

## An Analysis of Symbols in Robert Frost's Poetry

Julisthree Casilia Gregoriyani<sup>1</sup>

[julisthree.gregoriyani@gmail.com](mailto:julisthree.gregoriyani@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup>

IKIP Muhammadiyah Maumere<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract:

This study aims to identify the symbols in Robert Frost's poetry and analyze the meaning of those symbols. In this study, the author is going to focus on the symbols in Robert Frost's poetry. The author limits this analysis to Five of Robert Frost's poetry, they are: "Out -Out ", "Acquainted with the Night", "Ghost House", "My November Guest" and "A Prayer In Spring". In writing and analyzing the data on this study, the author used the descriptive qualitative. The author used the library research and technique on this study also content analysis to analyze the problem. The author find out and analyze about the symbols that reflected with theoretically and explain the meaning about the symbols in each poetry. Therefore, the result of this study concludes that In Robert Frost's selected poems there are symbols, they are light, the sunset, the saw, darkness, rain, the watchman, flowers, bees, bird love, ghosts, raspberries, the toad, the black bats, the whippoorwill, house, rain, tree, sky and earth. Those having meaning that reflected with theoretically.

**Keywords:** Symbol, Poetry, Robert Frost

### Introduction

There is a close courting among language and literature. Literature is a creativeness of fact to explicit human feelings. Taylor (cited in Sijabat, 2016) stated that, "Literature like different arts an ingenious act of author's creativeness in deciding on, ordering, and interpreting lifestyles experience". The definition of literature cannot stuck at the Latin term "letter" which the word literature became taken, literature here contain the artistic merit that have extra value. Those who want to express their emotions or emotion can use this manufactured from literature referred to as literary works. Literature have three main division, they may be drama, poetry, and prose.

Poetry with the clean which means that consist of the symbols trough the lyrics related to existence. Talking about poetry wants to recognize definition of poetry. Ollia and Jantas (2006) said that, poetry is any form of verbal or written language that is based rhythmically and is meant to tell a story, or particular any form of emotion, concept, or nation of being. A poetry

can both be rhyming, or non-rhyming. It uses symbols and has strains and stanzas which have sentences, fragments of sentences or each.

Poetry occasionally are absolutely symbolic to make it extra exciting because the poetry is definitely complete with imaginations and symbols occasionally are not clean sufficient. Symbol in conventional literary utilization, a symbol relates a phrase or concept to a concrete item, scene or movement with which-even though basically special. Ogden and Richard (said in Muzakki, 2007) say that symbol is something that is used to consult something else in step with agreements of effective corporation who uses the symbol. Many poets used symbolism to deepen the means in their poetries. Symbolism is the practices or artwork of the usage of an object or a word to symbolize a summary concept. Robert Frost is one of most famous poets. He uses symbols to deliver his concept through his poetry, as in the poem the road not Taken observed this poem describes a person have preference in existence. He desired to specific his enjoy of unseen international inside the imagination.

Poirer argues (in Sinaga, 2016) Robert Frost was born on March 26, 1874, in San Francisco. He became interested in reading and writing poetry at some point of his high school years in Lawrence, enrolled at Dartmouth University in Hanover, New Hampshire, in 1892. Poetry is extra complex than what is seen, it has which means even message. The author hopes that the reader receives the message of the poetry and understand the symbol in Robert Frost's poetry.

In this research, the author is going to focus on the symbols in Robert Frost's poetry. The author limits this analysis to Five of Robert Frost's poetry, they are: "Out-Out", "Acquainted with the Night", "Ghost House" , "My November Guest" and "A prayer in spring". Based on the background of the research, the author formulate the problems of research as follow, firstly what are the symbols in Robert Frost's poetry? Secondly, what are the meanings of symbols in Robert Frost's poetry? Based on the problems of the research, the author formulate the objectives of research as follow namely To identify the symbols in Robert Frost's poetry and to analyze the meaning of symbols in Robert Frost's poetry

## Review of Literature

### 2.1 Hermeneutic Theory

Schleiermacher in Keserci (2013) state that hermeneutics is a method for interpretation of all texts. Hermeneutics or the art of interpreting hidden meaning. Hermeneutic have become generally understood as strategies for information passages of a text that may be difficult to recognize. Schleiermacher challenged this assumption and provided versions amongst the author and the reader-interpreter with recognize to their non-public histories, the use of language, lifestyle, worldview, and pressured misunderstanding, rather than data in textual interpretation. Schleiermacher converted hermeneutics from a method to a popular idea of information and deciphering texts. Schleiermacher mentions about three primary troubles handling information: problem in data, not information, and misunderstanding.

