CHAPTER - IV

SYMBOLISM

Symbols are essentially words which are not merely connotative, but also evocative and emotive. Apart from their surface meaning, they evoke before the reader's mental vision a host of associations connected with them, and are also rich in emotional significance. To take an example, the world 'lily' simply means a 'flower', but it also calls up images of beauty and innocence, and carries with it the emotional overtone of pity resulting from suffering or oppression. Through symbols, thus, a writer can express much more than by the use of ordinary words. Ideas and emotions which are otherwise intricate and inexpressible become articulate and meaningful through the use of the symbols.

One comes across a deceptive simplicity in Frost's verse. Beneath its simplicity, one finds a sort of complexity, which arises from his extensive use of symbols. In his essay "The Figure a Poem Makes", Frost makes it clear that "he is
by intention a symbolist who takes his symbols from the public domain." Frost enriches the texture of his poems through symbols which add extra meaning to particular situations and events. His poems have different levels of meaning. The deeper meaning is to be found when one reads his poems carefully. In the employment of an oblique method, Frost is one with W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound.

Robert Frost is a great regional poet. New England is the focal point of his poetry. There is a constant selection and ordering of material. Even of New England, he only deals with the region that lies North of Boston, and of this region, too, only with the countryside and country-dwellers. His constant recourse to regionalism acquires a symbolic significance. The region, North of Boston becomes a microcosm of the world at large, and his Yankee characters become symbolic of human nature in all ages and countries. Emotional responses of his *dramatis personae* acquire a deeper significance as being symbolic of basic human responses. Thus, the emotional stress and strain, isolation
and alienation, of the modern mankind are well reflected in Frost's poetry. In this way, Frost is able to embody vast concepts and infinite depths within little space.

Warren Austin uses the term 'natural symbolism' to describe Frost's symbols, for they are all derived from the ordinary, common place objects and phenomenon of Nature and from the common everyday events and situations of human life. Such symbols are not peculiar to Frost; they have rather been used by all poets through the ages, as they come to mind naturally and spontaneously.

Frost's poems, some of the best of them, use natural symbols the reference of which we find it difficult to control: we think of 'The Road Not Taken', 'Walls', 'The Mountain'. In 'Stopping by Woods', 'miles to go before I sleep' is literally true of the traveler, we assume; but in the language of natural symbolism 'to sleep' is to 'die'; and if one couples by contrast the 'woods are lovely, dark and deep' (all three adjectives panegyric) with the moral and social check of 'promises to keep', one can't wholly reject the passing, not insisted on. Warren writers:
"Presumably no constant reader of poetry will go wrong with Frost; but, partly because of his natural symbolism, Frost has drawn a wide audience, some of whom, once grasping the possibility of symbols, will bear down too heavily on both the natural symbols and their companions, giving to his plurisigns a fixity and rigidity alien to the nature of poetic statement, especially contemporary poetic statement."³

Frost’s symbols are simple because they are drawn from the simplest sources, but they are also complex because they operate on more than one level of meaning.

Ordinarily symbolism is an object that represents something else. Originally it originates in France with the idea to express a higher and invisible world other than world of concrete phenomena. This movement also affected American literature in the nineteenth century. Symbols, signs, metaphors and similes are used all over the world to create images in the work of literature. It became an acceptable technique and medium to express and interpret the materialistic realistic of life and the mysteries of human
life. Man is instinctively impelled by his nature to know about the mysteries of life. These mysteries can be understood easily when ideas pertaining to the hidden aspects of life, which are beyond perception, are expressed in terms of sense experiences of the material world. The poet has to use these material objects and physical experiences in a suggestive manner to acquire significance as symbols.

Since literary creations seek to portray human experience in its variety and depth; symbols, too, are noted for their wide range and penetrative quality as well as the variety of meaning, suggestions and evocations to assess the hidden realities of life. The rise of the symbolist movement in America was a revolutionary turn; as Charles Field son approves:

"At a time when English literature was living on the capital of romanticism and increasingly given over to unambiguous narrative and orthodox meditation, American literature had turned toward a new set of problems, growing out of new awareness of symbolic method. In the central work of the Hawthorne, Whitman,
Melville and Poe, symbolism is at once technique and theme. It is a governing principle, not a stylistic device, but a point of view; not casual subject, but a pervasive presence in the intellectual landscape. 4

Meantime, it was recognized as an important part of the intellectual and artistic ancestry of the Modernist movement in the Twentieth century poetry in English. The chief exponents were W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot and Robert Frost. The several factors led many diverse conditions to enrich and boost up:

"Literary fashions and influences alone cannot account for the rise of symbolism in America, its differentiation from romanticism, and its continuity with modern literary aesthetics. The significant causes lie deeper. Symbolism is a coloration taken on by the American literary mind under the pressure of American intellectual history; Modern symbolism is a parallel response to closely related conditions; it is the literary consequence of certain basic problem of modern though ... yet Eliot is closer to Poe than to Pope." 5
The rise of symbolist movement influenced the modernist movement in the English poetry. Thus we may assume this to be a change of emphasis within one movement but, in fact, this is a very radical change that has taken birth in France before it is taken to England and America.

The symbolist movement coincides, the Imagist movement (1907-17) in English/American poetry. The exponents of the latter movement were Ezra Pound, Amy Lowell (its founder), F.S. Flint, Richard Aldington, John Gould Fletcher, T.S. Eliot, James Joyce, Carlos Williams, D.H. Lawrence and Robert Frost. It was a movement initiated around World War I by Pound just to shatter the stereotyped conception of poetry that is why, Imagism has been described as the grammar school of modern poetry.

