Introduction

All his life Robert Frost had been maintaining a poetic passion for making myths out of life. The very myth of New England which he had mapped on the poetical map of the world, is a typical demographic picture of the rustic inhabitants in the forestland, who are conducting their lives in a typical primitive manner of trying to find a self-conceived meaning for themselves out of their lives. Needless to say that it is more or less the same typical manner of the prehistoric ancients, who made their myths out of what they understood, out of what they did not understand, and out of all passionate manners of inventing for themselves certain unbelievable accounts of nature, of fellowmen, and of themselves. In the words of Egerton Sykes, "... all the early Gods and Goddesses having been regarded as endowed with human qualities to a superhuman degree" (xi).

The ancient mythmakers both in the Hellenic and the Christian prehistoric traditions were restless creatures, who needed some comfortable tale in order to withstand the abject confusions created by the world. To quote Egerton Sykes again, "These early divinities were lusty beings, the dynamic progenitors of races, the leaders of armies, and the sources of wisdom and knowledge, and their vitality was in marked contrast to the pallidity of their successors" (xi).

The attitudes of the ancient myth-makers to the objective world which included both the Heaven and the Hell in addition to the Earth, is always conformed out and out with an arresting sense of wonder. The fabulous manner of their narrations was quite simple and, at the same time, very difficult to rationally understand or empirically demonstrate, for they are the products of intuitive coherence in imagination rather than logical correspondence. However, the mythological expositions of the past contained in themselves such general ideas, which ultimately went to make civilizations, nations.
cultures, arts, and even the sciences that ruled the lives of the people in course of time. Susan Langer rightly pointed out myths as the "primitive phase of metaphysical thought, the first embodiment of the general ideas" (qtd. in Wimsatt 705).

The mind of the primitive man, with its flickering mythic perceptions and exhausting fearful vistas of nature conceives 'momentary Gods' that are generated out of the savage's need of imaginative comforts. In short the anonymous creators of the ancient myths literally created in their lores what Robert Frost exactly called a "momentary stay against confusion" (CP vi). The ancient myths as created by the prehistoric generations did not serve any practical and momentary problems of their lives, but they merely consoled and comforted them as inventions of momentary expositions that diverted them from the mystery and confusion of life as they found it. But now a days the most sacred ancient myths and rituals of the past have become altogether non-serious and laughable objects, the only way to enliven an interest and urgency towards them is by way of delicately hinting at them rather than recreating them in one form or the other.

Robert Frost created his poetry in the exact imaginative manners of the ancient mythmakers. This is not to say that he has slavishly imitated the Greek and the Biblical myths. It is not even to say that he had made categorical allusions and reference to the Bible and to the pagan myths. It is just to suggest that Robert Frost's mind in its rapport with the world of nature and the world of fellowmen around himself just functioned in the same imaginative manner of those ancient mythmakers when they conceived certain well-made archetypal pictures of life around them. Behind every poem of Robert Frost there is a typical non-thetic and nebulous analogy in the mythopoetical imaginative processes. His poems are non-creative analogies of Greek and Christian myths. There is
simultaneity of the imaginative cast of mind in ancient mythmakers' manner of conceiving their myths and Frost's manner of structuralizing his poems.

It has often been said that the rustic characters of Frost's poetry are the real inhabitants of New England. But then, for Frost himself they are not important as photocopies of the humans around him. The characters of Frost are certainly rural primitivists, and even ignorant of the most aspects of life as in "Two Tramps in Mud Time." The whole problem for the tramps emerges from the fact that they were deprived of the proud privilege of being the good and appropriate experts as workers. The irony here is, in spite of the fact that they are the right talented workers, they are not being allowed to work. But they silently conserved a grievance in their heart of hearts but did not say anything.

But the characters of Frost nurture in themselves such dramatic passions, emotions, feelings, and volitions which go to drive them to re-discover and re-invent for themselves the lives they have to live in the wilderness of the cosmos, in the ferociousness of nature, and in the ideological doubts and tribulations within the world. As they are, they emerge as typical mythological figures, not in their heroism or in their extended adventurous manners of life, but in their original and primeval manner of looking at everything with new eyes and arriving at new stories about things around themselves.

A. Creative Processes

Robert Frost's creative processes of the dramatic and meditative complexities of his poetical structures are analogies of the structuralist imagination of the ancient mythmakers. This mythmakers' poetical manner or mannerism of Frost was not popularly developed in an analytical, critical, and consistent manner by any of his major
critics. Critics like Lawrance Thompson, W.G. O'Donnel and Yvor Winters certainly hinted at the Biblical and Classical analogies in the explications of particular poems. But they never equivocated the very imaginative cast of mind of Frost with the primeval imaginative manners of the ancient myth-makers, who characterised themselves as passionately inspired and possessed by the haunting properties of the natural world around them and the world of their imagination. Frost himself confirms that the fact of his poetic inspiration is in the dark memory of the past. Says Frost, "For me the initial delight is in the surprise of remembering something I did not know I knew" (CP vii).

There is a substantial hint here to Carl Jung's 'Collective Unconscious,' which ultimately goes to create the necessary archetypes in the present moment of experience drawn from the forgotten past, that is, the mythical phase of primitive man's imagination. In this context Lawrance Thompson says: "As for the source of that initial impetus, he finds it growing out of a flash of recognition" (21). Thompson does not elaborate further the influence of ancient myths on Robert Frost even when he acknowledges, "There is another kind of recognition which might be called a correlation . . . . The present moment serves as a fulminating agent which fires experience lost in the dark of memory and causes that experience to burst into flame" (21).

