



# Comparative Analysis of *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* and *Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey, on Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour, July 13, 1798*

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**Abstract**— *The present paper attempts to compare and analyze two marvelous poems of all time, 'Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey, on Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour, July 13, 1798' and 'Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening' composed by the two highly philosophical poets William Wordsworth, who was a stalwart in the galaxy of Romantic poetry and the most celebrated American poet of 20<sup>th</sup> century, Robert Frost. The comparison has been made based on the themes, structure, poetic temperament and setting so as to bring differences and similarities between the poems.*

**Objective of study**

- To bring out the comparative analysis between the poems.
- To understand the poems deeply and understand the essence to see the similarities and differences of the poems.
- To bring out the conclusions out of this comparative study.
- To understand the different structures and styles of the poems to understand its uniqueness.

**Keywords**— *banks, poems, Robert Frost, panorama.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The writings of Robert Frost are connected to a great degree with the life and panorama of New England. In his poems he gives a detailed portrayal of landscape arena by adoption of straight, vernacular expressions. The poems of Robert Frost transpire as reflections on prevalent subject matter. He throws himself into poetic instinct using pure natural world as an inlet in relation to attainment of the all-inclusive.

Although both poets see nature in different ways there are some aspects which are clearly the same. William Wordsworth stands exceptionally as a poet of nature as he is the worshipper of Nature. His view of nature is original, new, and full-fledged. Unlike William Wordsworth, Robert Frost finds no sustaining power or source of joy and moral

health in nature. The writing style of Robert Frost displays artistic detachment from his writing and in the case of William Wordsworth there is a clear involvement of himself in the content and themes of his poetry. Robert Frost is skillfully simple whereas William Wordsworth is truly unsophisticated. Robert Frost is sensible, knowledgeable, and rational. On the other hand, William Wordsworth is a dreamer, delightful and enchanting. Robert Frost's poetry begins with joy and ends with deep insight, whereas William Wordsworth's poetry starts with amusement and ends with amusement and pleasure.

William Wordsworth is the exemplary personality of the Romantic Movement in England. The Romantic Movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century started as a revolt against the classical

age. The eighteenth-century poets who had put more emphasis on 'wit' and 'reason' and William Wordsworth in contrast with them used to prioritize on 'imagination'. And by usage of creativity and imagination William Wordsworth formed beauty out of common things. In the poem, "Lines Written a Few miles above Tintern Abbey, on revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour, July 13, 1798," William Wordsworth saw the beauty of the flowing stream, submerged and majestic rock face through his poetic vision. He was exuberantly fascinated at the sparkling resonance of the flowing estuary. Here, he says,

*Once again*

*Do I behold those steep and lofty cliffs*

*That on a wild secluded scene impress*

*Thoughts of more deep seclusion and connect*

*The landscape with quiet of the sky.*

In this poem, the poet seems that the nature as a remedy.

William Wordsworth is able to feel and recollect the existence of nature throughout his imagination and memory with high sensibility presented in the form of poetry even in the absence of nature around him. He says,

*In lonely rooms and 'mid the din*

*Of towns and cities, I have owned to them*

*In hours of weariness, sensation sweet.*

In his poetry Robert Frost expresses the harmonious, all-knowing, and free-spirited Inhabitant whom every Yankee desires of becoming. Robert Frost has exhibited genuineness in his poetry and people acknowledged. He represents the modest life, and individuals in an outrageously complicated society adhere to this. He exemplifies the forfeited vision of the purity in countryside of his fellow citizens who are trapped in the grindstone of sophisticated civilization, who can appreciate that irretrievable earlier time.

William Wordsworth promotes the use of uncomplicated, day-to-day language in poetry. His conception is that the poetry should be written in the language truly used by country men and women. He wants poetry to speak the language of simple truth.