As a description and extension to the theory of symbolism, W.B. Yeats, in 1901, led to formulate, in An Essay on Magic, the following points:

1. "That the borders of our mind are even shifting, and that many minds can flow into one another as it
were, and create or reveal a single mind, a single energy.”

2. “That the borders of our memories are as shifting and that our memories are a part of one great memory, the memory of nature itself.”

3. “That this great mind and great memory can be evoked by symbols.”

Over all Yeats purpose was really a systematic study of the symbolism of myths, trances, dreams and other human visions as psycho-analysis and anthropology were attempting from an individual point of view.

It is essential to define a symbol as a literary term, and understand its relation with other figures of speech such as simile, metaphor etc. which are used to create images and various categories of symbols in detail in a particular reference to Modern English poetry and American poetry.

The term “Symbol” is for Greek “Symbolon”, “a mark, a sign, and a taken.” It literally means to signify, to denote or to represent something else. Thus we can count the various meanings of the term ‘Symbol’. The New Oxford
Encyclopedic Dictionary, defines symbols as a “thing standing for or representing something else, especially material thing taken or represent immaterial or abstract thing, as an idea or quality; written character conventionally standing for some object, process etc.” 7 The Standard Dictionary defines a symbol as: “Something chased to stand for or represent something else, usually because of a resemblance in qualities or characteristics, an object to typify a quality, abstract idea, etc. The Oak Tree is symbol of strength.” 8

Taking into consideration the above definitions and discussion of the symbol, we can classify the term ‘symbol’ into three categories: 1. the universal/conventional symbols, 2. the general or accidental symbols, 3. Autobiographical symbols or the private symbols.

The universal/conventional symbols are those symbols, in which a natural object refers to a limited number of interpretations that transcend cultural barriers as sun representing energy, a source of life; at the same time, rising sun denotes birth, and setting sun represent death or decline etc.
Secondly, the general or accidental symbols are those appeals to smaller audience, but which contain more associative meanings, as in the Christian cross. There symbols arise out of the particular situations to represent those timely conditions or circumstances, but later on mingle into main-stream of the meaning in some changed form.

The third type of symbols are created by the writers, the poets themselves, according to the individual needs to represent, to denote, to associate something with individual experience and the social realities. And all these private invented symbols gain more significance and become universal and archetypal in due time when shared by the people.

Symbol covers different aspects of life i.e. cultural socio-economic conditions, religious, natural, philosophical tenants and literary purposes to convey something meaningful. The symbols are timeless, that is they change their meanings according to their changing needs of the society. The symbols have not meaning like signs, but the layers of meanings, one after the other, as like an onion; the
each new meaning of symbol is fresh and suggests something new.

The symbolist movement that arose to its peak with in the works of E.A. Poe, Emerson, Thoreau, and Walt Whitman etc. in the mid-nineteenth century was philosophy and a technique. These transcendentalists were men of learning and gifted with the art of writing.

The nineteenth century for the American Society was the age of change and socio-cultural revolution. These transcendentalists felt to answer the newly created problems and demands in all spheres of life: social, political, religious, psychological etc. They did all this, by using two methods. One, by discarding the Romantic literature (English view) based on personal joys- sorrows and making their vision; secondly, by adopting the symbolist technique.

Thus this transcendentalist literature was the precursor and guide line for the modern American poetry that emerged out of its socio cultural roots in the nineteenth century as a powerful literary activity in the early decades of Twentieth century in the works of Robert Frost, Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, Wallace Stevens, William Carlos, Hart Crane etc.
At the same time, the other representative mind of era was, Emerson, who said: “All our works which we do not understand are symbolical.”

Symbolism is not only the key to transcendental writer’s (early symbolists), but also to our present literature that helps us to get at the modern poetry. It has become an essential part of the literary devices and technique in the hands of the twentieth century novelists, playwrights, and poets.

There were many poets but no American poet since the middle of the nineteenth century who seems to have attracted a wider variety of readers than Frost. He has been labeled as regionalist, naturalist, realist, a late romantic or a modern poet. His work invoked conflicting critical claims because he had created a Frostian character and formulated a Frostian philosophy. The character of this Frostian myth all but eludes description and the philosophy definition, yet both were unmistakable. Frost’s poetry is the product of interplay of inheritance and environment, both varied and complex. His inheritance was not only American but also Scottish, not only pragmatically but also symbolical. That
he was a regional poet of America was acknowledged, but that the root of his culture and his training traced back to his mother's Sweedenborgian upbringing was not to be forgotten.

Though born in California, on March 26, Frost is widely celebrated as a New England poet. His father was a New Engander, and mother was a true Scots woman. Such other various contraries are interlocked in the life of Frost which illuminated his poetic vision, enlarged his, wisdom, enriched his experience and enhanced his poetic utterance.

Frost was raised as a city boy in San Francisco until he was eleven, and came to New England after his father's death. The initial shock of newness sharpened his various responses to the peculiar speech-ways, images, scenes, characters and attitudes which he later cherished and honoured in his poetry. Until his fortieth year Frost never received any public recognition. But after that Frost revived more honours than any other contemporary literary figure in America. That he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for poetry four times is enough evidence to prove his poetic genius “When he published “My Butterfly” in the
independent in November 1894, Henry James had not yet entered his major phase and Stephen Crane had not published, *The Red Badge of Courage*. A year earlier, Yeats had published *The Celtic Twilight*, but poems had not yet appeared, and Conrad, having closed his career in the merchant service, was beginning one as a professional writer. The careers of Lawrence, Joyce, Eliot and Pound had of course not begun; Fitzgerald, Faulkner, and Hemingway had not even been born.  

