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Abstract: This term paper analysis symbols in Robert Frost's After-Apple Picking and Birches. The paper also analyses the connection between nature and man in Frost's poetry, not to categorise him as a nature poet but to analyse the peculiarities of his symbols and their connection with man. Also the paper comparing both poems in terms of themes.

Robert Frost was born in California and was identified with New England. He moved to New England after the death of his father, and helped his mother by teaching in her own school. He had tried many fields like a teacher, farmer and later as a visiting professor in many universities including Harvard. His fortune changed from 1912 onwards, the time when he moved to England with his family. His first book, *A Boy's Will* (1913), got published there "with a phrase borrowed from Longfellow's poem *My Lost Youth*" (Thomas 97). After the publication and the wide reception of *North of Boston* both in America and England, he went back to America.

The success he enjoyed for the rest of his life as a poet, however came too late to cancel the bitterness left by his earlier struggles. Moreover, he endured personal tragedy: a son committed suicide and a daughter had a complete mental collapse. (Baym 727) He was a poet of simplicity. Simple themes, mostly related to life were presented in his poems. In the context of Frost's diction, the colloquial rhythms, the simplicity of his images and above all the folksy speaker- these are intended to make the poems look natural, unplanned. In the context of the modernist movement, however they can be seen as a thoughtful reply to high modernism's fondness for obscurity and difficulty. (Baym 727)

Elements of regionalism was there in his poems. Regional writers of American literature tried to bring more realism, and this was “resulted from the desire both to preserve a record of distinctive ways of life and to come to terms with the new world that seemed to be replacing these early and allegedly happier times” (Baym 12).

There were some “local colorists” dedicated to capturing its natural, social and linguistic features” (Baym 13) Nature is “symbolic of spirit” quoting Robert D. Richardson in ‘Analysis on Nature in Robert Frost’s Poetry’, Frost says that ““I am not a nature poet,” he once declared “There is almost always a person in my poems”” ( Yuanli 26). Human psyche in any natural elements becomes the focal point, rather than a mere “background”. It is also quoted that “some people called me poet of nature setting but I am not a poet for nature, there is also something else in my poems” (Yuanli 26). “Confusion and dilemma” are one of the common themes in his poems like in *The Road Not Taken* and in *Mending Wall*. He sings “And Sorry I could not travel 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 before Franklin. How many apples fell on Newton’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 life like a boy swaying on birches a poet (man) get inspired.

It plays a didactic or moral purpose. As quoting Robert Frost: It (a poem) begins in delight, it inclines to the impulse, it assumes direction with the first line laid down, it runs a course of lucky events, and ends in a clarification of life—not necessarily a great clarification, such as sects and 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 be some appreciation of any natural events or may begin with a nostalgic moment or village scenery. But whatever it is he will safely land on to some thoughts of wisdom. Symbolism in literature is a technique using for an indirect way of saying.

Symbols symbolise certain things and convey the 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 or stereotype to refer to something larger" (24).

In Frost's poem; woods, grasses, birches, apples etc. become symbols which denote human psyche, life, death, dilemmas and doubts. Symbolism in After Apple-Picking The poem is drowsing in tone. Poet brings the attention towards a daily life activity which is common in any rural life of America; i. e. "apple-picking". The poet is swaying with the weight of "sleep". Thus the "drowsy" tone implies the evening time of man.

He is "over-tired". Life may make him so. Maybe the death of man or poet's awareness of death which is very nearby, is repeated in poem with symbols of "winter" also. "Essence of winter sleep is on the night."

“(Line 7) Besides, “ Apple-Picking” is maybe the symbol of life’s hardships and its rewards as “ apples” or fruit of that he sawed in his life. There smells a self-satisfaction in the poet or the narrator. The following lines

maybe implies this:

“ But I was well

Upon my

way to sleep before it fall” (Line 14-15) But the dilemma and doubt comes in

this contentment also. Because he also declares that

“ And

there is a barrel that I didn’t fill

Beside it, there may be two or

three” (Line 3-4)

Biblical references:

There are many

metaphysical elements in this poem with reference to The Book of Genesis.

Adam and Eve started their journey from the Heaven to earth after “ picking” the “ apple” of Tree of knowledge.

The poet sings that “ But I am done with apple-picking now” (Line 6). The

life in this earth may be almost “ done” and he may want to start another

journey through “ sleep” through a “ ladder” which is pointed “ towards

heaven”. Symbolism in Birches

Robert Frost is a poet; which

always brings a man in his poems. Though he uses nature as a setting he

denied the title as a nature poet. He brought nature in his poems, to ignite

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 emphasize

that “ Earth’s is the right place to love” (Line 52).

Frost sings

that “ I like to think some boys have been swinging them”, even though he

knows that “ Ice storms do that”. He loves to see the “ birches” which are “

trailing their leaves on the ground” as, “ girls on hand and knees that

throw their hair

before them over their heads to dry in the sun.” or as a

rural " boy bend them". Certain events or places may bring certain forgotten images to mind. " Truth" tells him that " ice storms" make them bend. Thus knowledge takes away certain innocence and joy from life.

This is same as when we enjoyed moon and its light but the knowledge of what exists in moon makes it less romantic. Birches also brings nostalgia about his own childhood and thorns of life persuades him to go back to childhood memories. " It's when I am weary of considerations, And life is too much like a pathless wood" There, he comes to the significance of poetry. " I'd like to get away from earth  
 away and then come back  
 to it and begin over." If poetry is regarded as the " birches" and " swaying" as journey to " toward heaven". This " heaven" may be sublimity in realm of imagination. Comparing the symbols in After Apple-Picking and Birches Symbols in both poems reminding readers about life, death, Time, weariness of life and all.

Narrator in After Apple -Picking is " over-tired" and narrator in Birches is " weary of considerations." Both poems also share a theme of metaphysical world, in former through a pointed " ladder" to heaven and in latter through the swaying. Both poem share background of nature and a romantic rural setting. The focus point of 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 his lost joy reminds of passage of time. Though Frost is a simple poet who always adheres nature, he is not a nature poet and moreover philosophic in nature. Both poems share such philosophies of

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