In the expression 'Experience lost in the dark of memory' the reference of Jung's 'Collective Unconscious' is evident. For Malcolm Cowley, who is not an admirer of Robert Frost, "There is a case against him [Frost] and room for a dissenting opinion" (37). But he too gracefully acknowledges the presence of ancient mythological content in the poetry of Frost when he says, "There are other poems in which he [Frost] suggests that his faithfulness to the 'ancient way' is more a matter of habit than conviction" (40).
So far as the convictions are concerned, Robert Frost is a sceptic, but his poetic habit of mind and imagination finds a state of poetic fulfilment and impassioned satisfaction in what Thompson says 'a flash of recognition' which might be called a 'correlation.' W.G. O'Donnell's informed opinion is worth quoting in the context of Frost's universal nature. Says O'Donnell, "... a unique quality of Frost is that the primitive understanding of his writing ... does not do violence to the ultimate understanding which comes only after the reader has been familiar with the poetry for years" (48). O'Donnell's insistence on the familiarity with the poetry on the part of the reader extends to the mythological past. Like Susan Langer, Frost also regards myth as 'the primitive phase of metaphysical thought and the first embodiment of general ideas.'

Yvor Winters, who dubbed and denigrated Robert Frost as a "Spiritual Drifter" (61) after considering Frost on many accounts negatively, ultimately reconciles with Frost's real greatness as a poet, when he says,

The principles which have saved some part of Frost's talent, the principles of Greek and Christian thought, are principles which are seldom openly defended, and of which the implications and ramifications are understood by relatively few of our contemporaries, by Frost least of all; they operate upon Frost at a distance, through social inheritance and he has done his best to adopt principles which are opposed to them. (82)

Frost has a sparkling intelligence enough to work on these inherited principles through the Greek and Christian mythologies. But Frost is a symbolist. He does not create poetic analogies to the ancient myths. He just hints at them delicately and obliquely by way of manifesting them in the present myth (story) on hand, needless to state, the principles of Greek and Christian thought are best revealed in his myths.
And when I come to the garden ground,

The whir of sober birds

Up from the tangle of withered weeds

Is sadder than any words. (CP 11)

The clear Wordsworthian touch is visible, but from the publication of North of Boston until the end of his career he gradually metamorphosed into a mythical character as the central spokesman of his poetry. In his “Ten Mills” which he published late in life, we have in “One Guess” the following lines: “He has dust in his eyes and a fan for a wing, / A leg akimbo with which he can sing, / And a mouthful of dye stuff instead of a sting” (CP 408).

Robert Frost is aware of the fact that the Greek myths suffered greatly from the impact of Christianity. But the cultural properties of paganism to the extent they are alive in the modern culture bring back the Greek myths into a living property in the present.

B. Suggestive Symbolism

Robert Frost is a dedicated symbolist and as such, his utterances are elusively suggested and obliquely stated, instead of being stated as judicious epic assertions. In his “The Figure a Poem Makes” he copiously hinted about his passion for ancient myths. Says Frost, “The artist must value himself as he snatches a thing from some previous order in time and space into a new order with not so much as a ligature clinging to it of the old place where it was organic” (CP viii). The expression ‘not so much as a ligature’ suggests at his poetic method of delicately hinting rather than bluntly analogising. As such his poetic hints are clinging to ‘the old place’ where they were ‘organic.’

No critic on Robert Frost sensitively and informedly considered the point ‘where it was organic.’ There are many creative moments in the historical past. But, as said by
W.B. Yeats, the greatest symbolist of the twentieth century, nowhere else than in the mythological past the "Old simple celebration of life turned to its highest pitch" (qtd. in Wimsatt 720).

Northrop Frye confirms the same about poetry in general. On the authority of Frye, William K. Wimsatt and Cleanth Brooks say that the total literary history moves from the primitive to the sophisticated, and so Frye glimpses at the possibility of envisaging literature as the "complication of a relatively simple group of formulas that can be studied in a primitive culture" (qtd in Wimsatt 700).

Robert Frost progressively involves himself into a discrete search for archetypes in the literary anthropology of the Greco-Roman and the Judaeo-Christian myths of yore. His poetry is informed by pre-literary categories such as ritual, myth, and folk tale as ingrained in these mythical traditions in the name of archetypes. William K. Wimsatt, Jr. and Cleanth Brooks say, "It is in psychic residue of numberless experiences of the same kind, and thus part of the inherited response pattern of the race" (709). But the properties of ritual, myth, and folk tale are de-created and then re-created into new poetic wholes that conform themselves suggestively to the traditional mythic patterns. Almost all the critics on Frost blatantly ignored the mythic magnificence of Robert Frost. They arrived at their own pet theories of ruralism, naturalism, and New-Englandism in his poetry.

There is really some truth in what Malcolm Cowley said when he stated "I chiefly mean that there is a case against the zealous admirers who are not content to take the poet for what he is, but insist on using him as a sort of banner for their own moral or political crusades" (37). Failing to comprehend Robert Frost's mythic dimensions, Cowley considers Frost as a nonentity as a poet.
It is, however, noteworthy that the major critics like Lionel Trilling and George W. Nitchie copiously hinted at the mythmaking bias of Robert Frost; Trilling designates Frost as “a terrifying poet” (151) possibly intending to suggest at the influence of ancient anonymous mythmakers of the past. The present day critics drastically failed to comprehend Robert Frost as a profound mythmaker. But when it comes to presenting a convincing critical argument on behalf of Frost’s poetic mythmaking magnificence, Trilling tilts his line of thought towards the rural counters by way of blissfully setting aside the mytho-poetic Frost. Trilling’s own words are quotable here to suggest the point, “The people in Mr Frost’s poems can only reassure us by their integrity and solidity” (157).

