Songs with Sense: Metaphor in the Poetry of Robert Frost

Ilkka Kuosmanen

1. Introduction: True Lies Make Poetry

> One of my wishes is that those dark trees,
> So old and firm they scarcely show the breeze,
> Were not, as 'twere, the merest mask of gloom,
> But stretched away unto the edge of doom.
>
> I should not be withheld but that some day
> Into their vastness I should steal away,
> Fearless of ever finding open land,
> Or highway where the slow wheel pours the sand.[1]

This is how Robert Frost begins his career as a published poet. Quoted here are the first two stanzas of Frost's poem titled "Into My Own". It was published as the opening poem in his first collection of poetry called *A Boy's Will.* As it was published in 1913, Robert Frost was a poet of 39 years of age, residing in England. However, most of the poetry in *A Boy's Will* Frost wrote during the first ten years of the 20th century while living in the solitude of a rural New England farm with his wife and four children.[2]

He did not know it yet, but there were about 350 other published poems to follow those first few lines. Nor did he know that he was to gain immense popularity and fame as the hallmark American nature poet, both in the eyes of his contemporaries and we who read him almost a hundred years later. Much has changed in the world since Frost set out to determine his poetic subject matter with those first stanzas, but still Robert Frost can be said to be the foremost of the New England poets of the 20th century.

The first few stanzas of "Into My Own" serve as a key, not only to his poems and their popularity but also to the main lines of thinking along which his work has been praised, scrutinized, interpreted and sometimes also criticized. In a country that was industrializing at a rapid pace at the beginning of the 20th century, Robert Frost's poems where the narrator returns time and again to the wilderness to discover things about himself seemed to strike a chord of forgotten harmony. Many of his poems received enthusiastic response from commoners and scholars alike. Although they lived in cities, a rural setting was for many of the urban folk the only worthwhile American Dream. Not

only was Frost's verse short, rarely spanning more than the length of a page, but he seemed to have a voice which echoed the language spoken at any street corner or wheat-field anywhere around the United States. It was the language of the people, about the people, for the people. Frost's poetry is the kind to be shared in the circle of family and friends, preferably around a warm fireplace on a cold winter's evening.

One of the names that often emerges in connection with Robert Frost is Walt Whitman, who can likewise be interpreted as a true poet of the American people. But as John Hollander notes, whereas in Whitman there is often the sense of the writer trying to be "everything and everywhere", Frost's poems are characterized by "privileged seclusion".[3] Frost's man stands alone and listens closely to his own tune, while Whitman's men and women were all trying to sing one harmonious song of America.

As far as subject matter is concerned, Frost can be seen as possessing many similarities with such household names of American literature as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau. All of the three write about nature in a style that is commonly categorized under the label of romantic nature poetry. Be that as it may, there are distinctions, which set Frost clearly in a category of his own. As Winters points out, Frost lacks Emerson's religious conviction in the pantheistic view of nature.[4] Instead of being a Bible for the man to learn from, Frost's handling of nature can be more accurately described as relative.[5] Nature for Frost is more an indifferent actor that the divine teacher. As compared to Thoreau, Frost is less of a scientist and more an artist.[6] He may describe an item very closely, but only if a minute description brings him closer to his artistic objective.

Of his contemporaries, Frost is most often compared to T. S. Eliot. Scholars seem to explain the differences between these two poets as regards their use of the language. As Frost himself remarked in an essay "The Constant Symbol", the language of poetry is essentially metaphorical and all poems are in a sense metaphors.[7] Gerber states in his

book that Frost writes on multiple levels of meaning, often employing metaphors and symbolism to achieve his goals.[8] However, this does not make Frost a symbolist *per se*, as most of the other major poets work in this way as well. Gerber has this to say: Eliot can be said to be a symbolist, because his language often leaps directly to the secondary level of meaning, while Frost weaves his lingual emblems into the surface fabric of his poems so neatly that the inattentive reader may omit the referents altogether and still derive enough pleasure in the texture of the surface alone to make the reading experience worth-while.[9] In deed, it seems that one of the biggest merits of Frost's verse is that instead of "stealing away into the vastness" it concentrates on the little things and ideas, describes the ways in which the "slow wheel pours the sand", for example, rather than stating the symbolical significance of the action described.

