle coupled with the other students clapping their approval highlights his renewed understanding as a result of his isolation from societal norms. Mr Keating uses Robert Frost’s “ Two roads diverged in a yellow road” to teach each student to walk their own way, antagonising the traditional and conservative society. By learning to walk their way, “ To take the one less travelled by” they can develop their character and their individuality, ultimately revealing that the responders can too, walk their own way. Through the moments of epiphany, individuals attain self-discoveries due to their isolation.

Individuals may uncover the unknown through aspects of everyday life and as a ramification of an intellectual discovery, which may evoke a brighter understanding of the world. Throughout ‘ SB’, Frost’s clear language, first person narration and present tense empower the responder with an opportunity to experience the wondrous nature in “ The woods are lovely, dark and deep, but I have promises to keep.” where the ‘ woods’ illustrate the allure of nature while the ‘ promises’ exemplify society’s burdens. This presents the life he wishes – lovely and natural, dark and primitive, deep and genuine. However, the woods further represent the metaphysical where the “ dark and deep” symbolises death and the unknown in the after-life.

Furthermore, in DPS the individual discovery of what one can achieve is demonstrated. Mr Keating stresses the need to “ seize the day” throughout his lessons, encouraging them to capitalise on their time and exploit the opportunities that they face to achieve their goal. This notion is prevalent in various instances as simple aspects of everyday life such as calling a girl and auditioning for a play present the ability for responders to uncover an intellectual discovery by releasing themselves from society. Mr. Keating continues to reveal the importance of “ poetry, beauty, romance, love” as he states that “ these are what we stay alive for” through a close-up high-angle shot from the students’ perspective, allowing responders to be empathetic and attain a brighter understanding of the world.

Thus, everyday aspects reveal the unknown through the ramification of relinquishing societal norms. Overall, through the natural and romanticist settings, isolation and the unknown, the personas embrace new outlooks and perceptions on the world around them, consequent of the discovery processes of place, intellectual and self. Through Robert Frost’s ‘ The Tuft of Flowers’ and ‘ Stopping by woods on a snowy evening’ as well as Peter Weir’s Dead Poets Society, the responder can adopt a new outlook on life with a greater appreciation and perception for the world and others around them.