The goal of interpreting a textual content for Schleiermacher is to get higher the author's at the beginning intended that means. Therefore, in step with Schleiermacher, interpretation has, in addition crucial, additives: grammatical (objective) or psychological (subjective). According to Schleiermacher, grammatical interpretation refers to information and interpreting a text in 17 the context of the language with its possibilities and limits. As distinct from grammatical interpretation, psychological interpretation goals to reconstruct the author's mental.

### 2.2 Symbol

#### 2.2.1 Definition of Symbol

The word 'symbol' is derived from Greek symbollein this means that to throw collectively. The Greek verb symbollein is used to unite or throw collectively an aspect which has been spliced into additives. the two components of the aspect is called symbola in Greek, which often change to be 'symbol' in English word then it has broader

meanings (Dharmojo, 2005). Zoest (referred to in Muzakki, 2007) states that symbol is something that can represent mind, feelings, matters, and behaviors. It is in the form of arbitrary and conventional. Furthermore, Ogden and Richard (stated in Muzakki, 2007) say that symbol is something this is used to consult something else in step with agreements of advantageous corporation who uses the symbol. It could be in the form of words, matters, gestures, and so on. For instance the installation of the red-white flag in the front of the residence on August to show understand to the national heroes' deserves and like to Indonesia.

### 2.2.2 Kinds of Symbol

Finkelstein (2010) state that there are three kinds of symbol, they are: archetypal symbols, conventional image and personal symbol.

a. Archetypal symbols

Archetypal symbols are the ordinary roles everyone must finally play out in the act of interest integration. E.g., the jobs Carl G. Jung named as part of the more self; the jobs Dr. Carol Pearson has named as part of the Hero's journey; the jobs of the more Arcana of the Tarot cards, the jobs performed through the gods and goddesses of the Greek and Roman pantheons, and so on.

b. Conventional Symbol

Conventional symbol is a symbol is easily that has an understood or broadly common interpretation. There are a few conventional symbols for instance, a flag which is a physical, illustration of a country. While children humans recognize that the flag isn't the country, however that it stands for a country. Conventional symbol has meaning that identified by a society for instance: red can represent blood, passion, risk, or immoral person and stars are the symbols of Moslem. The following objects were considered as conventional symbols for centuries, some of that are contemplated in religious customs, mythical story and literature.

c. Personal Symbol

Personal symbol or private symbol is a symbol that made and put by the author in a literary works as person works. The symbol isn't recognized by majority of a society, it's the one that requires unique or private information to recognize the means of and in accordance in the context of particular story. The trouble with personal symbol is the readers do not recognize lots about the symbol.

Based on author's opinion, the kinds of symbol reflected with this paper is conventional symbol through the poetry. Conventional symbol are words of poetry that having meaning.

2.3. Poetry

Poetry is the oldest form of literature. A long term in the past, while humans did not comprehend something about written language, they got such kind of recollections from a storyteller. Natsir (2007) said that, poetry is a common as language and almost as ancient. The most primitive humans have used it, and the most civilized have cultivated it. Meanwhile, Siswanto (2002) explained that, poetry is possibly the maximum hard kind of language. Poetry is the most complex literary due to its compact in condensed diction in expressing mind.

2.4. Previous of Research

In this research, the author takes related research about symbols in poetry/poem. There are previous studies wherein related of research. the first previous studies in written by Tarihoran (2016) entitled "An analysis of Symbols In William Blake's Poem. This studies deals with an analysis of symbols within the seven poems of William Blake, including "The Angel", "The Lamb", "The Tiger", "Hear The Voice", "A Poison Tree", "The divine image", and "Jerusalem". The symbols that analyzed in this studies is a symbol which associated with the spiritual topics especially about the concept of deity in William's poems. The cause of the authors analyzed the symbols in William Blake's poems is to discover

the which means of those symbols. In these poems there are a few symbols, for instance, in the Angel poem, "The Angel" is symbol of divinity creature who has responsibility to assist, "The Lamb" is a symbol of the Lord Jesus, "The Tiger" is a symbol of the energy of God in developing something very powerful, and so on.