Therefore, Frost is not a symbolical poet in the strict definition of the term. There are multiple levels to his language, but his symbolism lies hidden behind factual observations of the details of ordinary life. Whereas it is customary for many writers to direct the reading process by bluntly pointing out their metaphors, Frost only delicately hints at his. Nonetheless, secondary meanings can be found, but the crossing of the barrier between the two levels of language is usually left for the reader's imagination.

I agree with Gerber that Frost should be considered essentially a non-symbolist, although his use of language certainly leaves all doors of interpretation wide open. Frost's poetry is just as suitable for a hasty exhilarating dip or a break from the toils of the day as it is for a deep wild dive into and beyond the limits of language and symbolism. As was the case with Shakespearean theater, Frost caters for all types of audience. In most of his poetry, there is the level of simple plot spoken outright, but there are also the hidden levels of meaning and intriguing innuendoes, which require a more comfortable seat and a view behind the scenes in order to be solved. With Frost one can never be quite sure whether the "dark trees that scarcely show the breeze but stretch away unto the edge of

doom" are in their grandiose stature simply trees or perhaps the metaphorical fingers of the literary establishment that are trying to pinch the budding enthusiasm of the young poet.

Gerber's somewhat unorthodox but astonishing remark in his book is that "poetry is the true lie"[10]. A poem should never be interpreted as the simple truth about any incident, although it certainly tries to imitate truth to a very great extent. While it may speak of the imaginative, it does so in the sincerest of language, forming extraordinary experiences from ordinary ones and vice versa. As for the project of philosophy, poetry has traditionally had an important role. Especially it the romantic period, poetry was often regarded as a means of achieving what philosophy oftentimes seemed unable to achieve, creating coherent experiences and plausible systems from seemingly incoherent fragments and human observations about the ways of the world.

In this study, I will try to examine what kind of systems and philosophies the poetry of Robert Frost yields to – in other words, how and to what end Robert Frost constructs his lies. Also, I will attempt to look behind the lie into some of the thoughts that went into its making. In other words, I will be studying Robert Frost and his use of language on several levels – the surface of the text and how the textual elements relate to each other as well as what lies deep beyond that surface, or how the elements of the text relate to their referents. My presupposition here is that the poet is in fact a "liar", whose job is not always to tell the truth as it is observed by the outside world, but to concentrate on describing the common experience in a manner that seems to give it enhanced ontological status. I will try to examine the ways in which Robert Frost makes his poems seem "more real" and acceptable than what the surrounding reality warrants. In other words, main interest will be on the attributes of Frost's poetry as an independent system of its own, not on how well it corresponds with some foreign entity outside the text.

Although many late 20th century approaches of literature count out the relevance of author entirely and concentrate solely on the text itself, it seems difficult to exclude Robert Frost as an author completely when it comes to explicating his verse. Perhaps this is partly due to the fact that although Frost considered explaining the "meanings" of his poems a pointless task,[11] he did not turn a deaf ear on the public interest altogether. Judging from his prose writings and lectures it becomes clear that not only did Frost consider himself to be a master of different poetic tongues, but he saw himself also as the master of common, everyday experience of the United States at the time.[12]

Likewise, it can be stated that Frost was never bashful in advertising himself and his ideas through his work. In fact, quite the opposite is true. As Gerber points out, Frost was quite fond of his role as the trusted elder statesman and the "farmer-sage" that could do no wrong, especially towards his later years in the 1950s.[13] To make the combination of literary intellect and common experience as appealing to as many people as possible, Frost chose to use language that stays close and true to the experience in his verse. His poetry was meant to decorate the popular experience in a way, which most Americans could embrace. For the American reading public, he became the sensitive poet-leader who observes the minuscule details in their lives, which they notice only after he has pointed them out.[14] Some critics have even ventured a claim that Frost was in fact trying to create a new form of consciousness for the American people to replace the old European one.[15]

Undoubtedly, Frost's life and career give credit to this claim. It seems equally true that in many ways, Frost was successful in bringing the realm of poetry closer to the hard realities of everyday life. The pinnacle of the new consciousness project came perhaps in January of 1961 when Frost delivered his verse to the deep consciousness of the American public by reciting his poem "The Gift Outright" in the inauguration ceremony of president John F. Kennedy.[16] Suggestive of Frost's social importance at the time is also

the fact that president Kennedy frequently used lines from Frost's verse to close his speeches.[17]

