



## Analytical Approach of “The Death of the Hired Man”

### ABSTRACT

*‘The Death of the Hired Man’ is one of the most powerful spectacular narratives of Frost, and was written and published in 1914. Its place in “North of Boston” as well as in the entire range of Frost’s poetry is supreme. The form of the poem is pastoral but Frost gave it a dramatic character and it is in this that his originality lies in a group of contrasting characters; but here there are three characters, instead of two. Aside from some brief descriptive and narrative passages, it is a dialogue and the conversation typifies Robert Frost’s skill in making Verse Sound like a talk and in delineating the folks of his region, the temperament and the history of the hired man, Silas are shown indirectly by discussion about him and his return and death are important incidents. Silas is lazy, sponging rogue who on many occasions has wandered away only to return and take advantage of the kindness of his employers, Mary and Warren. These employers reveal their characters, as they converse about the latest return of their pathetic; but rather interesting hired employee. In the discussion which follows the wife deftly wins the husband over to her point of view when Warren goes back to speak to Silas, he makes the ironic discovery that Silas is no more in the world.*

**Key Words:** *Marriage, class-distinction, ironic discovery.*

### INTRODUCTION

‘The Death of the Hired Man’ is one of the most powerful spectacular narratives of Frost, and was written and published in 1914. Its place in “North of Boston” as well as in the entire range of Frost’s poetry is supreme. The form of the poem is pastoral but Frost gave it a dramatic character and it is in this that his originality lies in a group of contrasting characters; but here there are three characters, instead of two. Aside from some brief descriptive and narrative passages, it is a dialogue and the conversation typifies Robert Frost’s skill in making Verse Sound like a talk and in delineating the folks of his region, the temperament and the history of the hired man, Silas are shown indirectly by discussion about him and his return and death are important incidents. Silas is lazy, sponging rogue who on many occasions has wandered away only to return and take advantage of the kindness of his employers, Mary and Warren. These employers reveal their characters, as they converse about the latest return of their pathetic; but rather interesting hired employee. In the discussion which follows the wife deftly wins the husband over to her point of view when Warren goes back to speak to Silas, he makes the ironic discovery that Silas is no more in the world.

The form is in terms ‘Mine’ but even more purely dramatic, not only in the sharpness with which voice and roles are declined, but also in the sense of relation and contrast between roles, and in the movement towards a climatic movement and a deportment. Frost’s dramas often have in fact a decisiveness and completeness not matched in ancient pastoral even when Theocritus goes farthest from pastoral song in “The Women at this Adonis Festival” (Idyll XV). He is creating a spectacular notion rather than an accomplished deed. In “Home Burial”, “The Fear” and ‘Snow”, the point of arrival is less clear than in “The Hired Man” but still there is dynamic opposition between roles and a felt movement towards a objective.

Like some other poems of Frost, the present theatrical poem has also a Speckled Appeal. Although it has successfully been acted as one-act play, the variety of the reasons that accounts for its widespread appeal has been commented by Untermeyer, **“The poem has endeared itself to readers of every kind, and for many reasons. Some readers have praised it for its authentic power, its conversational beauty,**

**and its rich sense of ordinary life”** Others have been moved by its eloquent descriptions, particularly by such passage: **“Part of moon was... her apron to it.”**

Perhaps the most remarkable lines in the poem are those in which companion clarifies of home. The frame of mind modifies, and light sarcasm is replaced for profound grief. The husband’s mocking definition is offered first: **“Home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in.”** To which the wife, with a condemnatory gentleness, replies, **“I should have called it something you, somehow, haven’t to deserve.”**

It is one of the most emotive human period, the mount so since it is all so quiet. The narrative unfurls itself in undercurrents; a poem heard or over-heard in murmurs. It is a dramatic discourse, which contrasts Mary and Warren through the device of the character of Silas’s tragedy. It has in his failure to realize himself except for his ability to build a load of hay.

The dramatic touch is added by Mary and Warren’s disagreement over the motives and nature of Silas. The difference is sharply and briefly presented in lines 118 – 120. the whole poem is underwritten, sparingly done, a method which invites, even required the reader to participating in finding the meaning of the facts.