In order to strike a judicious argument on behalf of Frost’s mythical dimensions the bard’s own words are important and hence, are worth repeating. Says Frost, “The artist must value himself as he snatches a thing from some previous order in time and space into a new order with not so much as a ligature clinging to it of the old place where it was organic” (CP viii). Needless to say that Frost is hinting at the ‘Collective Unconscious’ theory of Jung. His statement confirms the fact that Frost was ‘snatching’ his poetic effects from the ancient Greco-Roman and Judaeo-Christian mythological counters. This is so because the so-called poetic shapes of Robert Frost in his dramatic poetry inflatingly encompass the mythical figures which often embody contradictory principles and behaviours just like in the archetypal mythopoetic practices of the past. Robert Frost being a symbolic poet, obliquely hints at these mythical figures of the ancient times instead of allegorically introducing them into his poems. This is one of the reasons why the delicate mythic suggestiveness of Frost missed the critical attention even of his major critics like Lawrance Thompson.
George W. Nitchie makes a comparative study of Robert Frost and W.B. Yeats in his *Human Values in the Poetry of Robert Frost: A Study of Poet's Convictions*. He agrees that both W.B. Yeats and Robert Frost are mythmakers in poetry. But he concludes that Robert Frost is a lesser poet in being a mythmaker. It is important to note here that Robert Frost and W.B. Yeats belong to different, and even contradictory modes of poetic expression. Yeats is a lyric poet, with an esoteric and mystical visual imagination and Robert Frost is a dramatic poet bent upon interacting the poetic figures in order to create a strife in the emotional cast of mind of the reader. Yeats is visual and hallucinatory like P.B. Shelley. Frost is predominantly audio and tactile and sensuous like John Keats. Yeats poetically confabulates astounding pictures to be visualized, but manipulates the poetic pricks that his 'burrs' create. Poets and scholars, Frost writes “... / differ most importantly in the way their knowledge is come by” (CP vii). About poets he says, “They stick to nothing deliberately, but let what will stick to them like burrs where they walk in the fields” (CP viii).

Needless to say, the collected ‘burrs’ are the conscious materials for Frost. Yeats is visual, hallucinatory and curative. Frost is incisive, pathological, and even surgical in his poetic techniques. Both are symbolic and they resort to the metaphoric modes of poetically expressing themselves. In his metaphoric passion Yeats becomes exclusively personal, often condescending to artistic imagination and dialectic thinking. Yeats himself confirms the fact:

... some will ask whether I believe in the actual existence of my circuits of sun and moon ... To such a question I can but answer that if, sometimes, overwhelmed by miracle as all men must be when in the midst of it, I have taken such periods literally ... I regard them as stylistic
arrangements of experience . . . . They have helped me to hold in a single
thought reality and justice. (qtd. in MacNeice 129)

Yeats is not justified in concluding that all men are capable of being overwhelmed by
miracles and even most of them who are thus overwhelmed do not take them literally.
They are exclusively artistic. They cannot perspire into generality and, therefore, they
cannot be said 'real.' But, however, the impressions that Yeats creates in his poetry are
sincere in the sense that they stand the tests of 'poetic truth' and 'poetic reality,' as
determined by the classicists. But Frost's poetic method of imagination is more
convincing. Says Frost:

The impressions most useful to my purpose seem always those I was
unaware of and so made no note of at the time when taken, and the
conclusion is come to that like giants we are always hurling experience
ahead of us to pave the future with against the day when we may want to
strike a line of purpose across it for somewhere. (CP vii)

The collected burrs being the burrs in his conscious imagination of the
unconscious, they are available for the generality of experience. Finally Nitchie consents
to consider the mythical genius of Frost quite hesitatingly and withdrawingly: "And the
myth Frost constructs . . . involves a doctrine of successive reincarnations" (163).

C. From Simplicity to Complexity

In various publications of his poetic collections, Frost gradually grew into a
mythic figure as a result of which he became a complex poet. The spokesman in the later
stages of his poems is not the biographical Frost. He gradually assumed upon himself the
complex stance of the mythmakers and presents himself typically as a mythic
comprehender of the whole humanity. When Robert Frost published his *A Boy's Will,*
Ezra Pound and others reviewed him and declared him as a poet of simplicities. His first three published books of poetry were written at the Derry Farm when he settled himself as a farmer. But it is here that in retrospect he saw the often lonely, isolated, and afeared life. It is from here only that he prepared himself for a wider public and above all a poetic life. The following words of Frost are important here: "I kept farm, so to speak, for nearly ten years, but less as a farmer than as a fugitive from the world that seemed to me to 'disallow' me. It was all instinctive, but I can see now that I went away to save myself and fix myself before I measured my strength against all creation" (qtd. in Pritchard 356).

