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Abstract: Thisterm paper analysis symbols in Robert Frost’s After-Apple Picking and Birches.  The paper also analyses the connectionbetween nature and man in Frost’s poetry, not to categorise him as a naturepoet but to analyse the peculiarities of his symbols and their connection withman.  Also the paper comparing both poemsin terms of themes.

Robert Frost was born in California andwas identified with New England.  Hemoved to New England after the death of his father, and helped his mother byteaching in her own school. He had tried many fields like a teacher, farmer andlater as a visiting professor in many universities including Harvard.  His fortune changed from 1912 onwards, thetime when he moved to England with his family. His first book, A Boy’s Will (1913), get published there “ with a phrase borrowed from Longfellow’s poem My Lost Youth” (Thomas 97).  After the publication and the wide reception ofNorth of Boston both in America andEngland, he went back to America.

The success he enjoyed for the rest of his life as a poet, however cametoo late                to cancel the bitterness left byhis earlier struggles.  Moreover, heendured                                                       personal tragedy: a soncommitted suicide and a daughter had a complete                                            mental collapse. ( Baym 727)              He was a poet of simplicity. Simplethemes, mostly related to life were presented in his poems.  Inthe context of Frost’s diction, the colloquial rhythms, the simplicity ofhis                   images and aboveall the folky speaker- these are intended to make the poems look natural, unplanned.  In the context of themodernist movement, however they can be seen as a thoughtful reply to highmodernism’s fondness for obscurity and difficulty. (Baym 727) Elementsof regionalism was there in his poems. Regional writers of American literature tried to bring more realism, andthis was “ resulted from the desire both to preserve a record of distinctiveways of life and to come to terms with the new world that seemed to bereplacing these early and allegedly happier times” (Baym 12).

There were some” local colorists” dedicated to capturing its natural, social and linguisticfeatures” (Baym 13)                          Nature is “ symbolic ofspirit” quoting Robert D. Richardson in ‘ Analysis on Nature in Robert Frost’sPoetry’, Frost says that “” I am not a nature poet,” he once declared “ There isalmost always a person in my poems”” (  Yuanli  26). Human psyche in any natural elementsbecomes the focal point, rather than a mere “ background”.  It is also quoted that “ some people called mepoet of nature setting but I am not a poet for nature, there is also somethingelse in my poems” (Yuanli  26).  “ Confusion and dilemma” are one of the commonthemes in his poems like in The Road NotTaken and in Mending  Wall. He sings “ And Sorry I could nottravel both” in former and “ Why do they make good neighbours” in latter.

Also; we can see an element of “ delight and pleasure” in his woods, trees, grass, apple etc. Human Wisdom            How many times it thundered beforeFranklin.  How many apples fell onNewton’s head before he took the hint. Nature is always hinting at us.  It hints over and over again.  And suddenly we take the hint (Yuanli  27)looking nature and many natural phenomenon or any visual from a rustic lifelike a boy swaying on birches a poet (man) get inspired.

It plays a didactic or moral purpose. Asquoting Robert Frost: It(a poem) begin in delight, it inclines to the impulse, it assumes directionwith the first line laid down, it runs a course of lucky events, and ends in aclarification of life—-not necessarily a great clarification, such as sectsand cults are founded on, but in a momentary stay against confusion. (pdf 28)Thus, rather than merely sucking joy from nature Frost’s Poem ends in wisdom.  At the inception of his poems, there may besome appreciation of any natural events or may begin with a nostalgic moment orvillage scenery.  But whatever it is hewill safely land on to some thoughts of wisdom. Symbolism                   Symbolismin literature is a technique using for an indirect way of saying.

Symbols symbolises certain things and conveysthe ideas to readers in an aesthetic manner. Pramod Nayar in his Contemporary Literary and Cultural  Theory  States about ‘ symbolic codes’.  “ It extends beyond the immediate icon orstereotype to refer to something larger” (24).