The second previous studies is written through Setiawan (2014) entitled "Symbols in Robert Frost's Poems". On this study the writer focuses to evaluation the that means of symbols in masterpieces of Robert Frost's poems, which cognizance on symbol which taking by symbol in poem, the author take the symbols which consist of their poem, three masterpiece of Robert Frost's poem are "The Road Not Taken", "Fire And Ice", And "Stopping By Woods On A Snowy Evening". The writer use concept of Charles Sanders pierce semiotics theory, the most primary classes of signs in Peirce's menagerie are icons, indices, and symbols that likeminded with this thesis. This analysis discovered that symbol can be seen in the poem, as in the poem "The Road Now Not Taken", the writer observed that this poem describes someone has selections in lifestyles, and in the second poem "Fire And Ice" poem may be word that the poem implies the symbols that constitute manner of existence where in the life has spirit or fire to conflict, the third poem of Robert frost, the writer discovered that "A Stopping By Woods On A Snowy Evening" implies symbols that constitute what kinds of spirits we conflict.

Based on previous research, the author has the similar topic with previous author. Both of the research explain about the symbol and used qualitative research for research. However, both of research analyzes the symbol with different object. The previous author analyzes the symbol in William Blake's Poem and another previous author analyzes symbol in different poetry of Robert Frost. Meanwhile the author analyzes the symbol in Robert Frost's Poetry such as "Fire and Ice", "Out-Out", "Acquainted with the Night", "Ghost House", "My November Guest" and "A prayer in spring". Analysis techniques of previous research use theory of Charles Sanders pierce semiotics theory, the most basic classes of signs in Peirce's menagerie are icons, indices, and symbols that

compatible with this thesis. Meanwhile the author used the library research and approach for collecting the data and content analysis to analyze the problem in this research.

## **Method**

Research method are the techniques, processes of techniques utilities within the collection of information or evidence for evaluation to be able to find out new information or create better information of a topic. Ary (mentioned in Hasanah, 2018) defined that research method refers to the overall method followed in collecting and analyzing the information. In writing and studying the information on this research, the writer used the descriptive qualitative. The descriptive qualitative is a research wherein the main attention is on description, rather than analyzing relationships or institutions (Kumar, 2019).

Primary Data of research in this research is Robert Frost's Five Poetry, which are "Out-Out", "Acquainted With The Night", "Ghost House", "My November Guest" And "A Prayer In Spring". The reason for choosing the five selected poetries is because according to the author the poetries have related of symbol. Meanwhile, secondary data, the author starts to read all of facts including biography of Robert Frost. The author attempts to connect or relate each poetry to the Robert Frost lives history based at the time when Robert Frost wrote those poetry. Besides that, Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary and Merriam Webster dictionary also needed in this research.

There are some sources of data for this research taken through the author. In the time period of collection information, the research can be categorized as a library research. The author used the library research and approach in this studies. The library research is the searching of information from a few books in the library that are relevant to the subject that assist the assessment as references, (Hasan, 2002). The author used the library research because the source of data from the five of Robert Frost's Poetry. The intrinsic technique is used to discover the data from the textual content such as five poetry through Robert Frost. And sorting the information which has gathered and persevered through analyzing.

In analyzing the problem of this research, the author combined all the important information that has been collected from many sources and used content analysis. Data analysis technique used on this research is content analysis, because the facts source used on this research come from documents or written data (textual content). Content analysis, a method which may be used qualitative or quantitatively for systematically analyzing written, verbal, or visual documentation (White & Marsh, 2006). The use of content analysis, researchers can quantify and analyze the presence, meanings, and relationships of such certain words, issues or ideas. In step with buck (2016), content analysis is systematic research method for studying and making inference from text and other form of qualitative information. Qualitatively analysis develops the kinds as the evaluation takes area. The results are used to make inferences about the messages in the text.