The above words are written by Frost in a letter which he wrote on 22nd March 1915. In connection with the growing figurative personality of Robert Frost into mythic dimensions William H. Pritchard says as follows:

This 'book of people' (North of Boston) consisted of some fifteen longer poems, and although an 'I' occasionally appears (Notably in "Mending Wall," "After Apple Picking," and "The Wood Pile") the focus is not mainly on subjective presence that pervaded A Boy's Will. Nor is there heard the bittersweet lyric voice from that first volume, with its appealing combination of wistfulness, regret, quiet irony and gentle protest. In its place we hear voices in conflict with and correction of one another, 'characters' who are not to be identified with someone named Robert Frost. (359)

It is proposed to make a critical study of the mythopoesis in Robert Frost in the following pages. This mythopoesis is a potential aspect of the poet which did not get proper critical attention. In the process of evaluation it is aimed at categorically placing
Robert Frost at par with William Blake and W. B. Yeats who conceived for themselves in their poetry their own mythical surroundings. Robert Frost's New England and the primitive people who live in the forestlands are such poetic mythical assemblages, which altogether strive as lives and life styles from some strange archetypal imaginative backgrounds.

Frost's manner of trying to present his people as the ordinary rustics is again deceptive. They are not ordinary rustics. They are such potential humanistic agents who are trying to attain for themselves practical and spiritual dimensions that envisaged in the great philosophers and great religions. Quite interestingly, as unlettered and as untutored they are, they are trying to evolve in themselves a typical humanistic advancement in their cultures. Needless to say, his dramatis personae, including the poet himself are self-educating themselves with the primary lessons of human cultures, human religions, and human philosophies. If either the poet or one of his characters appears like a Socrates, a Plato, a St. Thomas or a Greek Zeus or a Minerva, it is not accidental.

The poet quite strategically, but quite unoptrusively, elevates his characters to the dramatic archetypal dimensions, even when they are presented as ordinary people. The manner in which Amy, the wife in "Home Burial," quarrels with her husband, necessarily brings back to the minds of the readers an ancient image of Hera boldly fighting with her husband Zeus in the Greek mythology. But then the mythological relevances between the two should not be extended or overread. They should be limited to the tempers or temperaments. Most certainly Amy of the "Home Burial" is not Hera of Greek mythology. But in her temper or temperament there is that tenacity of Hera which emboldens her to make a decisive and outright fight with her own husband. It is like this,
in the tempers and temperaments, the mythological analogies are imbibed by Robert Frost.

Mythological analogies imbibed by Robert Frost are sometimes Greco-Roman. But very often the concern is with the Judaeo-Christian mythic subsistancies. What perspires as highly poetical and appealing in Robert Frost very often concerns with the confluence of the inherently contradictory temperamental particulars of the above two religious mythological dimensions. In a poem like “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” the initial sensuous demands of the spokesman resemble the pagan idea of enjoying the given in life. But as the poem advances, it lands into Catholic Christian dimensions of sleeping in the Bosom of Abraham until the Day of Judgment. Many of the poems, like “Home Burial,” “The Death of the Hired man,” “Mending Wall,” contain in themselves brilliant poetic configurations of the Christian and the pagan mythic particulars intricately blended together. Out of these poetic blending emerges a rare apprehension of wisdom that emerges out of delight.

D. Emergence of Classical Knowledge

The Catholic Church fathers of the Middle Ages introduced into Europe a continental university system essentially based on the Greek and Latin classics. Earlier the masses in England transmitted myths through the folk verbal traditional manners. Such native legends as those of King Arthur, Guy of Warwick, Robin Hood, The Blue Hag of Leicester, and King Lear were the usual rustic preoccupations. In course of time the Greek and Latin classics started becoming important not only to the clergy and educated classes but also to the masses at large. They started referring far more frequently to the myths in Ovid, Virgil and the summaries of the Trojan War.
In spite of the entrenched Biblical lores in the colloquial circles through the regular Church Services, the Greek and Latin myths and legends became passionate conversational curiosities. The current knowledge of these myths in a cultural and intellectual heritage transmitted through the fairy tale versions of Kingsley’s *Heroes* and Hawthorne’s *Tanglewood Tales*. In spite of the fact that these classical lores were often dismissed as bizarre and chimerical fancies and a mere charming legacy from the primitivist Greek intelligence, their passionate appeal to the masses was so great that they started giving equal importance to them in their hearts along with the Biblical lores.

However, the greater spiritual importance of the Bible remained practically intact; and the ancient Greek and Latin myths merely added and elevated a passionate angle of observing and comprehending life with a rare desire for heroic achievements. In the twentieth century with the advent of the psychologists like Freud, Brill, and Jung, and the scholarly academic researches into Archaeology, pre-history, and Anthropology a rare symbolic and suggestive insight into the Greek and the Biblical myths could be possible.

**E. Myths and Their Evocation**

For Robert Frost himself the importance of the Greco-Roman and the Judaeo-Christian myths lies in the evocative manner in which they grip his creative poetic impulses in his mind. Referring to the distinctly different poetic approaches of T.S. Eliot and Robert Frost, James M. Cox arrives at the following conclusion: “While Eliot was discovering symbols for his age in the ancient myths of creation and fertility, Frost was creating the myth of Robert Frost” (5).

Frost’s New England rustic robust faith in the ‘liberty’ restlessly forces him to discover for himself a sort of mythic version of liberty and freedom in the human set of trial by existence. Liberty is good for man. God wants him to have it. It is not possible
to feel the intensity and depth of ‘liberty’ without grace. There is an eternal flow of love coming from God to man. Man achieves the height and bliss of love in freely catering the same from his end to all the living creatures. That is the essence of Christian love in its pure form of agape or charity that takes a mythical structure in Frost’s poetry. It is not Frost’s myth that is important in his poetry. On the other hand it is the characteristic manner of acquiring this agape into the individual counters of being-in-the-world that transpires as the necessary myths of life with concern.