Thus when it comes to Frost's verse, in more ways that one the author is not "dead", but instead very much alive and present, kicking the reader to follow the path chosen by him. Of course it is possible to read Frost's work strictly for its aesthetic value with total disregard to the author. It is equally true that in most cases biographical tidbits about Frost's life are irrelevant and add nothing to our understanding of the poems. However, it is my conviction that to a certain extent some general awareness of Frost's theories about poetry is beneficial in explicating his own verse. Consequently, I will attempt a reading that does not uproot the work completely from its creator, but rather admits the author limited entry; I am not trying to explain any singular words or phrases by pointing directly back to Frost's biography, but I will include the occasional comment from the author as regards his more general attitude towards the world and the poet's place in it.

First as a framework for further analysis, I will examine the element of metaphor in language. I will introduce I. A. Richards' theory of the metaphor as being composed of the tenor and the vehicle. After examining the nature of metaphor from the early analytical perspective of Richards, I will introduce several other theorists, who have attempted to create alternative methods of pinpointing exactly how metaphor functions and to what effect. Theories of Geoffrey Leech, Israel Scheffler, George Lakoff and Mark Turner will be examined in light of examples from Frost's verse. The specificity of metaphor will be further explicated by comparing it to other types of signs, namely the symbol and the icon. After this, I will be discussing some of the ways in which critics of poetry in general and Frost critics in particular have approached the topic of their investigation and the functions that Frost himself thought that poetry should serve.

By interpreting Frost's poetry within this theoretical framework, I wish to narrow the scope of investigation to deal with the matters that I think are essential in understanding the quintessential attributes of Frost's language. As regards the type of poems examined, most attention will be given to Frost's poems that adhere to some formal element, for example the poems employing the iambic pentameter. I will maintain that Frost masters the complex interrelationship of strict form and creative content brilliantly in most cases: particularities of sound, imagery and sense are intertwined seemingly effortlessly in a way, which leads the reader from the particularity of language to the universality of the experience. In this regard, Frost is examined as a poet who practices *concrete universal* language; the regulations set by the mechanism of form are skillfully disguised under elements which seem natural to the reader. This seems to give the poem the status of the *presentational symbol*, in that it no longer refers to any element outside language but rather presents and evokes experiences from itself.

Further, I will analyze several of Frost's metaphors that have to do with forming a system of epistemology within his poems. I will establish proof to the claim that the poetic metaphor is perhaps the most important tool in forming a concretive system of epistemology, which poetry must accomplish in order to be convincible, "true lie". Here Frost's metaphors that deal with physical labor, dreaming and knowing are of importance. Some thoughts will be adopted from René Descartes' theory of cause and effect, when it comes to the corporeal beings of the actual world and their representations as ideas in the mind. Ultimately, I will establish evidence to the claim that the characters in Frost's verse often function in a manner that is equivalent to the poetic practice of their creator. Seen in this light, Frost's verse becomes a testament of his poetic vision that has long since outlived its creator.

2. Introduction to Language: The Metaphor

For a number of thinkers within the fields of philosophy and language, the impossibility of giving a satisfactory definition of language lies in the fact that all natural languages are referential by nature; their existence relies heavily on the existence of some other entity – real or imagined. Therefore also all our theoretical language is referential; the value of each utterance is judged in a framework of meaning, where erring is not only human but also very likely. To make things even more difficult, the mind is not a neutral agent operating independently, but tends to lay a heavy connotative load on top of the denotative value of any given word. Therefore, dictionary definitions provide only a shabby common ground for building harmony. Dictionaries give us a slight hint as to how this or that term is usually applied in relating to the beings of the world. The rest is ambiguous and open for constant debate and misinterpretation.