Critics have since been trying to discover the various elements that constitute Frost's artistic talents. Various theories and concepts have been put forward and claimed to be the main or the major reason for Frost's success. Here an attempt is being made to trace the importance of symbolism in the poetry of Robert Frost.

Frosts poetic concerns are akin to Wordsworth's. He chose incidents and situations from common life and presented them in the language actually used by them. He even captured the rhythms and cadences and tones of human speech. His primary artistic achievement rests on his blending of thought and emotion and symbolic imagery
within the confines of the lyric. The poem is fully understood only when the extension of meaning is found to transcend the physical. "He likes to endow images and actions with implicitly metaphorical and symbolical meanings until they repeatedly suggest continuity between his vision of the human 'fact' and the divine 'fact.'\textsuperscript{11}

Frost had a whimsical and humorous nature. He never wanted to indulge in direct philosophy. Like Emily Dickinson he began to express his thoughts through nature. Frost was also shy of public expression. The evidence can be gathered from his biography written by Radcliffe Squires. Frost by temperament was "a shy person, easily wounded and proud, as well as touched by strange fright."\textsuperscript{12}

Frost believed that symbols are the constantly used medium of communication. The written letters are the symbol of sound and the words are the symbols of thought or feelings of any individual. The phonic variation in the utterance of a word is the symbol of the emotional attitude of the speaker. As an artistic philosopher symbolism suited his method of preaching. His symbols "emerge like a three dimensional picture as a result of the setting, the treatment
both of the setting and the action and thirdly the suggestive meaning upon the reader which enables him to glimpse at the poetic vision of its creator."

Symbolic poetry is invariably concerned with psychology. Frost also presents the psychology of most of the men and women whom he met. His people are same and rational. They have the typical 'Yankee' spirit in them. Like the reasonable neighbor of 'Mending Wall' they never even whimsically doubt about the 'elves' which might have meddled with the stone wall.

Although, Eliot dominated the literary scene and especially poetry, Frost remained a very popular poet, who is regarded as an unofficial national poet of America. The main problem of the contemporary poet was to depict reality in all its complexity - intellectual, moral, social, spiritual and psychological. Frost tries to depict this is a very realistic and lucid way, using traditional forms in to development of contemporary idiom. Leonard Unger observes:

*Even while Eliot dominated the scene, Robert Frost was the most popular American poet... By the end of World War II, Frost was receiving*
admiring attention from modernist and intellectual critics. It was observed that, along with his use of traditional forms, he had after all, given expression to contemporary sensibility. 14

“'I've grown to hate the word 'Symbol:' 15 said Frost once to an audience of ardent admires what Frost hated was the kind of symbolism adopted by the modern poets who were involved in irrational and psychological themes of the sub-conscious mind.

The problem of the symbolists as well as that of Frost was to find the position of man in this universe. The problems of life and life after death steered them to a path away from materialistic world. He himself suggested in following words. "I wish we would change the subject a little and say typifies - Typification - or some-thing like that." 15 Frost looked up heavenward or around the natural surrounding when he was weary of considerations. He always portrays a double-sided sketch unified by theme but varied by experience. His male and female characters are
not mere individuals but as he himself said that ‘Typification’ of certain types.

Frost’s men and women knit the social and economic web of the modern era into their regionalism. They are the characters in the Frostian mythology. As in the case of the other myths they can also be construed as a potential source to represent a system of life as a particular place. As symbols they are not only individuals but also the representatives of the regional and universal men and women.

It is fact that Frost has become a sort of legend, like many other eminent writers. He is complex poet, who used traditional as well as contemporary codes to depict the life of the American people in its completed sense. He witnessed the contemporary upheavals and drastic changes. A Zverve observes:

Robert Frost was such a poet, capable of uniting in his work both clarity, and profundity, complexity and accessibility, uniqueness and universality ... in Frost, one can see a poet of ‘eternal themes’ themes, a poet of land, of
nature. But he was not cut off from the anxiety of his America, from her spiritual needs or from the artistic striving of the twentieth century.17

That is why, he is assumed to be the most popular poet of America as “The poet of the People”, with universal themes, whose aspiration coincides with the spiritual quest of America. He is one of the New Poets of America, who reflected the life in a realistic manner - to the core. He chose “the old fashioned way to be new” feeling a keen responsibility for the poetic word. For Frost ‘The people’ emerges as a category of the historical existence. Frost brought a peculiar artistic concept of “Autochthony” (speaking of autochony) Eliade implies a profound and frequently unconscious sense of belonging to the place: “men feel that they are people of the place, and this is a feeling of cosmic relatedness deeper than that of familiar and ancestral solidarity” (Mireca Eliade, Myths, Dreams and Mysteries, London, 1960, p. 164). It is assumed to be true and relevant description of Frost’s world view. In the context of literary history “autochthonic” sense, which is conveyed in his poetry is possibly his greatest achievement.
There is no doubt that Frost loved the rural life of New England. He made it a medium and mythic world to gain new artistic perspective. Through this literary device he formulated his poetic idioms and derived his themes and images to express the alienation of modern man. He predicts the real conflict between man and the nature and man’s resistance to the unknown environment. Observing the symbolic nature of the poem he says:

Every single poem written regular is a symbol small or great of the way the will has to pitch into commitments deeper and deeper to a rounded conclusion...18

The symbolic unity makes us to feel that Frost had made ‘twenty fables with one moral.’19 Which Emerson feels is the art of the true poet.

