

# A Study on the Symbolism of Robert Frost's Poetry from the Perspective of Deep Ecology

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**Abstract:** Robert Frost didn't like vassal theory all his life, and he was against classifying himself into any school. He opposed others to call himself a symbolist poet, but called his poetry a symbol. Based on the theory of deep ecology of Allan ness, especially the two highest principles: ecocentrism, equality, self realization and guiding principle, simple means and rich purpose of life style, we can find that the deep ecological consciousness of DOUSHE in Robert Frost's poems is as follows: Man and nature are equal, interactive and interrelated. If human beings want to realize themselves, they must be kind to nature. Robert Frost opposes the excessive pursuit of rice material life, opposes the great enrichment of material wealth brought by industrial civilization based on science and technology, industrialization and commercialization, and advocates a pastoral life.

## 1. Introduction

Robert Frost opposed classifying himself into any genre throughout his life, did not like to subordinate various theories, and historical critics rarely attribute it to various genres. He himself once said that we have reason to doubt that any poem written in accordance with a certain theory can last. He also stated that I oppose all isms, they are just some views that are popular and out of favor [1]. Etymologically, the word “picture sign” is derived from the Latin Emblema, which first came from the Greek εμβλημα, which originally meant inlaid or embedded symbols [2]. The modern usage of pictorial signs originated in Italy in the 16th century. In 1531, the Italian lawyer and humanitarian Andrew Aseto, known as the father of pictorial literature, published his Latin book “Picture Calling Book”. Picture call for books mainly refers to a collection of symbolic pictures, usually accompanied by prophecies, verses or prose, which come from medieval fable books [3]. The book of pictorial representation was a genre of pictorial literature in Italy in the 16th century, and it became popular in Western Europe in the 17th century. Francis Cortes is a famous author of pictorial representation in England. Pictograph is an entity with three parts: picture, emotion and thinking. Deep ecology is based on the ecosystem as a whole, fully understanding the self value of the environment, maintaining the diversity and integrity of the ecosystem, and deeply reflecting on the environmental values, the ethical attitudes of people and the environment, and the social structure. Its central problem is criticizing anthropocentrism [5]. Recognize the self-value of ecology. Starting with the relationship between man and nature, he led people to realize the equality and symbiosis of ecocentrism between man and nature, and at the same time, he resolutely criticized industrial civilization and advocated rural life from a unique perspective. Therefore, the deep ecological consciousness in Robert Frost's poems is worth exploring and exploring.

## 2. Deep Ecology

Robert Frost is one of the greatest American poets in the 20th century on the same fame as Eliot and Pound. He enjoys a high reputation and social status. He is also the only American poet who has won four Pulitzer Prizes. Poet Laureate. He has been diligent in writing throughout his life, and has created many collections of poetry, many of which are well-known works in the history of American poetry [7]. Robert Frost is good at using ordinary things in nature to reveal natural laws and universal common sense. In these poems, nature and human beings seem to be one. With its own appeal and spirituality, nature conveys to human beings her laws and universal laws of the

universe.



Fig.1 Robert Frost

Deep ecologists have constructed a four-layer structure of the theoretical system of deep ecology: the first layer consists of two fundamental principles, namely the highest criterion. The second level consists of eight action plans. The third level is the normative conclusion and factual hypothesis deduced from the first and second levels. The fourth level is the concrete action rules based on the third level. These four levels are gradually deduced from the inside to the outside, from the conceptual level logic of metaphysics to the empirical level of concrete actions.

Ecocentrism equality means that all existences in the biosphere can survive and multiply, and they all have the right to display and realize their individual existence in a wider range. From the perspective of deep ecologists, because the existence of human beings is inseparable from other existences, all existences in the biosphere have intrinsic value just like human beings. This inner value can be intuitive, and this intuition comes from a deep understanding of nature. However, Naess also pointed out that the equality in deep ecology is not absolute equality, but that the rights and interests given by ecosystem to human and natural beings are equal. When the interests of human beings conflict with those of other beings, two principles can be used to solve the problem: one is the principle of fundamental need, that is, fundamental need takes precedence over non fundamental need, no matter who the subject of need is. The second is the principle of closeness, that is, when the same interests or obligations conflict, the interests of those beings that are the same or similar to us have priority. These two principles enable people to respect other beings without being helpless in real life.