A unique poetic effect emerges in his poems when he freely and uninhibitedly effects a charming confluence of the distinctly different, even contradictory mythological forces of the Greco-Roman and the Judaeo-Christian counters. In his poems like “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening,” “Home Burial,” and “Mending Wall,” there is that innovative creative process of the variant mythological particulars being blended and brought to confluence. They are unified in such a manner that the resultant poetic effect confirms the fact that both these contradictory mythological manners ultimately contribute to the fulfilment and clarification of life’s humanistic purposes.

As back as 1942, Lowrance Thompson categorically hinted at the mytho-poetic tendency of Robert Frost, when he said:

And Frost’s quest of the present moment as the greatest reality becomes a pursuit in the Emersonian sense; it becomes implicit with newly perceived aspects of an evident design in the universe. Always, the past cuts across the present moment to reveal and illuminate the moment by transforming it into a metaphor which has for him beauty and meaning. (27)

Needless to say, the expression ‘transforming into a metaphor’ is another way of stating that the transformations themselves of myths take place in their own way.
Though a repetition, yet it is worthwhile to quote Frost's own statement here: "For me the initial delight is in the surprise of remembering something I didn't know I knew. I am in a place, in a situation, as if I had materialized from cloud or risen out of the ground. There is a glad recognition of the long lost and the rest follows" (CP vii).

The expressions 'a glad recognition of the long lost' and 'a thing from some previous order in time and space' are vocal enough that the Wordsworthian 'emotions recollected in tranquillity' is certainly hinted at. While for Wordsworth it is the fact of emotion that matters, for Frost it is the very act of snatching 'a thing from some previous order' that matters. This is what Lawrance Thompson means in what he said "Frost's image of experience hurled into the future, as if by intuitive foreknowledge of the eventual need, is very closely related in spirit to Emerson's theory of poetry. The flash of recognition is a happy response to that union of impressions present and past" (30).

In Frost 'the flash of recognition' is a matter of Aristotle's concept of anagnorisis in the context of Tragedy. The conflicting contraries that emerge out of the impressions 'past and present' create the necessary dramatic effect. The past 'impressions' as retained actively in Jung's 'Collective Unconscious' intricately work for the dramatic effect. Thompson further clarifies his position when he said,

As for the source of that initial impetus, he finds it growing out of a flash of recognition, a fresh perception. But there is another kind of recognition which might be called a correlation. Somehow it amounts to a new awareness of self. The present moment serves as a fulminating agent which fires experience lost in the dark of memory, and causes that experience to burst into flame. (21)
It is obvious that 'in the dark of memory' means in the 'Collective Unconscious' of the race and not that of the poet's personal memory. Thereby Frost inducts new clarifications of life. But then they are momentary stays against confusion. Otherwise life is a matter of 'chaos' and as such unwithstandable. Poetry makes it withstandable with the help of necessary myths.

Thus in the newly arrived clarifications and fulfilments the non-thetic manner in which they go to suggest at the unified spiritual purpose of life is almost unique. In this poetic compromise the seemingly contradictory pagan and Christian fundamentals become equally important in the act of acquiring 'wisdom' through 'delight' which is the ultimate poetic goal of Robert Frost. Like a true New England Yankee, his individual temper or temperament hastened him to arrive at new clarifications of life, after investing it with a revitalizing myth of being comfortably placed in the universe, in the cosmos.

Robert Frost was mainly grounded in Latin and Greek History, Literature, and Philosophy in the Lawrence High School, at Dartmouth and at Harvard. He read and taught about the Greek and Latin Classics intensely all through his life. His intense spiritual association with the Bible is to be found in the untutored and uninstructed original manner in which the New England rustics arrive on their own at the highest Biblical spiritual truths and heights. Referring to Frost's passion for the Bible, Lawrance Thompson says that Frost was actually soaked in it.

Referring to his association with the Bible and the Classics, Helen H. Bacon says as follows:

Frequently as I hope to show, when it comes to classical literature, he seems purposely misleading. He likes to drop a clue in the form of an allusion to a passage in the Bible or English literature, which, while not in
itself false, is not the whole story. But it distracts us from looking further and enjoying the 'intoxication of success' that goes with 'taking' the classical analogy that lies beyond. The King James Bible and the English poets are far more appropriate than pagan antiquity to the homely Yankee surface he likes to maintain. One of the most deeply guarded and cherished secrets of the poetry is the affinities, which are never identities, with classical poetry that this Yankee surface masks. (36-37)

The expression 'the affinities which are never identities' clarifies the non-thetic manner in which Frost sets aside the imitative analogies to the background by way of inventing for himself a poetic image or a structure, which obliquely shows the suggestive pointed finger towards the original myth or legend. The reference is so subtle and evasive that it is very difficult to arrive at a conclusion that his poems have mythological parallels or analogies in them.

Like an impassioned musician ecstatically echoing the hidden references in his emotions to the universal human impulses at the pitch of his symphony, Frost dramatically ignites a like emotional pitch of ancient universal mythic particulars instinctively and instantly perceived. Frost abundantly makes it clear when he defines the initial delight of making a poem as the "surprise of remembering something I did not know I knew" (CP vi). In the context of the dramatic profundity of Frost in this 'remembering something' there is a veiled reference to the concept of anagnorisis (recognition) of Aristotle. J. A. Cuddon briefly clarifies the term 'anagnorisis' (Gk 'recognition') as: "A term used by Aristotle in Poetics to describe the moment of recognition (of truth) when ignorance gives way to knowledge. According to Aristotle, the ideal moment of anagnorisis coincides with peripetia or reversal of fortune" (37).
Since Frost’s poems are not analogies to Aristotelian tragedies, the expression ‘reversal of fortune’ has to be taken as realignment of perception in accordance with his pet logic that a poem “begins in delight and ends in wisdom” (CP vi). Both delight and wisdom emerge as sudden flashes of anagnorisis or recognition. In one of his letters to Whit Burnett Frost discloses the basis upon which he built his books. Says Frost: “... could anything of large design, even the roughest, any broken or dotted continuity or any fragment of a figure be discerned among the apparently random lesser designs of the several poems?” (qtd. in Cox 2).