## **Results and Discussions**

The author find out & epitomize the symbols used by Robert Frost's poetry. From the five poetries, there are 20 the symbols such as light, sunset, saw, supper, darkness, rain, watchman, flowers, bees, bird, love, ghosts, raspberries, toad, bats, whippoorwill, house, tree, sky and earth.

### **a. "Out Out"**

"Out-Out" is a poetry by American poet Robert Frost, posted in Frost's 1916 collection Mountain interval and based on actual incident that occurred to Frost's friend's son. Out-out" tells the story of a young boy who dies after his hand is severed through a buzz-saw. The poetry focuses on people's reactions to loss of life, in addition to the loss of life itself, one of the crucial thoughts being that life is going on.



**Table 4.1: Symbols in Out-Out Poetry**

No	Title of Poetry	Kinds of Symbol	Symbol
1.	"Out – Out"	Conventional Symbol	And the saw snarled and rattled, snarled and rattled, As it ran light, or had to bear a load. (Lines 7-8)
			And from there those that lifted eyes could count Five mountain ranges one behind the other. Under the sunset far into Vermont. (Line 3-6)
			And the saw snarled and rattled, snarled and rattled, As it ran light, or had to bear a load. (Lines 7-8)
			As if to prove saws knew what supper meant, Leaped out at the boy's hand, or seemed to leap (Lines 15-16)
			His sister stood beside him in her apron To tell them 'Supper.' At the word, the saw (Line 14)

b. “Acquainted with the Night “

One in all Frost’s most celebrated poetry, “acquainted with the night” first posted in 1927. It is an exploration of isolation, sorrow, and despair emotions that, to the poetry’s speaker, enjoy as inescapable because the night itself. These emotions, Frost indicates, are a commonplace part of the human experience. This poetry is written in the form of a sonnet. Even though the poetry includes the traditional factors of a sonnet such as the 14 lines and ending couplet.

**Table 4.2: Symbol in Acquainted With the Night Poetry**

No	Title of Poetry	Kinds of Symbol	Symbol
1.	“Acquainted with the Night”	Conventional Symbol	I have been one acquainted with the night (Line 1 & 14)
			I have out walked the furthest city light. (Line 3)
			I have been one acquainted with the night. I have walked out in rain—and back in rain. I have out walked the furthest city light. (Lines 1-3)
			I have looked down the saddest city lane. I have passed by the watchman on his beat And dropped my eyes,

			unwilling to explain. (Lines 4-6)
			But not to call me back or say good-bye; And further still at an unearthly height, One luminary clock against the sky (Lines 10-12)

c. “A Prayer In Spring”

“A Prayer In Spring” through Robert Frost was published in A Boy’s Will (Henry Holt and corporation, 1915) right now shows the expression of gratitude to God’s blessing that relates to the entire content of the poem through a prayer. A poetry that asks for peace in the face of a hectic, without stop demanding world. The speaker is looking for peace for himself and people round him. It is a four stanza poetry this is separated and steps of four lines, known as quatrains. The ones quatrains follows a normal rhyme scheme. Most people of the lines are written in iambic pentameter.

**Table 4.3: Symbol in a Prayer in Spring Poetry**

No	Title of Poetry	Kinds of Symbol	Symbol
1.	“A Prayer In Spring”	Conventional Symbol	Oh, give us pleasure in the flowers to-day; And give us not to think so far away As the uncertain harvest; keep us here All simply in the springing of the year. (Lines 1-4)

			And make us happy in the happy bees, The swarm dilating round the perfect trees. And make us happy in the darting bird (Lines 7-9)
			For this is love and nothing else is love, The which it is reserved for God above To sanctify to what far ends He will, (Lines 13-16)

d. “Ghost House”

“Ghost House” through Robert Frost posted in 1913 in “A Boy’s Will” which represented dreamy days of teenagers. Story of someone who had back to his vintage home only to locate that there rest completely the remains of a cellar. It is made from six stanzas, every with five lines. It has a strict rhyme scheme: the first, second and final lines of every stanza rhyme, as do the third and fourth lines. This creates two neat rhyming couplets in every stanza, with the very last line performing disjointed as if it has been an addition. Frost’s meter on this poetry is iambic tetrameter.