But it is also owing to this ambiguity and confusion and the strange impulses of the brain that we have fictional literature and things such as poems, which commonly use resemblances and ambiguities as a way of stimulating the brain into believing things that are not there. From such convincing make-believe rises the metaphor, which can in fact be regarded one the defining characteristics of language.[18] As Hawkes argues, the development of any given language has a great deal to do with the functioning of the metaphor, because "metaphor is located at the heart of language and indeed defines and refines it, and thus man himself."[19] Lakoff and Johnson are a bit more specific in concluding that most fundamental concepts of understanding are organized in terms of one or more metaphors that imply space or direction, such as "Happy is up", "Good is up", "Sad is down", "Happy is wide", and "Sad is narrow."[20] According to Lakoff and Johnson, the fundamental spatialization metaphors form also the cornerstones of our

cultural values.[21] For example, the cultural statements "more is better" or "future will be better" are coherent with metaphor "Good is up", whereas "less is better" is not.[22]

Metaphor, as well as poetry, is founded on the basis of ambiguity. Both deal with institutionalizing the specific and particular experiences into words, which have enough ambiguity so that they can be taken to mean something besides their immediate referent, but also pertain enough of the original denotative value of the words in order to be understood by a multitude of readers. Therefore, it is reasonable to begin any study of poetry by concentrating first on the single most important feature of poetical language: the metaphor.

2.1 The Tenor and the Vehicle

Although the concept of metaphor may seem self-explanatory, it carries with it several points worth considering. In his book, *The Philosophy of the Rhetoric*, I. A. Richards begins his discussion of the metaphor by quoting Aristotle:

> The greatest thing by far is to have a command of metaphor. This alone cannot be imparted to another: it is the mark of genius, for to make good metaphors implies an eye for resemblances.[23]

The fundamental issue here is *resemblance*, for without our capability of seeing resemblances in separate entities, there would be no metaphors, and quite possibly, no language at all; after all, onomatopoeia was the first, rough form of metaphor, which involves imitation and giving the properties of one thing to another. In describing the sound that a fly makes, for example, we try to create a word that resembles the actual sound as closely as possible – hence the word *buzz*. As such, it no longer carries any significant metaphorical undertones, but if we were to use the same word to describe the effects of alcohol (e.g. *beer-buzz*), the term would gain back some of its original metaphoricity, because it is being used out of its usual or conventional context.

Going back to Richards' definition, here are "two thoughts of different things [the sound that the fly makes and the feeling that some alcoholic beverages may cause] active together and supported by a single word, or phrase, whose meaning is a resultant of their interaction."[24] Although flies and alcohol have virtually nothing in common, through convention and preset ways of thinking we are able to make the connection between the audible properties of the fly and the physical effects of alcohol.

Our everyday lives are full of such comparisons and imitations, but most of the terms have lost their original metaphoric potential or they go unnoticed. The phrase *time runs*, for example, is no longer seen as tremendously metaphorical although it entails connecting two ideas of clearly different spheres: the abstract concept of time and the concrete physical act of running. Through time, the phrase has lost most of its original metaphorical value and might now be considered more literal. The same is true of the term *leg* when it appears in the construct *leg of a table*. In Richards' words, *leg* in this context is metaphorically "dead"[25] word, because we no longer see it as a transmitter between different contexts. As Hawkes notes, the word fades into the background of standard language.[26] This is not to say that standard language does not have any metaphorical value. On the contrary, it is the poet's job to reactivate words that have become metaphorically dead.[27]

What Richards does not point out is that very often this shift is made in the opposite direction as well. Terms and phrases tend to lose much of their original literal value and become more metaphorical if they are used constantly out of their literal context. Sometimes this change occurs naturally; the object that the term refers to becomes obsolete, but the term lives on and takes on a more metaphorical meaning. Thus the term *witch-hunt*, for instance, is still often used in reference to an unjustified mental or physical pursuing of innocent individuals by a larger group of people. Many people may

not even be aware of the fact that the term's origins are much more sinister and based on real events, where the chase would not end until the presumed culprit was dead.

On the other hand, sometimes it is the case that there is no first order term or literal alternative to the figurative term at all. In such case, we are discussing a *catachresis*: the figurative term refers to something for which there is no prior grammatical term. The example above, *leg of a table*, is in fact a catachresis, or as Jacques Derrida says, a "forced metaphor"[28] in that there is no other way of expressing the same thought, except perhaps through a lengthy detour or a clumsy explication. According to Derrida, the metaphor-catachreses are the verbs and nouns, which carry the heaviest philosophical burden, for example terms such as light, blindness, to do, to be, to take or to understand.[29] Ultimately then, most metaphors of catachresis seem to be reducible to a certain present concept that the figurative term presupposes; it is a given concept, whose origin cannot be retraced or tracked down.[30] As such, catachreses could perhaps be classified one sub-class of the dead metaphor.