Frost thus confirms that a poem is a chancy product unpremeditatedly assorted and propounded. In order to comprehend ‘apparently random lesser designs of the several poems’ one has to look into his concerns with the Greco-Roman and the Judaeo-Christian mythological counters of the past. Referring to the aetiological processes of literature Northrop Frye’s well-considered opinion is worth quoting in this context:

Literature develops out of mythology, a body of stories with a specific social function and mythology in its turn is an outgrowth of what I call concern, a term that I hope is self-explanatory. There is primary concern, and there is secondary concern. Primary concern is based on the most primitive of the platitudes: the conviction that life is better than death, happiness better than misery, freedom better than bondage. Secondary concern includes loyalty to one’s own society, to one’s religion or political beliefs, to one’s place in the close structure, and in short to everything that comes under the general heading of ideology. All through history secondary concerns have had the greater prestige and power. (21)
There is a standing critical charge and snubbing on Robert Frost that he never considered the contemporary problems of life seriously. He consistently avoided to turn his poetic kaleidoscope to the burning problem of the day, say world wars, atomic weapons, for the simple reason that they are passing parodies of the day. He knew it well that they pass off after making momentary agitations in the minds of people. As a serious poet he concentrates his poetic energies in re-evaluating and re-validating the primary concerns in the light of the thoughts of inevitable need to survive in the world without getting shattered. One profound reason for his relegating himself to the pastoral contexts of New England, leaving the urban comforts for themselves, lies in the fact that life in the modern contexts is under a necessity to search for alternative life styles on the well-considered lines of Emerson and Thoreau. His poetry abounds in primary concerns, just like in the ancient mythmakers.

One of the most important Sanskrit poetic theories called the Dhvani Siddhanta suggests that the real enjoyment of poetry comes when the intended poetic effect or meaning is bleakly suggested through intonative inflections, rather than in directly providing the readymade gists or analogies through well made and stylized syntactical assertions. The essence of this theory was cryptically laid down as the prime poetic motive of his poetics, when Robert Frost talked of ‘Sound of Sense’ as the target of his craft. The Classical authors like Plato, Catullus, Horace, and Virgil referred to the practice of this art as ‘Play’ (in Latin Ludere, Ludus; in Greek Paizein, Paidia). It is a ‘play’ with ideas, emotions, feelings, and volitions, duly confectioned into the vocables through metaphors, similes, and all other possible figures of speech, which constitute the structural essence of language.
It has been widely acknowledged that Robert Frost's favourite figure of speech is synecdoche (the figure of putting a part for the whole, or whole for the part). His use of synecdoche becomes all the more elusive and oblique, when he resorts to synaesthesia or sensation produced at a point different from the point of stimulation, a sensation of another kind suggested by one experienced. The following example from his "For Once, Then, Something" serves best for the characteristic manner of Frost using both synecdoche and synaesthesia. Says Frost,

I discerned, as I thought, beyond the picture
Through the picture, a something white, uncertain
Something more of the depths -- and then I lost it,

Water came to rebuke the too clear water. (CP 276)

The picture metaphor substantiates the synecdochic manner of comprehending the total vision. That 'something white, uncertain', suggesting more of the 'depths' in his own inner authenticity, explains the point of synaesthesia. It all could be possible because of that expression 'Through the picture,' holding a particular in the experiencing self always as an expiring flash that would never repeat its immensity of experience. The suddenness of its revelation and its vanishing happen at a time. Only it has to be supplied back by the memory presented here in the metaphoric 'picture' in which 'water came to rebuke too clear water.'

Coming to the 'sound of sense' formula here the repetition of 'r' sound adds for the bizarreness of the experience of the 'white, something.' The mythical manner of expressing the pain of the transitory nature of all human personal experience is profoundly clear. All the poetical myths of Robert Frost partake themselves in the creative manner of the ancient classical and the Biblical myths.
Robert Frost very often creates an ironic mythical apprehension in his readers that he is a serious philosophical genius in search of absolute truths. But he is a poet consciously using the philosophical stances also as fit metaphors in his poems. The two philosophical systems he considers seriously are the Greco-Roman and the Judaeo-Christian traditions, and that too for the substantial mythological systems they offered. The inherent mutual contraries involved in these two mythological systems came handy for him in order to suggest at “the paradox between his own watchfulness and his own skepticism,” to borrow the expression of Lawrence Thompson (25). But Thompson reads very high serious intentions on the part of Robert Frost in his poem “For Once, Then, Something.” Says Thompson: “But my supposition is that Frost’s experience happened to bring the analogy into sharp focus with his lifelong accumulation of prejudices concerning the extent and validity of knowledge” (25).