Frost’s many poems are in blank Verse but in no other poem it so marked by Variety and Range as in the present one. Thompson’s analysis of this point is illuminating- **“To appreciate the variety and range which Frost achieves in blank-verse, we must be aware of the fine modulation required by different situations and characters in the dramatic narrative and dialogues.”**

Despite the poem’s straight forward simplicity it’s conversational and home-made tone, and the absence of a philosophical comment, the poem’s symbolic meaning has depth and uncommon universality. Note the figurative significance of these lines: **“He is come to help you.....miss the moon.”**

In this work, home is the symbol of relations which was a favorites theme for Frost. It is a long dramatic narrative poem and its theme has been brought out by the poet in a very clear and pointed manner. The theme of the poem is however, such as can yield different interpretations.

There are two divergences in this poem. One is with gender and the other is about the class. The fact that critics have allied Mary with mercy can be endorsed to Mary being womanly. Yet while Mary’s sex might undeniably make her additional concerned to Silas’s troubles, it is nearly even more significant that Mary has already observed Silas and has estimated his pitiable state, whereas Warren has not. Had Warren noticed Silas, it is doubtful Warren would have crooked Silas away. He, too, would have had leniency on the dying man. That Mary has observed Silas and has therefore, as the phrase goes, “seen the light” about Silas’s state is indestructible by descriptions of Mary “musing on the lamp flame” at the opening of the poem and ensnaring moonlight (the light of love) in her apron when the poem makes a momentous twirl known as a nomadic on Mary’s resolution to inform Warren that Silas has not returned back to work but to die. Mary not only shows gentleness toward Silas conceivably the light blaze but toward Warren (the moonlight). Thompson’s explanation of the theme is detailed and exhaustive and it deserves to be quoted. He said: **“The central theme of the poem is the transformation of the husband’s stubborn and impatient prejudice, through the deliberate and gentle persuasiveness of the wife.”**

It is a dramatic dialogue, which contrasts Mary and Warren through the device of the character of Silas’s tragedy. It has in his failure to realize himself except for his ability to build a load of hay. The husband and the wife are indulged in a quip, which shows the passion of their sentiments over Silas’ demise; the spectacular paradox gets complete play.

In “The Death of the Hired Man” and “Home Burial” home is the emblem of associations [Which was a favorites theme for Frost]. It is a long dramatic narrative poem and its theme has been brought out by the poet in a very clear and pointed manner. The theme of the poem is however, such as can yield different

interpretations. Thompson's explanation of the theme is detailed and exhaustive and it deserves to be quoted.

When Silas and Mary are central points for this poem, perhaps no character is as interesting as Warren, for he is the only personalities who transforms. As Mary is always tender and Silas is proud and deceptive, Warren alters from being stubborn to being gently hesitant. After Mary assembles moonlight and plays upon the dawn beauty strung from earth to top, and redefine habitat as somewhat one should not have to deserve in other words, something that is everyone's right, Mary is able to believe Silas's come again. To show Warren trodden by advanced reason and compassion, Frost has Warren obligate a bit of aggression against a little stick on the ground — he breaks it, signifying his fury at being made to crumple. With this sign there is little need for Warren to speak, as is also true for Warren's ultimate gesticulation — Warren holding on to Mary's hand when he tells her Silas is dead.

The psychological implications of the poem become apparent only when one recognize the gradual ascendancy of the wife's latent pity and kindness until it dominates the husband's outspoken intolerance and anger.

By recitation Silas connection with Warren's household, Frost has commended the design that "Home is not where one lives, hut where one loves" as Mary says "Silas has come to die". During incredible plot, the poet has intensity of the Lyric. It is comparable to "Home Burial" The essentially dramatic elements of the poem have been commented upon, but one striking originality of Frost's creation is that it acquires the passion of Brower "At the climax of "The Hired Man" the style becomes decidedly lyric, moving outside the limits of either dramatic of narrative realism."

Finally, the observation about "The Death of the Hired Man" is the most worth mentioning achievements of Frost and the lyrical sensibility and imaginative proficiency is closet of a high order.

## References

- I. [www.english.illinois.edu](http://www.english.illinois.edu).
- II. <https://poemshape.wordpress.com>
- III. <https://www.poets.org>.
- IV. <https://en.wikipedia.org>
- V. [www.gradesaver.com](http://www.gradesaver.com)
- VI. <https://archive.org>
- VII. <https://neoenglish.wordpress.com>
- VIII. Bloom, Harold (2003). Robert Frost. Infobase Publishing. P.12.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Dr. Dipti H. Mehta**  
Government Science College  
Gandhinagar

Copyright © 2012 - 2018 KCG. All Rights Reserved. | Powered By: Knowledge Consortium of Gujarat