In Frost’s poem; woods, grasses, birches, apples etc. become symbolswhich denotes human psyche, life, death, dilemmas and doubts. Symbolism in After Apple- Picking                        The poem is drowsing intone.  Poet brings the attention towardsa daily life activity which is common in any rural life of America; i. e.” apple-picking”.  The poet is swayingwith the weight of “ sleep”. Thus the “ drowsy” tone implies the evening Time ofman.

He is “ over-tired”.  Life may makes him so.  Maybe the death of man or poet’s awareness ofdeath which is very nearby, is repeated in poem with symbols of “ winter” also.  “ Essence of winter sleep is on thenight.

“(Line 7)  Besides, “ Apple-Picking” is maybe the symbol of life’s hardships and its rewards as “ apples” or fruit ofthat he sawed in his life.  There smellsa self-satisfaction in the poet or the narrator. The following lines maybeimplies this:                        “ But I was well                        Upon my way to sleepbefore it fall” (Line 14-15)Butthe dilemma and doubt comes in this contentment also.  Because he also declares that                         “ And there is a barrel thatI didn’t fill                         Beside it, there may be two or three” (Line3-4)                       Biblical references:                   Thereare many metaphysical elements in this poem with reference to The Book of Genesis.  Adam and Eve stated their journey from theHeaven to earth after “ picking” the “ apple” of Tree of knowledge.

The poet sings that “ But I am done withapple-picking know” (Line 6).  The lifein this earth may be almost “ done” and he may want to start another journeythrough “ sleep” through a “ ladder” which is pointed “ towards heaven”. Symbolism in Birches                     Robert Frost isa poet; which always bring a man in his poems. Though he uses nature as asetting  he denied the title as a naturepoet.  He brought nature in his poems, toignite himself and readers about the philosophy of mother nature.

He brings the symbol of “ birches”, which is” Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning” (Line 6), to remind us about “ Truth” , life, death and to emphasis that ” Earth’s is the right  place to love” (Line 52).                          Frost sings that “ I liketo think some boy’s been been swinging them”, eventhough he know that “ Icestorms do that”.  He loves to see the” birches” which are “ trailing their leaves on the ground” as,” girls on hand and knees that throwtheir hair            Beforethem over their heads to dry in the sun.” oras a rural ” boy bend them”.  Certainevents or places may bring certain forgotten images to mind.  “ Truth” tells him that “ ice storms” make thembend. Thus knowledge takes away certain innocence and joy from life.

This is same as when we enjoyed moon and itslight but the knowledge of what exists in moon makes it less romantic.  Birches also brings nostalgia about his ownchildhood and thorns of life persuades him to go back to childhood memories.             “ It’s when I am weary ofconsiderations,            And life is too much like a pathlesswood” There, he comes to the significance of poetry. “ I’d like to get away from earth awaile                                                                             And then come back to it and begin over.” Ifpoetry is regarded as the “ birches” and “ swaying” as journey to “ toward heaven”.  This “ heaven” may besublimity in  realm of imagination.  Comparing the symbols in After Apple-Picking and Birches                         Symbols in both poemsreminding readers about life, death, Time, weariness of life and all.

Narrator in After Apple –Picking is “ over-tired” and narrator in Birches is “ weary ofconsiderations.”  Both poems also sharesa theme of metaphysical wold, in former through a pointed “ ladder” to  heaven and in latter through the swaying.  Both poem share background of nature and aromantic rural setting.  The focus pointof the former poem is “ apple picking” (life) which makes the poet “ over-tired” and pulls him to “ sleep” (death). In Birches the swaying in childhood and hislost joy  reminds of passage oftime.  Though Frost is a simple poet whoalways adheres nature, he is not a nature poet and moreover   philosophic in nature. Both poems sharessuch philosophies of Robert Frost as a realistic, naturalistic and regionalistpoet. Work Cited:  “ What Do BirchesSymbolize in the Birches Poem by Robert Frost?” Study.

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