The poem itself stands on a playful mock-serious experience of a child gazing at the bottom of a well and making high serious stipulations concerning ‘Truth.’ Intently and searchingly gazing at bottoms of wells and at passing evening clouds is a popular pastime for rural children. This heart-filling luxury is denied to the urban children. Robert Frost’s mock-mythic analogy comes to the forefront if we compare the experience here to what Plato says in the ‘Myth of the Cave’. Transcending into the bottom of the well is a mock reverse of Plato’s ‘Myth of the Cave.’ The shadows cast at the mouth of the cave by the passers-by on the road in front of the cave are the shadows of the ‘ideas’ in Heaven. The mythical shadows of Plato become that elusive ‘something’ in the poem of Frost. That ‘something white uncertain’ discerned by the poet is thought to be ‘beyond the picture’ that is beyond the human perceptual field. But then the whole mythic impassioned nature of the experience comes to nothing when “One drop fell from
a fern, and lo, a ripple / shook whatever it was lay there at the bottom" (CP 276). This mock-serious myth of Frost exposes the absurdity of Plato's high seriousness. Plato superficially perceived the 'picture' and thought that they discussed 'beyond the picture.' Frost mockingly alludes to Plato and has the laugh of fooling the philosophers and their high seriousness.

F. Rustic Life in Frost's Poetry

When Robert Frost's *North of Boston* was published William Dean Howells in America and Ezra Pound in England gave encouraging critical appraisals. Howells, talking about the essential theme of Frost's poetry, stated that it was "unaffectedly expressive of rustic New England" (qtd. in Cox 4). The following remark of Dean Howells is more important in suggesting about Frost's manner of seeking his poetic evocations from the prehistoric ancestral past. Says Howells: "Amidst the often striving and straining of the new poetry, here is the old poetry as young as ever; and new only in extending the bounds of sympathy through the recorded to the unrecorded knowledge of humanity" (qtd. in Cox 4).

The 'bounds of sympathy' penetrates into the prehistoric anthropologic man as a rustic struggling, at arriving towards feasible comprehensions of the world of his experience through myths, legends, and folk tales. Ezra Pound complemented him for breaking away from the "stilled pseudo literary language" by way of daring to write in the "natural speech of New England" (qtd. in Cox 4). Pound also complemented the unaffected simplicity of Frost's poetry. However, as demonstrated by numerous critics, Frost's simplicity is highly deceptive. The same is true of his poetic technique also. Frost's own words are important here: "Poetry is the renewal of words forever and ever.
Poetry is that by which we live forever and ever unjaded. Poetry is that by which the world is never old” (qtd. in Hall 83).

This is possible only with an invention of new metaphor. The metaphoric departures, particularly in creative writing like poetry, are always risky. It is just possible that some readers might lose their way when confronting unexpected and unthought connections. These connections which are coming out of the mind of the poet are likely to remain unperceived or fleetingly apprehended as unimportant. In the metaphor the meaning is like a hidden fence, wherein the poet’s sensibility establishes a correspondence with it. If this correspondence is not captured what all that emerges is a typical obscurity. The very nature of metaphor is to perspire as a half-truth. Referring to this aspect of poetic creativity Frost himself says as follows:

In the beginning was the word, to be sure, very sure, and a solid basic comfort it remains in situ, but the fun only begins with the spirited when you treat the word as a point of many departures. There is risk in the play. But if some of the company get lost in the excitement, charge it up to proving the truth of chapter and verse in the Gospel according to Saint Mark, although the oracle speaking is Delphic. (qtd. in Hall 83)

The oracular passage in the Gospel here is the same referred to in “Directive” where ‘a broken drinking goblet like the Grail’ is ‘kept hidden,’ “Under a spell so the wrong ones can’t find it, / So can’t get saved, as Saint Mark says they mustn’t” (CP 520).

The most important point here concerns with the necessary treatment of ‘the word as a point of many departures.’ The subtle poetic complexity in Frost’s poetry emerges in holding these ‘many departures’ of words as suggested or pointed out essences of experience, with the words, as well as the world that is made by these words. The most
important point of our concern emerges when he speaks of the poetic experience as a Gospel of Saint Mark, which says that the Holy Grail cannot be seen by the wrong ones. At the same time Frost says that it could as well be a Delphic oracle. He passionately equalizes the Greco-Roman and the Judaeo-Christian mytho-poetical representations which are equally important for him.

But the suggestive material particulars supplied by these myths are taken up as symbolic poetic particles conforming themselves into imagined phenomenal sequences and consequences. Like Susan Langer, Frost considers a poem as a unitary symbol which creates the feel and sense of virtual experience. The unitary nature of the symbol confirms that it has no conceivable equivalents or parallels in meaning structures. They just point towards some vague perception of experience, which in its turn offers a fulfilment through a height of feeling.

It confirms the fact that all poetry is a creation of illusory events, and it is thus illusory fabric that gives it a structure which is more in the nature of a myth, than that of a reality or a mere logo-centric structure. Says Frost in an interview with John K. Hutchens: “If you try only to put words together that were never put together before, it’s too limiting” (126). Taking poetry as the first form of understanding, he says in another interview with Harvey Breit: “If poetry isn’t understanding all, the whole world, then it isn’t worth anything” (124).

Thus the rural background under which Frost writes his poetry, in spite of its topographical and geographical affinity with his nation New England, is an illusory structure. The characters with which he fills his background are actors in the poet’s imagination. They are not real. They quite innocently operate as beings-in-their-own-world. To that extent they are illusory and mythical symbols contributing to the unitary
symbolic nature of Frost’s poetry. The occurrence of thought in him is an event in the poet’s personal mythology, or the ancient mythological particulars as appealed to his personal experience. Thus the thoughts themselves have a distinct character of their own as adventures, rights, and human contacts. The seeming propositions that he makes contain in themselves vital dramatic tensions created by the situation by way of transplanting the echoes of ancient thoughts on what Frost calls “momentary stay against confusion” (CP vi).