In order to have better tools of dealing with metaphors, Richards introduces two technical terms of language that have become almost commonplace in the study of literature: the *tenor* and the *vehicle*. These two together form the metaphor.[31] Although the definition of these terms is not unproblematic, it would seem clear that Richards uses the tenor to describe the underlying idea or the referent behind the expression, whereas the vehicle is the image itself. In other terms, tenor represents the idea and vehicle its reflection in language. These two sides interact, so that we can describe or qualify the tenor by modifying the vehicle.[32] A *rose* as a vehicle, for example, is essentially different from a *black rose*. Adding the word *black* to the expression changes the quality of the tenor radically. Whereas a *rose* by itself is usually used as a symbol of harmonious beauty, the latter phrase carries for most people heavier undertones of death or despair.

Moving from the vehicle to the tenor forces our mind to make a connection between the literal and the metaphorical levels of language.[33] Normally this is achieved by employing some form of resemblance between the tenor and the vehicle, but as Richards notes, this is not always the case. In fact, Aristotle's classical definition of the metaphor makes room for three other types of metaphorization besides the cases where the transport of meaning is achieved through a form of analogy. These are the meaning transports from *genus to species*, *species to genus*, and *species to species*.[34] In the first case, the genus stands for the species; a more general expression replaces the more specific term. For example, in *He goes to Sweden* the word *goes* replaces its species *travels*. In the second case, the specific member of some genus replaces the genus itself, for example in *I've waited a million years* the *million years* is a specific instance of the genus *very long time*. In the third instance, the transport happens between species of a certain genus, which are at the same level of generality: *carry a burden* and *bear a cross* are two species of an operation which entails transporting something heavy. Both expressions have the same metaphoric value and are thus interchangeable without changing the signified idea.

Aristotle's classification of the four types of metaphor gives credit to Saussure's claim, which Derrida presents earlier on in his book. Saussure notes that all systems of value, including the metaphoric value of an expression, is shaped by a paradoxical principle; it must always contain within itself an element of dissimilarity that can be exchanged for an idea, as well as an element of similarity by which it can be compared with something of the same nature.[35] Thus, a value of any given expression is fixed by the concurrence of everything else that exists in its immediate environment. Thus for example, in order to determine the value of a twenty euro note, one needs to know what quantity of some different thing (for example cartons of milk) it can purchase and compare it with a similar value of the same system, e.g. the five euro note. Similarly, we

might compare the phrases *bear a cross* or *carry something heavy* in different contexts to determine their metaphorical value.

According to Richards, disparity is another possible solution of meaning transfer in metaphorization, and in some cases, a metaphor may work well although the reader might be quite unable to say exactly how the connection was established.[36] The further the vehicle is from the tenor, the greater is the possible force of the utterance:

> As the two things put together are more remote, the tension created is, of course, greater. That tension is the spring of the bow, the source of the energy of the shot, but we ought not to mistake the strength of the bow for the excellence of the shooting; or the strain for the aim. And bafflement is an experience of which we soon tire, and rightly.[37]

This is the foundation on which Richards builds his whole theory of the value of poetry. While I find this metaphor on the metaphor witty and very helpful, I do not agree with it completely. Firstly, it is clear that *excellence* is a term full of conflict that seems to presuppose a fixed mind-set and shared cultural heritage. What Richards deems worthless or inoperable literature may for some other fraction of the world population be the only thing worth reading. Secondly, I think that there is more mystery to the creation of poetry than what Richards seems to allow for in his straightforward view of the poem as a linear creative process that originates in the mind of the writer and ends up in the hands of the reader.

In any case, it seems clear that mimesis of some sort or its denial is the precondition for the existence of metaphor. Besides presenting the definition formulated by Aristotle, Jacques Derrida quotes another worthy definition of the metaphor from Pierre Fontanier in his book. Fontanier defines the metaphor as a trope of resemblance, which presents an idea under a sign of another idea that is either better known or more striking and has no tie besides conformity or analogy to the first idea.[38] Admittedly, much of the appeal of good poetry lies exactly in the fact that it manages to say something in a "striking" manner about something else, stray successfully from the literal value of the

sign itself. Although the phrases *bear a cross* and *carry something heavy* are both expressions which refer to the same idea, the former is undoubtedly more striking and therefore also more potential when considering its metaphorical worth.