Thus we see, Frost’s symbolism like that of W.B. Yeats is rich and complex and his imagination moves from the earth to the sky. Indeed, his symbolism comprehends his private experiences, the sociological and psychological forces and becomes, in his final analysis, many splendored dome. In the forthcoming chapter I shall try to understand
his theory of poetry and sources from where he collected his symbols and presented before us in the form of poetry.

SOURCE AND PURPOSE OF SYMBOLISM

IN FROST'S POETRY

Frost's poetry is not a "spontaneous overflow of powerful emotions." He does not "pour out his heart in profuse strains of unpremeditated art." His art is not an abstract un-bodied joy which floats like a cloud and soars higher in the deep blue. Frost, on the other hand is an artist deliberately and consciously making poetry out of axe-handle. Like a gum-gatherer he collects the crude facts of life. He is like a mower amidst the continuous moving finds time to admire a tuft of flowers. Each of his poems is like the 'X' mass tree carefully cultivated in his grade. He does not hang out of clouds of fire but swings on a birch branch deliberately maintaining his equilibrium between heaven and earth. This neat balances him to peck his thoughts compactly in the form of the poem and we see his art there as that of sculptor who brings out life out of rocks with the constant chiseling and shaping of the hard realities of life.
Frost is always considered as a mere nature poet, a late Romantic or a pastoral poet. His poems though deal with rural themes do not glorify them. His rustics are not living in an idyllic setting of dance and song. For the Romantics 'a thing of beauty is a joy forever; they tried to capture the prime beauty of nature displayed through flowers, birds, books etc. Even when Wordsworth turned to the ordinary and simple lives of the rustics his main purpose was to create an atmosphere of poetic wonder and curiosity. Frost's aim is only to give the shock of knowing the facts which we already know. There is no unique situation. He renders facts without exaggeration.

His images are very concrete. The comparisons are from day to day life. The bent birch tree for example is compared to the girls on knees and hands who dry their hair in the sun.

"You may see their trunks arching in the woods
Years afterwards, trailing their leavers on the ground like girls on hands and knees that throw their hair before them over their heads to dry in the sun." 21  
(Birches)
Frost's images have shattering capacity which comes like a shock. While the Romantics bewailed, mourned, longed, and sighed, Frost only smiles and satires. As an artist he tried to represent the true spirit of America. He selects those details of scene or action that symbolized life. His best pictures are packed with experience. He selects an object, an animal, a person, an incident or whatever other things he likes, and makes it a symbol of something else which is larger or deeper than it. He moves in indirection and never means the same thing about which he is talking about. For example in his 'Mending Wall' he directly portrays the annual ritual of the two neighbors having different points of views. But indirectly he aims not at the mere stone wall between the particular neighbours mentioned but at all the walls of conservatism, ignorance, selfishness, materialism, indifference etc. which hinders the proper communication between any two persons of any nationality. Frost himself said that it doesn’t mean just because he wrote his novels in New Hampshire, he aimed them at New Hampshire. He used the particular for the general.
Frost’s swain is not the master of his fate, but his recognition of it is quicker than that of a city dweller. His pastoral myth allows broad and generalized symbolism where the analogy is implied rather than stated. His pose as a rustic sage was convenient for him to expose his clarification of life not as a philosophy, but as an exposition.

Poetry is a criticism of life where virtues are praised and vices are condemned or ridiculed. Poems can be the prophetic proclamations of seers or the authentic representations of the realists. We hear in them the fierce voice of the revolution any reformers or the feeble voice of casual observer. But every poem has a message to offer. Frost has always morals to teach in his poetry.

One of the myths which surround Frost’s fame is that he is a homespun philosopher. His poems though begin in delight always ended in wisdom and so had in them some morals. They are like the parables having a moral behind the story. But Frost always tried to blend the aesthetic and didactic purpose of his art as a single unit, that many readers often tend to miss the moral in their casual first reading. But his poems “embody biographical, ethical and
philosophical convictions. Poems apart from technical excellence aesthetic ordering of parts, effective impact, have a moral and intellectual ideas, their relevance to the world, their adequacy as a measure of man's thought and action."^{22}

Though Frost prefers to write without being hampered by restrictions of a preconceived theory, his works are not without some intellectual content. After running through a course of lucky events, his poetry ends in a clarification of life.

Frost's ethic values, enables him to elevate his pastoralism into an ideal way of living where man keeps his direct contact with nature; God and fellow human beings. He presents the rustic life as juxtaposition to the materialistic and modern city life. The connection between man and his physical environment makes him aware of his limitations as well as his capacity. His daring adventures reassure his courage. Frost through his Christmas Trees warns of the insensitivity of a materialist who values those tender trees in terms of money. Frost tries to awaken in inner consciousness of man.
Malcolm Cowley in his Case against Mr. Frost condemns Frost that he had made to distinction between separateness and self-centeredness. But a clear understanding of his poetry reveals that Frost was not an advocate of these virtues. A self-reliant individual is the one who doesn't depend on anyone else. But in his *Mending Wall*, even the wall-loving neighbour needed the help of his jovial friend to build the wall. The purpose of the wall was not to "keep off each other and keep each other off." Neither is it "Steal away and stay away." The reason is that "good fences make good neighbors."

