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1. How does Robert Frost represent personal relationship and human psychology in his poem Home Burial? Elaborate your answer with proper example.

Answer: Robert Frost was an American poet who gained immense recognition and popularity for his work in the twentieth century. Frost was known for his ability to capture the complexities of human relationships and the psychological challenges that arise from them. He is considered one of the most important and influential poets of the 20th century, renowned for his depictions of rural life and his insightful explorations of the human psyche. In his poem "Home Burial," Frost portrays the complicated and often turbulent dynamics of a marriage that is marked by tragedy and loss. This essay will examine how Robert Frost represents personal relationships and human psychology in his poem "Home Burial" through an analysis of the language, imagery, and themes used in the work. Frost offers a powerful meditation on the complex nature of personal relationships and the psychological turmoil that can arise when those relationships are strained or broken. Through a nuanced portrayal of the dynamic between a grieving couple, Frost examines themes of communication, loss, and the struggle to connect with others in a meaningful way.

The poem "Home Burial" was first published in 1914 and is based on the loss of Frost's own son, which happened shortly before he wrote the poem. Frost draws upon his own personal experiences to create a powerful and emotional work that explores the challenges of communication, grief, and loss within a marriage. The poem tells the story of a couple who have recently lost their young child and are struggling to come to terms with their grief in different ways. The husband, who is a farmer, attempts to comfort his wife. However, his wife, who is consumed by grief, is unable to communicate effectively with her husband and is haunted by memories of their child's death. Through their interactions, Frost reveals the deep emotional turmoil and psychological challenges that arise from the loss of a child and the difficulties of communication within a marriage.

The poem "Home Burial" opens with a description of the physical environment of the scene: a couple standing in a stairway leading to their home. The husband, identified only as "He," has been working outside, and returns to find his wife, "She," gazing out the window at their child's grave. Frost uses this setting to establish the emotional and psychological distance between the two characters. The physical separation of the stairway serves as a metaphor for the emotional chasm that has developed between them in the wake of their child's death. This distance is further emphasized through the use of stark, contrasting images. The husband's outdoor work is described as "loose earth," while the wife's grief is portrayed as "fallen leaves." The difference between these two images creates a sense of conflict, as if the husband's pragmatic concerns are at odds with his wife's emotional turmoil.

At its core, "Home Burial" is a study of the breakdown of communication between two people who are experiencing profound grief. The poem opens with a description of a woman named Amy, who is "digging" in her garden while her husband watches her from the stairs of their home. Frost's use of the verb "digging" is significant, as it immediately establishes a sense of labor and effort, suggesting that Amy is working hard to bury something deep within herself. As the poem progresses, it becomes clear that the object of Amy's grief is the loss of her young child, who has recently died. However, Amy is unable to communicate her feelings to her husband in a way that he can understand, and their attempts to connect with each other only seem to drive them further apart.

One of the key themes of "Home Burial" is the breakdown of communication within a marriage. Throughout the poem, the husband and wife struggle to communicate with each other effectively. The husband tries to comfort his wife by discussing practical matters, such as the burial of their child, but his efforts are met with anger and frustration from his wife. She accuses him of being insensitive and incapable of understanding her grief, saying, "You can't because you don't know how to speak of it." This line illustrates the difficulty of communication within a marriage and the frustration that arises when one partner is unable to express their emotions to the other. Frost captures the complexities of this situation through the use of dialogue and internal monologue, which reveal the thoughts and emotions of both characters.

Another key theme of "Home Burial" is the psychological impact of loss and grief. The poem explores the different ways in which the husband and wife deal with the loss of their child. The husband tries to maintain a sense of normalcy by focusing on practical matters. However, his wife is consumed by grief and unable to move on from the tragedy. She is haunted by memories of their child's death and feels isolated and alone in her grief. Frost captures the psychological impact of loss through vivid imagery and descriptive language. For example, he writes, "She took a doubtful step and then undid it/ To raise herself and look again." This line captures the uncertainty and hesitation that often accompanies grief and loss. The central conflict in the poem arises when Amy becomes upset with her husband's suggestion that they move on from their grief and start living their lives again. This leads to a heated argument in which Amy accuses her husband of being insensitive and indifferent to her pain. However, the most striking aspect of this argument is the fact that the two characters seem to be talking past each other, rather than engaging in a meaningful dialogue. For example, when the husband says, "Three foggy mornings and one rainy day / Will rot the best birch fence a man can build," he is attempting to convey the idea that time heals all wounds and that they should not let their grief consume them forever. However, Amy interprets this statement as a callous dismissal of her pain, and responds with anger and frustration. What is most interesting about this exchange is the way in which it highlights the difficulties of communication between people who are in emotional distress. Neither Amy nor her husband is able to understand the other's perspective, and their attempts to connect only seem to exacerbate their pain. As a result, the poem suggests that grief can be an isolating experience that can drive people apart, even when they are trying to come together.

Frost's portrayal of Amy and her husband also highlights the complex nature of human psychology, particularly in times of emotional upheaval. Throughout the poem, both characters are shown to be struggling with their own internal demons, which makes it difficult for them to connect with each other. For example, Amy is consumed with guilt over the death of her child, and feels that her husband does not understand the depth of her pain. Meanwhile, the husband is shown to be stoic and reserved, which makes it difficult for Amy to connect with him emotionally.

However, what is most striking about the poem is the way in which Frost shows how these internal struggles can manifest in outward behavior. For example, Amy's digging in the garden is symbolic of her desire to bury her pain deep within herself, while the husband's constant pacing up and down the stairs suggests his inability to sit still and confront the pain head-on. These behaviors not only reveal the characters' psychological states, but also serve as powerful metaphors for the struggle to connect with others in a meaningful way.

Everyone experiences grief differently, and there is no one-size-fits-all approach to dealing with loss. This is reflected in the following exchange between the couple:

"She was staring down

All in a heap of broken glass in the cellar--

But I knew what she was thinking."

"Frozen ground and heaps of snow

And the returning man and the coming dogs.

'Say it for her.'"

However, despite their different approaches to grief, the husband and wife are ultimately united in their pain. This is exemplified in the powerful image of the wife "clutching her hair" as she confronts her husband. The physicality of this gesture underscores the intensity of her emotional distress, while the husband's inability to understand her pain highlights the communication breakdown that has developed between them.

In addition to exploring the psychological impact of loss and grief, "Home Burial" also examines the role of gender in a marriage. Throughout the poem, the husband and wife have different ways of dealing with their grief that are linked to their gender roles. The husband tries to be practical and provide comfort through his actions, while the wife is consumed by her emotions and unable to communicate effectively. Frost captures the differences between the husband and wife through the use of dialogue and internal monologue. For example, the wife thinks to herself, "What was it brought you up to think it the thing/ To take your mother-loss of a first child/ So inconsolably—in the face of love." This line highlights the expectations placed on women to grieve openly and expressively, while men are expected to be strong and practical. Ultimately, what makes "Home Burial" such a powerful and insightful work of poetry is the way in which Frost captures the nuances of personal relationships and human psychology.