The same kind of similarity we see in Robert Frost's poetry where he discloses the intricacies of pastoral life in the form of everyday expression. But many of his concise remarks are challenging to decipher as these indicate figurative themes unlike William Wordsworth who prefers simple language. The body of his poetry appears simple and ordinary but convey deep meaning that demands one's attention to introspect to understand clearly. There is a great

art behind the simplicity projected in his poetry. Most of his poems are open to more than one interpretation. The opulent features of his poems gives them a rich texture which gives the poems an ever-lasting status. Undoubtedly the most suitable examples are the poems "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" and "Birches".

The philosophy of William Wordsworth on human life describes that the human being is very much part of nature. He believes that usually in childhood the man is sensitive to all natural influences because of the purity he holds during that phase, and he is an epitome of the blissfulness and aesthetics of the world. William Wordsworth explains this delightfulness and this perceptiveness towards Nature by the philosophy that the child comes straight from the Creator of Nature. This premiership with nature and with God and which glorifies childhood, extending through a man's entire life and elevate it. This is the teaching of the poem "Tintern Abbey" which displays the best part of human life shown due to realistic impact. According to William Wordsworth, people become perverted and weakened due to association with the unnatural life and crowded environment in the cities so the only way to overcome this miserable way of life is to return to a natural and simple way of living. Nature stands supreme in William Wordsworth's poetry, and he establishes the union between humans and nature as human beings and nature are never distant from each other and are closely related. Whereas in the case of Robert Frost we see that nature has been made subordinate to humans and because of this, it becomes hard to address Robert Frost as the poet of nature in consideration with William Wordsworth. Moreover, Robert Frost himself confesses that: "We have had nature poetry for a hundred years." He is intrigued in discovering the dealings between nature and humans. It is true that both poets pursued comfort and joy in nature.

Nature is a Healer for William Wordsworth, and he describes healing abilities of nature in his poem "Tintern Abbey". Nature never betrays the heart that loved her says William Wordsworth. Nature is hostile, malicious and spiteful to Robert Frost as it creates barriers to tranquility and satisfaction of human beings and social responsibilities. Even though he praises the woods in his poetry saying that they are lovely, dark and deep, he is of the opinion that humans have duties to perform and have miles to go before they sleep and should not stay in nature for long.

'Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening' is undoubtedly the most celebrated poem of Robert Frost. Here the poet shares with the readers his amazing experience in the woods on a snowy evening.

*Whose woods these are I think I know.*

*His house is in the village, though;*

*He will not see me stopping here  
 To watch his woods fill up with snow.  
 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 sounds the sweep  
 Of easy wind and downy flake.  
 The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,  
 But I have promises to keep,  
 And miles to go before I sleep,  
 And miles to go before I sleep.*

William Wordsworth first visited the Wye Valley when he was 23 years old. After His return five years later William Wordsworth composed the poem *Tintern abbey* expressing his beliefs about nature, creativity, and the human soul. In *Lyrical Ballads* composed by Wordsworth and his friend and fellow poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge., a 1798 collection of poems “*Tintern Abbey*” was included as the last poem.

*Five years have past; five summers, with the length  
 Of five long winters! and again I hear  
 These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs  
 With a soft inland murmur.—Once again  
 Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,  
 That on a wild secluded scene impress  
 Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect  
 The landscape with the quiet of the sky.  
 The day is come when I again repose  
 Here, under this dark sycamore, and view  
 These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,  
 Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,  
 Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves  
 'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see  
 These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines  
 Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,  
 Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke  
 Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!  
 With some uncertain notice, as might seem  
 Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,*

*Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire  
 The Hermit sits alone.*

Thematic Analysis of “*Stopping by the woods in the Snowy Evening* and *Tintern Abbey, On Revisiting the Banks of Wye during a Tour. July 13, 1798*”