Throughout each poem in North of Boston, Frost insistenty projects the theme of alienation of man's isolation from his fellow man. The husband and wife of *Home Burial* cannot share the grief which more than anything else in their experience, should make them one in feeling. They irritate a raw spot with every syllable they utter and thus unfit themselves for any return to a normal existence. Frost wants that alienation should be overcome by a repeated affirmation of fellowship. He dislikes isolation as much as any man of wisdom does. But he sees it a fact
that everyone must face in one form or another. He wants the readers not to shun the reality but to accept the sufferings which add insight and strength to his soul and transfigure an action into a radiant experience.

Through his poems be illustrates that 'caring' is at the heart of every human relationship and almost all of the psychologically distraught characters of Frost's poems make some reference to it. It is more understated than 'love', but because it suggests responsibility, perhaps more important. The suggestion of a lack of care in the relationship removes the whole reason for existence for women, who in abandoning her marriage, he stake everything on her present love. He believed that only communication and partnership will promote understanding. In *Home Burial* he dramatizes the destructive result when complementary psychological attitudes become perverted and introspective. The man has indeed been insensitive to his wife's grief and regularly slow in divining the cause and extent of her resentment. Yet she is self-pitying and ungenerous not to recognize that grief has many expressions, and that grim concentrations on daily routine can be one of them. He
brings out the frustrations of blocked communication and destructive introspection. Frost gives a psychological analysis of the role played by women. In the functional level, a woman is the Biblical helpmate who accompanies her husband in flower-gathering, fetching water, or as a companion of the 'talks-walking'. She acts as the emotional counterpart of the rational masculine mind and also as a heaven of protection capable of substituting and fulfilling the functions of a home. There is repression and restriction on their active participation in the outdoor world. The women are emotional, imaginative, passionate and sexual. With his wonderful insight into the soft-hearted feminine nature he understands the result of adverse treatment of such fragile and delicate creatures. Her disposition welcomes a compassionate understanding on the part of man. But when the gulf between the essential natures of man and woman comes into contrasting conflict they either degenerate into sentimentality or madness.

Frost believed that fact is the sweetest dream that labour knows. "Doting on things gloating on things, just dwelling on the things. Not getting up things, not
exaggerating things, not whooping thing up, but just gloating."25 This shows that Frost kept a firm grasp on the local things. But the aim of representing a particular and present fact is that, it stands as a universal and permanent truth. In the *Directive* for example, the particular journey symbolises several kinds of journey, as the guide directs as to the changing sights and associations long the way. The rhythm too is so potent in 'getting us lost' and in bringing us to the climax of the metaphorical journey of the poem. Frost displays superior skill of admitting mysterious over meaning, as he keeps a firm grasp on the local thing.

The American language too is vivid, direct, bold & mostly devoid of exaggeration. The brevity of expressing was very suitable for Frost's artistic purpose because he wanted to say, less so as to stimulate the reader's curiosity. He can catch the merest breath of an incident and clothe if in the airy graces of his imagination until it assumes beauty. He can design a vague situation into a meaningful symbol. The running rivers and the rustling corn and even his myth can talk to the reader. He enables the readers to see the light of the firmament reflected through the snow-covered
mountains and mute nature. From these he attains and maintains a lofty sight where facts yield their secret sense.

Frost wanted to give a pleasant surprise for the readers. "A poem is a little voyage of discovery. If there isn’t any surprise for the poet in writing it there wants’ be any for the reader. A poem should have a quality of dawning."\textsuperscript{26} To achieve this Frost invariably adopted regional symbols. They had in them the implications of the infinite invoked through the finite. Every action, scene, or incident so aesthetically delineated stands for an analogous theme or idea, as a result of which the quality of dawning is achieved.

Though Frost selected regional events in his poetry is not just regional in its appeal. He makes in universal. "Frost is as little space bound as any major poet in the great tradition. Place is the fulcrum for the lever by which he raises the world a little the better to see and know it."\textsuperscript{27} He makes the ration a microcosm for ideas and feelings that in transcending the local, share the spectrum of the Universal emotion and thought.

Frost once said, "The moon and running water surely are purely poetical subjects. Yet it is very hard to do
anything with the moon - so much has been done with it." 28 He wanted to write about the unusualness of the usual thing. His unusualness is not in the object but in the treatment of the object. So much so that incidents like plucking berries, returning home, going for water, harvesting etc. become highly symbolical.

In the Poem *Mending Wall*, nature is a destroyer of the boundaries between men. But the old - conservative man has no idea without it. He only occurs: “Good fences makes good neighbours.” 27 Yet the former argues:

“There where it is we do not need the wall.

He is all pine and I am apple orchard.

My apple trees will never get across.

And egad the cones under his pines, I tell him.”

But

He moves in darkness, as it seems to me,

Not of woods only and the shade of trees.

He will not go behind his father’s saying,

....., ‘Good fences make good neighbour’. 29

Thus, Frost chooses the symbols from his experience to denote the cultural transformation or the
conflict between two contrary forces. But at the same time as a progressive, liberal man he observes:

"What I was Walling in or Walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offence.
Something there is that doesn't love a Wall,
That wants it down." 30

Frost uses the symbols to depict nature, the relationship between the Man and Nature. Frost does not observe nature as heal-all and or the perennial source of solace. But unlike the Romantics he witnesses nature's conflict with man on various levels. At the same time, he does not deny the beauty of nature and benefactions for man.

The activity of apple picking in the poem, "After apple Picking" is a real experience. It is symbolic of man's routine life, daily activity of which he is addicted and get tired. That is why thinks to get rid of it and after life. He feels momentary stay against confusion by dreaming of eternal sleep. On his ladder he had transcendental experience:
My long-two-pointed ladder's sticking through a tree
Toward heaven still,
He is satisfied and longs for long sleep:
And there's a barrel that I didn't fill
Beside it, and there may be two or three
Apples I didn't pick upon some bough,
But I am done with apple-picking now.
Essence of winter sleep is one the night....