Emerging synthesis of a poem unobtrusively partakes in the entirety of human thoughts and actions starting from the mythic past. The validity of these actions and thoughts for Frost is intrinsic tension tried and tested on his own personal authentic self as exquisite chance poetic particulars creating ecstasy. The final result is a mythic panorama of life which presents an extended and better human way of living than is possible in the modern times, as Frost says in his “The Lesson for Today”:

If this uncertain age in which we dwell
Were really as dark as I hear sages tell,
And I convinced that they were really sages,
I should not curse myself with it to hell,
But leaving not the chair I long have sat in,
I should betake me back ten thousand pages
To the world’s undebatedly dark ages,
And getting up my Medieval Latin,
Seek converse common cause and brotherhood. (CP 471)

In this context Robert Frost’s unobtrusive and casual manner of introducing metaphors that metamorphose into symbols in the progress of the poem is quite enchanting.
Referring to his passionate attachment to metaphors and symbols Frost in his "The Constant Symbol" says: "There are many other things I have found myself saying about poetry, but the chiefest of these is that it is metaphor, saying one thing and meaning another, saying one thing in terms of another, the pleasure of ulteriority. Poetry is simply made of metaphor" (qtd. in Napier 128).

In spite of the fact that the metaphorical method of imagination is as old as that of the ancient mythmakers, the poetic use of it always acquires for it a new meaning and a new ecstasy. Frost hastens to add to the above: “Every poem is a new metaphor inside or it is nothing. And there is a sense in which all poems are the same old metaphor always” (qtd. in Napier 128).

G. Myth and Metaphor in Robert Frost

As is known to all, a typical metaphor takes the form of the statement that ‘A’ is ‘B,’; examples can be found in almost all the poems of Robert Frost. In his "Rose Pogonias" the statements like

A saturated Meadow,

Sun-shaped and jewel-small,

A circle scarcely wider

Than the trees around were tall;

Where winds were quite excluded,

And the air was stifling sweet

With the breath of many flowers,-

A temple of the heat. (CP 19)

As in all the myths, we have two contradictory suggestions and messages here. There is that assertion that the ‘saturated meadow’ is ‘sun-shaped’ and ‘jewel-small’ (that
is 'A' is 'B'). Simultaneously there is an undercurrent of suggestions that 'the saturated meadow' can never be comprehended 'sun-shaped' and jewel-small.' (that is 'A' is obviously not 'B'). It is the same as the expression 'air was stifling sweet' and 'temple of the heat.'

The 'saturated meadow' further metamorphoses into 'A circle scarcely wider / Than the trees around were tall.' The meadow is magically turning into a symbol that smacks off a mythic structure. It becomes clear that Frost's poem evokes a variety of responses and reflexes that are contradictory in nature. The 'sun-shaped' can never be 'jewel-small' for all our empirical and rational understanding, for we know that the sun is a high star and it can never be comprehended as 'Twinkle, twinkle little star.' For that matter there are no 'little stars' at all in the universe. They only look like that and give that contingent feel of enchanting littleness because of the enormously extended distances. But metaphor, after due conversion into a symbol obviates those distances.

Therefore, George Willy in the Chapter on Symbol and Myth in his book Poetic Process says that "A Symbol, like a metaphor, does not stand for 'a thing' or for 'an idea'; it is a focus of relationship" (qtd. in Frye 29).

Their 'focus of relationship' is always institutional and the situation itself is created in the context of the poem by way of adopting an archetypal mythic magical imagination. Again, 'the focus of relationship' changes and alters in accordance with the momentary perceptions evoked as innumerable 'momentary stays' simultaneously. Even when such perceptions and reflections quite obviously fall under the category of perceptual fallacy, our felt experience takes a leap into a sort of pleasant plastic pictures that provide a myth. These myths are readily owned and accepted by the reader as momentary little exulting solutions for the big chaos of life, as an awful mystical
presence. Life has to be lived in these momentary poetic solutions in the absence of real solutions for our primary and secondary concerns. It is not a mere Coleridgean 'Willing suspension of disbelief'; it is a matter of a conscious willing assumption of disbelief itself as the only possible recourse and relief from the unbearable pressure of the primary and secondary concerns—both physical and metaphysical.

In the face of virtual spiritual chaos, Frost relies on poetry as the only value maker in life. His poetry is made up of what he calls the 'adaptations' (not analogies) of what he sensibly and consciously gathered out of his involvement with the past literary traditions starting from the ancient mythic past. As back as 1955, in his lecture at the Dartmouth college commencement, Robert Frost told that the literary adaptations were the basis of his poetry. In his own words, "I am going to tell you that every single one of my poems is probably one of these adaptations that I have made. I have taken whatever you give me and made it what I want it to be" (qtd. in Avenzo 1). The word 'adaptation,' is very important. It is not a creation, re-creation, or de-creation of ancient myths and authors. It is not even what Wallace Stevens creates as analogies. It is all a matter of 'adaptations.' Mere intellectual emulation of the past is not sufficient for him. He has to adapt it and own it dearly to make it what he wants it to be.

In Frost we have innumerable echoes of myth as 'sound of sense' recaptured and recapitulated, and the myth is an eclectic and self-conscious product of the Romantic Search for the identity. Frost's myth-making is attempted as his search for identity in the forthcoming chapters of the thesis.