**Table 4.4: Symbol in Ghost House Poetry**

No	Title of Poetry	Kinds of Symbol	Symbol
1.	“Ghost House”	Conventional Symbol	<p>I know not who these mute folk are  Who share the unlit place with me—?  Those stones out under the low-limbed tree  Doubtless bear names that the mosses mar.  They are tireless folk, but slow and sad—  Though two, close-keeping, are lass and lad,—  With none among them that ever sings, (Lines 22-28)</p> <hr/> <p>And the purple-stemmed wild raspberries grow.  (Lines 5)</p> <hr/> <p>That has no dust-bath now for the toad.  Night comes; the black bats tumble and dart;  The whippoorwill is coming to shout  And hush and cluck and flutter about:  I hear him begin far enough away  Full many a time to say his say  Before he arrives to say it</p>

			out. (Lines 14-20)
			I dwell in a lonely house I know That vanished many a summer ago, And left no trace but the cellar walls, And a cellar in which the daylight falls And the purple-stemmed wild raspberries grow. O'er ruined fences the grape-vines shield The woods come back to the mowing field; The orchard tree has grown one copse (Lines 1-7)

e. “My November Guest”

“My November guest” visitor by Robert Frost posted in his first poetry collection, *A Boy’s Will*, in 1913. The poetry advice the importance of making place for sorrow that could teach humans to see beauty in unexpected places. It moreover illustrates how connecting with nature is one manner of feeling a lot much less by myself. The poetry product of 20 lines prepared into five lines stanzas. The poetry feels pretty constant and controlled during way to a constant iambic meter, line duration, and rhyme pattern in each stanza.

**Table 4.5: Symbol in My November Guest Poetry**

	Title of Poetry	Kinds of Symbol	Symbol
1.	“My November Guest”	Conventional Symbol	My sorrow, when she’s here with me, Think these dark days of autumn rain (Lines 1-2)
			She loves the bare, the withered tree; The desolate, deserted trees (Lines 4 & 11)
			The faded earth, the heavy sky, (Line 12)

## Conclusion

Based on the finding and discussion, the author formulate the conclusion of research. From the five poetry of Robert Frost, the symbols are very obvious, where there are the elements of divinity that descended through the conventional symbols. There are 20 the symbols such as light, the sunset, the saw, supper, darkness, rain, the watchman, flowers, bees, bird, love, ghosts, raspberries, the toad, the bats, the whippoorwill, house, tree, sky and earth. Those having the meaning of the symbols. The most dominant meaning are sadness, destruction, instability situation, negative emotions, despair and sorrow.

## References

Berry, T. (2009). *The Spirituality of the Earth* (1979). In M. E. Tucker (Ed.), *The Sacred Universe: Earth, Spirituality, and Religion in the Twenty-first Century* (pp. 69–79). Columbia University Press.

- Cooper, C. (1974). The House as Symbol of the Self. *The People, Place, and Space Reader*, 168-172.
- Darmadi, S. (2013). Corporate Governance Disclosure in the Annual Report: An Exploratory Study on Indonesian Islamic Banks. *Humanomics*, 29(1), 4-23.
- Dharmojo. (2005). *Sistem Simbol dalam Munaba Waropen Papua*. Jakarta: Pusat Bahasa Departemen Pendidikan.
- Finkelstein, N. (2010). *On Mount Vision: Forms of the Sacred in Contemporary American Poetry*. University of Iowa Press.
- Frost, R. (1915). North of Boston. Henry Holt.
- Frost, R. (2020). New Hampshire (Vol. 3). Standars Ebooks.
- Gilbert, J. (2013). Monolithos: Poems' 62-'82. Knopf.
- Gonlin, N., & Reed, D. M. (Eds.). (2021). *Night and Darkness in Ancient Mesoamerica*. University Press of Colorado.
- Gradwohl, E. (2012). Sylloge Epigraphica Barcinonensis: *SEBarc* , 439-447.
- Hopler, W. (2017). *Meet Archangel Chamuel, Angel of Peaceful Relationships*.
- Hutching, T. (2015). E-reading and the Christian Bible. *Studies in Religion/ Sciences Religieuses*. 44 (4) (2015): 423-440.
- Johan, IM (2019). Bird Symbolism in Persian Mysticism Poetry. *International Review of Humanities Studies*. 4 (2) (2019).
- Kartikasari, DW (2017). The Meaning of the Gedog Batik Motive is a Reflection of the Character of the Tuban People. *Moral and Citizenship Studies*, 5 (03).
- Kasim, R. (2007). *Introduction to Literature*. Medan: University of North Sumatra
- Kushner, H. S. (2003). *The Lord is My Shepherd: Healing Wisdom of the Twenty-third Psalm*. Anchor.
- Lehner, E., & Lehner, J. (2003). *Folklore and Symbolism of Flowers, Plants and Trees*. Courier Corporation.
- Lennox, M. (2015). *Llewellyn's Complete Dictionary of Dreams: Over 1,000 Dream Symbols and Their Universal Meanings*. Llewellyn Worldwide.
- Lerner, I., Lerner, M., & Lerner, M. (2002). *Inner Child Cards: A Fairy-Tale Tarot*. Bear & Company.
- Loeb, E. M. (1943). A Note on Two Far-Travelled Kachinas. *The Journal of American Folklore*, 56(221), 192-199.