Frost is a conscious artist who views the society around him in a pragmatic manner. He observes the daily activies, customs, and rituals. He also witnesses the socio-economic and the philosophical changes that take place with the development of society in an unknown natural setting in relation to the scientific developments. The behaviour of human beings is lucidly suggested. In the poem “The Death of the Hired Man” real social drama is depicted, around the symbol of “House”. The house stands for the roots, the permanent shelter, something that is yours from birth to death. The poet brings to our notice that the only source of peace and comfort in the present complex
social structure is one's home. The meaning of "Home" is interpreted differently by wife and husband, who are representatives of different attitudes. Husband defines home as "the place, were when you have to go there/they have to take you in." But the wife defines it as, "something you somehow haven't to deserve." But the old Silas have no place even to die. The house for him becomes a symbol for eternal rest even after death. Clean the Brooks has called the poem "dramatic decorum."

In the Poem "Home Burial" Frost has depicted a social problem that arises on the death of a child. The incident creates a conflict between the husband and the wife. The poem is symbolic of two attitudes to his natural fact. The over-wrought, excited mother cannot forget that her husband himself dug the grave of their own child in their little graveyard and bury him there. She regards it as an indication of the callousness of her husband. The spiritual crisis leads to their relationship very near to breaking point. But adjustment is finally sought out through self-expression and intercommunion. The whole
meaning of the poem is symbolized by the open door in the last stanza:

"You-Oh, you think the talk is all. I must go.
Somewhere out of this house. How can I make you"

"If you do!" She was opening the door wider.
"Where do you mean to go? First tell me that.
I'll follow and bring you back by force. I will." 34

Another symbol of philosophical nature Frost uses is "Birches." The poet creates the image of comparison between the two contrary aspects. Birches symbolise the ideal life, on the one hand and the crude scientific reality on the other. Birches are bent in the one situation by ice or snow, in the either by the swinging boy. Both the activities symbolise naturalness and worldliness, spiritual experience and physical experience, respectively. The poem is symbolic of man's longing for a momentary stay against confusion:

"So was I once myself a swinger of birches ....
And life is too much like a pathless wood
Where your face burns and tickles with the cobwebs...
I'd like to go by climbing a birch tree,

And climb black branches up a snow-white trunk

Toward heaven, till the tree could bear no more

But dipped its top and set me down again. 

Because reality is that:

"Earth's the right place for love;

I don't know where it's likely to go better."

Frost is not a simple poet who sees things from outer appearance or on the surface level. But he observes natural activity working on human systems. He uses very authentic symbols to observe the man's conscious as well as unconscious code of conduct. In the poem "The Road Not Taken", "Road" is symbolic of man's confused psyche in face of alternatives. One is grassy and less traveled road, the other is trodden path. Whereas Road is symbol of action, adventure, it may be of any type. The poet states -

"I shall be telling this with a sigh

Some where ages and ages hence;

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I-

I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference,\(^3\)

The traveler choosing the road less traveled suggests his quest and adventurous spirit. The ‘wood’ is a symbol of this world in which each task has two alternatives. The traveler, the man is confused what should he choose?

Nature held the first, permanent, predominant and persistent influence on Robert Frost. Nature allured Frost with the scattered figment of insight in birds, beasts, flowers, pools and mountains. Nature was the thin veil for him to cover the complexity of thought. It was the source of his symbols and also the provider of the pastoral myth. As a true prophet he diagnosed and understood the spiritual malady of the age and wanted to interpret the age to it. His natural world provided the solution wherein he could diagnose and instill awareness among readers not by direct proclamation but by indirect suggestions.

The natural symbols are used by poets very often. But their freshness of appeal is never lost in Frost's handling. Nature in itself has the great healing power which curses the spiritual maladies of the individuals and the bruises caused by materialistic pursuits. Such is the power
of nature to restore peace to the human soul that it enables the created being to aspire for the reunion with its creator. Knowing the secret powers of Nature, the ancient Indian Saints set up their spiritual centers on high mountains or deep forests which form a wall to protect them from the hustle and bustle of the material world. Unless man practices lonely meditations he cannot achieve salvation. And nature provides the proper setting background and also becomes an active agent to stimulate man's journey in search of absolute peace. Frost also seems to have understood the effect of Nature on man's spirit.

Nature and the art of poetry enabled Frost to achieve the clarification of a vague sentiment in the form of a distinct, concrete and individual image. The success of Art depends upon successful expression and Frost's art is successful because it has never failed to make clear and distinct the impressions which it was called upon to express. There is a spiritual activity which collects and combines individual images and draws conclusions from them. These conclusions are always general abstract and they are the province of philosophy.
His symbols are so organized, consistent and harmonized that it makes his poetry to grow. Any art which grows and is never made is a genuine product, which could never have sprung from a confused mind. He collected the images which is not a disorganized heap but a systematic whole.