In his discussion of the topic, Derrida recognizes the human desire to stray from the original or first idea of the sign. As he puts it, metaphor opens the door for the "wandering of the semantic", because in metaphor, the sense of the noun is carried away from the sign itself.[39] Yet at the same time, because the capacity of seeing resemblances belongs to logos, metaphor is also tied to the possibility of meaning and truth in discourse;[40] metaphor is one of the most important, serious and philosophical means of gathering knowledge about the world.[41]

Although metaphoric capacity is a natural gift, nature does not grant it in equal proportions to all of us. As was already noted above in the quote from Aristotle, the capacity of making good metaphors is a mark of genius. At its best, metaphor manages to unveil the proper qualities of things[42], but by the same token, it is quite possible to construct bad metaphors that provide falsified knowledge about the world, "miss the true"[43].

2.1.1 Deviation as Foregrounding

As was already mentioned briefly in the discussion above, it is one of the greatest challenges of a poet to create new metaphors from the stock of words which are deemed to be part of the "standard" language. In fact, using only well-established metaphors that have been previously created by another author is probably one of the surest ways of committing a literary suicide for any aspiring author. It is only with extreme caution that writers can make use of word such as a *rose*, for example, since it is nearly worn-out as far as its metaphorical power is concerned. *Rose* is so obviously a word that occupies the

foreground in poetic language that a reader is likely to yawn when this vehicle is used once again to point to the tenors of peaceful harmony or unspoiled beauty.

The creation of new metaphors usually calls for the activation of inert structures of language. In poetic language, this activation happens often by a form of deviant linguistic behavior – a word may be used completely out of its accepted or usual context, for example. This deviation results in the word being brought back to the foreground. In his worthy observation, Hawkes notes that this method of foregrounding breaks the rule of collocability.[44] The words *leg* and *table* have a fairly high probability of coexistence, for example, whereas the words *finger* and *table*, for instance, are not nearly as likely to occur together. Hawkes remarks that in principle, the higher the degree of collocability of any two words, the more likely it is that the reader considers them as part of the background and thus fails to understand their metaphorical value. Likewise, the more unusual the placing of words together is, the more this pushes the words into the foreground of language.[45]

If it is taken to its extreme the purposeful breaking of the rule of collocability and probability of coexistence approaches the project of surrealism. Connecting two objects of very remote nature and trying to make them function together as a metaphor is a project that can work, but also one which is very likely to fail. Of course it is questionable, whether such surreal literary visions should be called metaphors at all, because they do not seem to function in the same way that the traditional metaphor does. Richards mentions the surreal school of poetry briefly in *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* in reference to Andre Breton and what Richards calls the "French Super-Realists".[46] From his short discussion of the topic it becomes clear that Richards is not very sympathetic or appreciative towards the project of surrealism. In his opinion, the surreal use of language causes "confused reverberation and strain"[47] in the mind of the reader. Going back to

Richards' own metaphor on the use of metaphor, too much strain on the string of the bow causes the arrow to miss its mark.

2.1.2 The Surreal Extreme

While I do agree with Richards that the surreal elements do not necessarily add to the power of language as concerns the possibilities of metaphor, I still find surreality within poetry a worthwhile example in the practice of foregrounding. Not only does the surreal "metaphor" pick words into the foreground in an astonishing way, but it accentuates the ambiguous side of the word over its denotative value. A good example of an author who is fond of deviating words to their extreme is the poet Gregory Corso, who was a member of the so-called Beatnik movement in literature of the 1950s in the United States. The radical that he was, Corso probably forms the closest thing to a polar opposite that can be imagined in relation with Robert Frost. Many of his poems, scattered with words that have no business in appearing together, seem to be based on the sole idea of deviation. An extreme discrimination of the rule of collocation occurs for example in the poem "Don't Shoot the Warthog", which begins by stating this seemingly simple fact: "A child came to me / swinging an ocean on a stick".[48] The reader can only guess at reasons why the words *swinging, ocean* and *stick* appear together in a sentence. As such, the phrase has virtually no denotative value at all, but it is still capable of tying the mind of the reader into a knot while creating an impression of calmness or serenity.