The poem ‘*Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*’ creates the desire in the reader to undergo a deep sense philosophical understanding and thinking. The poem is in relation to people in common who feels lost in the pleasantness and calmness on his voyage of life and suddenly remembers his duties and other obligations that need to be fulfilled and the goals that need to be achieved. The clash or disagreement is seen in the poem right from the beginning of stanza and continues to further stanzas and gets sorted out in the end. There are continuously struggles going on which is very much in relation Sigmund Freud’s concept of id, ego and super ego of a man. The speaker is represented to be embodiment of human nature and is carried away by a tranquility of the nature and is drowned in his emotions in presence of the snowy woods, but his inner intuition portrayed by ‘horse’ in the poem cause him to think that it is not a good idea for him to stay in a place just like that without any reason to rest or desist. The horse is very much relatable to man because the rider enjoys the ride and but sooner or later gets caught up in the ‘snow’ and ‘frozen lake’ which is like an obstacle to keep from making further progress in life. In the snowy evening there can be dark, deep and lovely woods but then the rider cannot cease to stop because he has a long way to go in fact miles to go before he sleeps. In this poem it is seen to get into two opposite scenarios where he has to choose either ‘Woods’ or ‘urban life’ indicating a conflict between being in a society and spending time alone in the forest. And simultaneously between stopping and moving and succumbing and resisting. This state of being ambiguous keeps the poem imperishable. The narrative sets up this subtle tension between the timeless attraction of the ‘lovely’ ‘woods’ and the pressing obligations of present situation.

It is these conflicts that is set up in the poem which helps in maintaining the rhythm of the poem and implant it with closer study and understanding of the essence of the poem. The final section of the poems sorts out the tussle between choosing responsibility over the numbness and alluring woods of the snowy evening environment.

The abstaining action of speaker in the poem is justified in the final lines of the poem. The speaker has a long way to go in life before he surrenders to nature and give up the association of this material world. The sayings of the speaker had also inspired Jawaharlal Nehru (the first Prime minister of India) so much so that the last powerful lines of

poem were found written in his diary at his table in his death.

In the poem "Tintern Abbey" William Wordsworth is inspired by nature ability to preserve the memories of past and present of one's life. His experiences with nature are conveyed in the poetry by usage of vivid imagery, narration-based composition and metaphysical figures of speech especially metaphors. This poetry also contains several aspects that might connect to the sentiments of the readers. It is such a beautiful poem that people or readers have retained the effect that it has created through nature that leaves several beautiful impressions on the mind regarding the poetry.

In solitude with nature and in the company of his sister Dorothy, William Wordsworth explored every aspect of nature with complete deep understanding and introspecting his ideas and fascination towards it. And this fascination of poet triggers the senses of the readers to look through the vision of poet and rejoice the experience that poet is trying to convey through his poetry.

The usage of imagery in Tintern abbey lays out a firm base for the readers to look upon the trying to decode the precise point of view and feeling that poet is presenting about nature and the natural environment. It would not have been possible for William Wordsworth to introspect his thoughts and emotions deeply and recreate his perceptions to his readers without detailed exemplification of the scenery within which he is located or positioned.

The following lines depict the poet's expression in accordance with imperishable imagery.

*Once again I see*

*These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines*

*Of sportive wood run wild; these pastoral farms,*

*Green to the very door; and wreathes of smoke*

*Sent up, in silence, from among the trees.*

William Wordsworth is of the opinion that silence is can be an important ornament to connect and observe nature closely. And whatever action has to occur it is within William Wordsworth's mind and imagination as he perceives nature in its true sense. So therefore, it is clear that it is the nature and natural world that gives him a chance to connect to the quietness and true beauty of nature. The presence of nature acts as a medium for William Wordsworth to understand beauty and propensity to affect the senses of individuals.

William Wordsworth has adapted his mind in such a way that it contributes to his own personal growth in being able to create amazing depictions of the setting even though there is changelessness in impression of the scenery. With the

actual portrayal of pictures that William Wordsworth witnesses he is able to present to his readers the true capacity of metaphysical representation of life. It is essential for William Wordsworth to illustrate the scene so that the impact of five years past provides the reader with the way the mind is altered through time and perceptions can be changed as one enters new stages of their life.