As any other symbolists, Frost makes us to a cross a frontier from the personal world into a world of greatest vision and expanded consciousness. He made his poetry profound and lovely, invincible and proud, by laying its roots in the deep down beds of the natural tradition beyond all that is modern and restless. Modern man lives as though without a past. It must be because of the loss of that pattern in which his fragmentary individual life is a part. God has bound the man and the stars together and the present difficulty is due to his ignorance of that universal language. A journey to the past is the main theme of his Directive. Through varying scenes Frost leads the readers to the heart of the woods where stands the uninhabited broken house and their toys. He thus symbolizes the journey towards past with the journey to the stage of childhood.
Childhood itself symbolises innocence and Wordsworth considered it as the time when the recollections of Immortality are fresh. Wordsworth described that maturity of the child invariably means a journey away from the sea of Immortality. Frost in ‘Directive’ leads again to the stage of childhood; He shows us the broken goblet which is hidden and to be found only by the right ones. He also points out to the pool which once was a stream and advises to drink its water to be cured. There is an overwhelming image which runs at par with the natural symbols.

Frost and Wordsworth both recollected the past memories in their solitude. Frost goes a little further in searching after insight through meditation. When Wordsworth gloated over emotions, Frost rationalized them and made the personal into something very impersonal. Wordsworth, poem portrays their writer whereas Frost’s poems confuse the reader as to the real identity of the poet. Frost dramatized his own conflicts so as to hide his personal involvement.

Through his mother’s interest Frost was well acquainted with the Romantic theory of correspondence;
Sweedenborgian symbolism explained that each thing in nature has a fixed spiritual equivalent. For him external nature has significance because they compel powerful responses of ethical or metaphysical dimensions.

Frost's idyllic scenes never attempt to glorify the rural areas. There are no fairies and nymphs and his rustics have no time for song and dance. His peasant is both simple and shrewd. His aim is not in exalting the rustic scene by glorifying its simplicity. He presents the facts with scientific accuracy. He warns us to be lad of the water but also never to forget the lurking winter which will show its crystal teeth as the night sets in. His rustics may not have the luxury of learning base-ball in the cities but they have their own games like swinging the birches, collecting the barriers etc. They are never idle but hard workers indulged in the substantial work of sustaining life amidst the hard realities of nature. He has to overcome the difficulties and face the various trials which are set before him by God and Nature. He has his fellow humans as well who are also not easily handled. In this continuous trial of life man has to find the meaning of his life which looks as a mere extravagance.
Unlike most other natural poets Frost had not used nature as a mere external ornament. He associated aspects of landscape and physiological traits. He has a farmer's sagacity and unwillingness to go beyond brute facts. The contrasts between man and nature, between country and city are the central theme of many of his poems. He never links himself with nature in metaphysical kinship, but views it as essentially alien.

Frost does not use a lot of metaphors because they bring out the identity of the symbol and referent. He purposely used nature as an allegorical setting and not merely as a divine manifestation. Frost believed that poetry has the power to check the modern chaos and he also believed that it should more often be of the country than of the city. Since he found the key to unlock the mystery of life amidst natural surroundings he daringly proclaims as a directive.

"Here are your waters and your watering place
Drink and be whole beyond confusion."38

Religion like nature holds a permanent influence upon men of letters. It had been their source of inspiration
and subject matter for years. The presence and the power of unknown is the undercurrent of every human being whether acknowledge, denied or ignored. While writers like Milton, Francis Thompson, Hopkins and T.S. Eliot publicly proclaimed their faith. Blake on the other hand, found religion as a symbol and used even Christ as an adorable symbol of freedom, justice and innocence. Poets like Yeats had to satisfy their curiosity by a thorough probe in various religious myths, witchcraft, alchemy etc. For pantheists like Wordsworth, nature itself is the manifestation of God.

Frost gives no prophetic proclamation as the messenger of God; neither does he adore nature as the divine manifestation. He does not choose to make sweeping statements about God any more than he does about nature or man.

Instead of choosing symbols directly from the religious myths, Frost projects himself as a symbolical figure that sought after truth as a young boy and attained a pragmatic realization in his matured age. The overlapping figure of a single person is dramatically projected through many characters. Frost's spiritual sojourns like that of the
Israelites in the old Bible and his doubts like that of the unduly afflicted Job made to him to form a philosophy of his own.

Frost identified himself with Job and tried to find the meaning of the extravagance of the entire human struggle for survival. He understood that there is a design that governs in such a small thing as a spider or its prey the moth or any such minute and insignificant things of nature.

The experience of a farmer after a rich harvest of apples is colourful about his future. But Frost is rather tired of the rich harvest he himself desired for. He is drowsy with the materialistic affluence and looks longingly at the two pointed ladder, which is ticking through a tree. As its point is towards heaven, Frost also wishes to direct his thought towards spiritual matter. Like Wordsworth Frost also must have felt that ‘the world is too much with us, and getting and spending we lay waste our powers.’

The trials which a man has to face are many in the form of barriers between human beings, in the natural world and also in the religious grounds. They test his virtue to dare, to seek and to build a home out of the wilderness.
The broken deserted or abandoned houses and nests symbolise the closing of the form. The stone wall enables man to recognize the limit beyond which he cannot venture. If man limits his intellectual quest to know too much, if he respects the barriers to accept his own limitations then he will not be lost in the wilderness. It will lead him to the fate similar to that of the first parents.

Frost sympathized with people and caused the readers to correspond too. This was possible through the dramatic suggestions. Sub correspondences operate more through gestures, tines, silence, frowns, stiffening, flushes and glances than through mere words. So he used the characters in direct portrayal.

Frost used people because he believed in the theory of 'sound-posturing'. He said "words in themselves do not convey meaning ... If we go back for enough we will discover that the sound of sense existed before words. Something in voice or vocal gesture made primitive man convey a meaning to his fellow being before the race developed a more elaborate and concrete symbol of communication in language." 39 Wordsworth wanted to visualize things so he
wrote with his eyes. Frost wants to write with his ear to the voice. This sound posturing enables him to summon up the experience fresh from life.