### 3. The Characteristics of Robert Frost's Poetry

Features can be used as both a rhetorical device and a genre. Robert Frost called his poetry a feature poem, and pursued 'the visible meaning of things'. It can be understood that the feature that Robert Frost said is a figure of speech, not a figure of genre. Robert Frost only uses the figure as a rhetorical form to achieve the visible meaning of things, not the collection of pictures. Although Robert Frost calls his poetry a feature, the indispensable picture as a feature does not really exist in his poetry. Robert Frost emphasized the visible signs of things, and what he learned and valued was the visible. Although there are no pictures in his poems, the poet uses his own words and descriptions to present a picture to the readers. The readers can experience the visible pictures from the words, and the essence of the pictures has not been lost. One of his poems "The Tree by the Window" presents a picture like this to the reader:

The tree is in front of my window, the tree in front of the window, night falls, lower the window. Never pull down the curtain between you and me. Hazy, the head of the dream rises out of the ground, things almost diffuse to the clouds, not all your eloquence can show the profound. But, tree, I see you swaying restlessly, if you have seen my sleeping face, you will see my tossing and turning, endless loss. On that day, our heads were put together. It was destiny who gave full play to her imagination. Your head was so concerned about the climate outside, but mine was connected with the inner warmth.



Fig.2 Tree by the Window

There are two parallel images in the picture presented by the poet, the narrator in the poem and the tree by the window. As night falls, the window leaves open, and the narrator's every move is in the eyes of the tree, so the narrator thinks that the tree can see his sad face and toss and turn. Similarly, every move of the tree can't escape the eyes of the narrator, so the swaying uneasiness of the tree also appears in the poet's eyes. Robert Frost presents the inner world of a thoughtful person. The picture shown is a tree by the bedroom window when night falls and a lonely worried sleeper indoors. The tree is an anthropomorphic appearance in the picture, able to read the poet's mind. The poet also regards the tree as a living thing that can talk to, and connects his heart to it. Such a description clearly shows the reader a visible picture. For Robert Frost, poetry is an art of communication, which should not be obscure. In his eyes, the symbolism movement will open up the distance between readers and hinder or even destroy poetry as a thrombus. Therefore, although Robert Frost also uses symbolic writing techniques, he definitely does not consider himself a symbolist, and he wants to draw a clear line with the symbolism movement. What he pursues is the visible sign of things, so as to make them closer to readers.

#### 4. Conclusions

Although Robert Frost said that he was not a member of the symbolism movement, the signs he proposed belonged to a kind of symbolism. In contrast, the pictorial features are more intuitive, with the presentation of pictures and the reminders of apostles, both of which help Robert Frost to get closer to the reader. At the same time, the preaching emphasizing morality in the slogan further distinguished Robert Frost from symbolism and the popular movement of imagism and vortexism at that time. In short, Robert Frost's poems contain rich ecological philosophy, which embodies deep ecological consciousness. Through the analysis of Robert Frost's poems, we find that Robert Frost is against anthropocentrism, and believes in the interrelationship between man and nature, which is in line with the equality of ecocentrism advocated by deep ecology. In the attitude towards nature, Robert Frost requires us to make proper use of nature or to let it develop, which is in line with the principle of self realization advocated by deep ecology. Robert Frost has deep feelings and unique insight into nature. His poetic spirit lies in the trees, flowers, birds and animals in his poems. Only the sons of nature can comprehend the sounds of nature naturally. Through the description of nature and metaphor, he reflects his different ecological feelings from contemporary poets. It is his ecological interactive aesthetic of nature that makes him surpass contemporary poets, critics and readers. Perhaps this is the reason why he has been misunderstood for a long time.

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