## II. SETTINGS AND POETIC TEMPERAMENT

Both the poems Tintern Abbey and Stopping by the Woods in the Snowy Evening are encapsulated in the company of nature in solitude, totally distanced from urban life so to entreat a reflective, pensive and recollective mood. Since time immemorial poets have highlighted wild and tranquility as an ideal spot for reflecting one's own sensibility. The Poets William Wordsworth and Robert Frost have also disclosed the spokesperson to genuine personality in that way they are counseled and enlightened by the Nature.

Themes of the '*Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey, On Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour July 13, 1798*' and *Stopping by the Woods in the Snowy Evening*

Nature is presented as the driving force for morality in this poem composed by William Wordsworth. The poet describes that the association with nature invokes him to perform good deeds and inspires him to make good decisions. He tells us the glories of nature in this poem, and he is convinced by the fact that everything is in relation with nature including human beings. Another important theme discussed in the poem 'Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey' is the description of the poet's past. William Wordsworth here first of all begins the poem by recollecting his past memories mentioning the place that he visited five years ago.

The poet considers thoroughly his change of relationship with nature over time. During his early years his experience with nature was not so deep and profound as the way he looks back very affectionately now. He also relates this fact in relation to his sister Dorothy. With experience William Wordsworth has understood the significance of nature. However, he doesn't forget his joyful and passionate youthful times.

### Human and Nature Relationship

In Robert Frost poetry we come across humans versus nature to be a common theme. At the beginning of the poem "Stopping by Woods in the snowy evening" we can actually see the conflict occurring between nature and humans during the course of the poem where the speaker and his horse halted at the woods in the snowy evening. Whereas

William Wordsworth is asking us to take shelter of nature and explaining us the profound relationship between the nature and human beings.

#### Poetic Devices /Techniques, Symbols and Imagery

It is noticed that Robert Frost is notable for making use of diverse poetic devices in his poems. And, in this Poem 'Stopping by the woods in the snowy evening' several devices have been employed to describe and explain the basic understanding of the poem. For instance, the usage of wood in the poem is used for representation of the suburb areas where the applicability of rules and regulations are uncommon as the person is closer to nature and he is all by himself surrounded by pure natural surroundings. And the description of snow and the frozen lake that is mentioned in the poem depict the condition of getting tempted by one's own senses basically enjoying sense gratification from one's own senses that leads to numbness of senses just like the snow and the frozen lake. The usage of horse is used to represent the passionate and conquering side of the human being. The usage of 'Sleep' in the last lines is used to indicate the metaphor for death and living life is mentioned as 'miles to go' in the poem. The snow also brings up the usage of imagery as whiteness indicates stillness and calmness.

'Lines composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey, On Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour July 13, 1798' is majorly an ode because it is focused majorly on praising a place in the poem by the poet William Wordsworth who is praising the countryside natural environment. The Five stanza poem is composed of varying lengths and the meter is much more consistent as it is written in blank verse. William Wordsworth effectively uses blank verse in the poem for its rhythmic and balanced flow which is useful for connecting to the readers in an informal tone to see nature as naturally as possible.

### III. CONCLUSION

Robert Frost has excelled in presenting prevalent themes like the one given here. He has showcased a prominent flexibility of the theme that conveys a great message to human kind. Both the poems analyze human nature and conclude by the fact that human mentality is naturally subject to uncertainty and has the propensity to alter and transform. Robert Frost was able to glorify the rural setting and natural imagery with the usage of symbolic and metaphysical elements which make the poem very charming with global relevance. Whereas William Wordsworth brings exceptional experience in his poetry that the readers are able to connect to heightened sensibility of the poem through imagination. Therefore, imagination plays a key role in poetry of Wordsworth as it is vital aspect that helps

in revealing the truth which can be figured out with the perception of both subjective and objective approach. William Wordsworth's poetry explains and makes the readers understand the uniqueness of the same as mentioned above.

In the poetry of William Wordsworth, we can learn that the we need to connect to nature and be friendly to nature and how we can overcome everyday tensions by seeking solace in nature and associating ourselves with nature. And Robert Frost poetry showcases the approach where we got to seek relief in nature, wildlife and rustic life of rural people and also employ ourselves in constant work and carry out our duties and responsibilities.

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