- McIntosh, C., & Turnbull, J. (2005). *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Morris, M. (2005). *Making West Indian Literature*. Ian Randle Publishers.
- Mouterde, R. (2023). *The Geometry of the Last Supper: Leonardo da Vinci's Bidden Composition and Its Symbolism*. Raphael Mouterde.
- Muzakki, Ahmad. 2007. *Kontribusi Semiotika dalam Memahami Bahasa Agama*. Malang: UIN-Malang Press.
- Ollila, B. and Jantas, J. (2006). "The Definition of Poetry". <https://joejantas.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/the-definition-of-poetry>.
- Poirer, Richard and Mark Richard. (1995). *Robert Frost: Collected Poems, Prose and Plays*. New York: The Library of America
- Prasetyo, L. (2019). The Spiritual and Cultural Symbols in a Mahayana Buddhist Temple 'Vihara Lotus' Surakarta. *Analisa: Journal of Social Science and Religion*, 4(01), 59-78.
- Prastyarini, E. Y. (2008). *Symbolism in Robert Frost's Poems* (Doctoral Dissertation, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim).
- Raflesia, N.N., Bahren, B., & Hage, E. (2019). *The Meaning of Symbols in William Wordsworth's Selected Poetries* (Doctoral dissertation, UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi).
- Rival, L. (Ed.). (2021). *The Social Life of Trees: Anthropological Perspectives on Tree Symbolism*. Routledge.
- Robert Frost". *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Online edition Ed.). 2008. Retrieved 2008- 12-21.
- Rydell, J., Eklöf, J., & Riccucci, M. (2018). Cimetière du Père-Lachaise. Kelelawar dan Vampir dalam Romantisme Prancis. *Jurnal Penelitian Kelelawar & Volume Konservasi*, 11 (1).
- Schleiermacher, F. (1998). *Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings*. Halle University.
- Setiawan, I. (2014). *Symbols in Robert Frost's Poems* (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim).
- Shyam, R., Cassell, W. A., & Dubey, B. L. (2009). SIS Detection of Invisible Imagery in Bipolar Depression. *SIS Journal of Projective Psychology & Mental Health*, 16(1), 24.

- Sijabat, R., & Suharti, L. (2016). Sharing Knowledge as the Bridge to Achieve Flourishing Inner Wellbeing: Literature Review. *Economics*, 3(7).
- Sinaga, N. (2016). *Biographical Analysis Of Five Selected Poems By Robert Frost* (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Sumatra Utara).
- Tarihoran, I. (2016). *An Analysis of Symbol in William Blake 'S Poems* (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Sumatra Utara).
- Wahab, HA, Abdullah, IH, Mis, MA, & Salehuddin, K. (2016). Euphemisms in the Management of Remains in the Sarawak Malay Community: A Cognitive Semantic Analysis. *Language Journal*, 16 (1), 50-73.
- Warrend, Austin and Walek. (1989). *Teori Kesusastraan*. Jakarta: PT. Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- White, M. D., & Marsh, E. E. (2006). Content Analysis: A Flexible Methodology. *Library Trends* 55(1), 22-45.