In order to bring out the subtle variation in nature and to save him from the trouble of explaining in words, Frost had to use different characters. It also enabled him to prove his theory that "Art is the amplification and sophistication of the proverbial of speech." For him the music of poetry is unlike the music of an instrument. It is "obtained by catching the conversational tones which are the special property of vital utterances. There is the sense the words convey and there is also an emotional quality, and interpretive quality, in the tone in which the words are uttered. To gather these, because they are significant and vital and carry through the ear an appeal of sincerity, is the main effort in poetry."

Frost believed that where there is life there is poetry. He could not understand why some poets deliberately plunged into obscure mythologies in order to obtain poetic integrity. He wonders, "I can't see that a man needs have his feet plowing through unhealthy mud in order to appreciate
more fully the glowing splendors of the clouds I can’t see that a man must fill his soul with sick and miserable experiences, self-imposed and self-inflicted and greatly enjoyed, before he can sit down and write a lyric of strange and compelling beauty. Inspiration doesn’t lie in the mud; it lies in the clean and wholesome life of the ordinary man.”

For him poetry itself is to be taken as a symbol of a man, taking its rise from individuality and seclusion. It is written first for the person that writes and then goes out into the social appeal and use. Having this in mind Frost felt that the thing most appeals to one human being is just another human being. He thus sets out to portray the lives of the simple people which for him contain a secret vigour and a moral to impart to the observer.

The characters that Frost employed in his poetry belong to different categories like the rigid conventional lovers of the wall of the Stone Wall, Warren in the Death of a Hired Man, the husband in Home Burial and the West Running Brooks etc. There are the emotional sympathetic people with a tendency to adjust with the natural and human surroundings in which they are placed like Mary,
the farmer of the Pasture and others. They are the physically invalid people bent with age, lack of love, care and protection.

People in the poetry of Frost are symbols projecting the values dramatized through them. His originality is that he renders a true version of their lives in such a way that the readers fail to note their symbolical meaning. In spite of being symbols they cease to be mere caricatures but breathe and feel as any human being of flesh and blood.

The Incident and situations chosen by Frost are all centered around the visions of struggle. Most of them involve explorers, seekers or questioners. What they long for is understanding, confidence and a sense of form or order. His travelers did not travel far. But within the limited region Frost makes them to travel in the right way, with the right exploratory and contemplative spirit that they made the important discoveries. It is Thoreau said, 'Live at home like a traveler.' The incidents contributed a dramatic conflict, a lyric stimulation, and a variety of vocal tones. He used them as imageries and combined with them his own
personal visions and emotions to create highly effective poetry.

Through the events he wanted to express the existence of harmonies and correspondences between the story and the moral, the material and the spiritual, the scene and the unseen. He was concerned with the correspondences that every single individual has with God, with nature and his fellow neighbours.

Frost was a complex, frequently equivocal metaphysician, given to analysis evaluation and contemplation. He never tried to dispel the curiosity about our place among the infinities.

His experience in New England provided imagery, dramatic conflict, lyric stimulation and a variety of vocal tones that he could combine with his own personal vision and emotions to create highly effective poetry. The peculiar charm of his poetry is that though born a Californian, he was able to voice New England. Yet we feel that “The voice may be the voice of New England, but the hands (often the heart) are Californian.”
In the poem, "Two Tramps in Mud Time" Frost shows his didactic ideas that an individual should have freedom to work "with love and need." Frost creates a situation in which two contrary man face each other.

*With what was another man's work for gain?*

*My right might be love but there was need.*

And

*But yield who will to their separation,*

*My object in living is to unite*

*My avocation and my vocation*

*As my two eyes make one insight*

*Only where love and need is one,*

*And the work is play for mortal stakes,*

*Is the deed ever really done?*

*For Heaven and the future's sake.*

This poem shows Frost indulging in chopping wood; He call the ordinary wood as 'unimportant wood' thereby symbolising life as the important wood which is chopped by the blows of self-control. He also conveys that poetry is to be written both for the pleasure and the need. His object in life is to unite both vocations as the two eyes make just one
sight. The act of wood chopping thus stands for poetry writing. Thus, the poet dramatizes man's self-satisfaction as well as his choice to proceed in his action-packed life. The axe is a symbol of man's action. It also represents man's source of subsistence, on the one hand, and his love to do something creative, positive in a physical sense, on the other. This poem has built up a situation of delight and developed into wisdom.

His 'Stopping By Woods On A Snowy Evening' is also a symbolic poem in which Frost tries to suggest that each person is a traveler in this world. He has a momentary stay in this mortal world and ultimately he has to die. The woods are symbolic of the world and the promises. "Miles to go" symbolise man's responsibilities to the other fellow beings, and sleep is symbolic of death i.e. the end of all flux, worries and responsibilities. The evening symbolises the old age and the horse symbolises man's little badly in comparison to the bulky shape of the world:

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farm house near
Between the woods and frozen lake
Thus, the traveler's reluctance to leave the woods is due to the desire to hold and make permanent a moment of pleasurable discovery in a brief existence. But he is impelled by certain commitments. And there are the miles he must travel through other kinds of experience before he yields to the final and inevitable commitment i.e. death:

The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,
But I have promise to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep

After a long discussion in his symbols I can say that Frost was shy of self-revelation, the extremely moral purpose of his poetry was clothed in simple rustic language and conveyed through parables and incidents. His stories teach the modern man to gain his lost aboriginal strength by turning against materialism. His wisdom is implicit and inspiring so that its effects are long lasting.
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