Another method of surrealistic foregrounding is grammatical in nature. Here we are dealing with granting a word categorical properties which its referent clearly does not possess, for example giving an inactive agent attributes of an active one. This becomes evident in Corso's poem "Poets Hitchhiking on the Highway", for instance. Two lines representative of this are, "I told him the sky chases the sun" and "So I said: but the ocean chases the fish".[49] Here foregrounding happens, although the rule of collocation is

clearly not broken; *sky* and *sun* are words which have a very high degree of coexistence, just as *ocean* and *fish* are very likely to be found linked to each other. Deviation is in the manner in which this linking occurs. The poet gives a passive word that is normally found linked to an intransitive verb a transitive status. Clearly in the background of language would be an ocean that rages or swells, for example – both are verbs that require no direct object complement.

Although surrealistic use of language can be merited as being a kind of a language laboratory where all sorts of radical experiments become possible, it is only seldom that it assists in understanding conventional or traditional poetry, of which Frost could be said to be a prime example. The fact that reading surrealistic poetry is often an exhausting task, is perhaps due to the fact that surreal poems are in constant battle with their own nature. The lines and stanzas seem to have no common currency or conception of truth. There is no coherence between the fragments, and as a result, no solid system is formed.

2.2 The Ground of Comparison

As was shown above, it seems that the use of the transitive verb in a manner that diverges from the norm is quite a powerful tool of foregrounding. But as Christine Brooke-Rose points out in *A Grammar of Metaphor*, this is not always the case. She states that in fact the copula constructions – *to be*, or its more timid variants *to seem* and *to become* – give the text a strong sense of authority and seem to be used quite commonly among the "great" writers in the creation of the noun metaphor.[50] What Brooke-Rose is saying is basically that for the purposes of powerful metaphor, it is better to say *A girl is a rose* than it is to say *A girl resembles a rose*, for example. Of course the validity of such a claim remains shadowed by a doubt, just as it can be questioned whether such a statement adds anything to our understanding of the metaphor.

Leaving aside the question of greatness, I think the value of Brooke-Rose's analysis of the metaphor lies elsewhere. She makes a point worth closer attention when it comes to the classification of metaphors. One of the classes that she establishes for categorizing noun metaphors is called *the genitive link.*[51] This means that the vehicle is linked to a third term by the genitive *of* construction and it is from this construction that we induce the tenor. Therefore, A is part of, or belongs to C, and from this relationship we can infer B.[52] As an example of this kind of usage, we might mention the phrase *the temple of soul* as a metaphor of human consciousness.

The value of Brooke-Rose's seemingly simple remark lies in the fact that it shifts the focus of observation from the decidedly dualistic stance of tenor and vehicle continuum to make room for a third agent. This approach is typical of the later analyses of the metaphor, in which the metaphoric process is no longer perceived as proceeding straightforwardly from the vehicle to the tenor. It seems to be a widely accepted feature of the transference of meaning in metaphor that the tenor is said to be like the vehicle in some respect, but not in all respects.

Thus as Geoffrey Leech notes, the functioning of any metaphor could be represented with this simple formula: X is like Y in respect of Z, where X is the tenor, Y the vehicle and Z the ground of comparison. [53] Obviously, it is only in the explicit cases of the simile when this formula can be directly applied to the level of text. Tenor, vehicle and the ground of comparison are all present in this example: *He is as hairy as a monkey,* in other words, he is like a monkey, when it comes to the amount of body hair. In most cases, however, the ground of comparison is not spelled out in words. In the example above, where human consciousness was said to be *the temple of my soul,* the task of finding the ground of comparison is left for the reader. Although most people undoubtedly make the connection on the ground of comparing the size and character of the temple as a building to the faculty of human cognition, there is nothing in the textual elements of the

metaphor that would resist a reading where the comparison is made according to the type of process that building a temple is: it takes a long time to build a temple, just as it takes a long time to decipher the knowledge of one's self. In this sense, it could be argued that metaphors may become to mean something that is quite different from the purpose that their creator originally meant.

Of course, Brooke-Rose and Leech are by no means the only theorists who have noted that the metaphorical process always involves projecting some, but never all, aspects of the literal vehicle onto the domain of the tenor. In fact, it would be difficult to find a theorist who does not make this statement at some point in his/her analysis of the matter. Marcus B. Hester calls this aspect of the metaphorical language a process of *seeing* some aspect of the vehicle *as* something else in the tenor.[54] Since most metaphors are not explained on the level of text, the process often requires understanding the relevant, implicit sense of comparison, which relies on inner experience, although in some cases, namely the simile constructions of *like* and *as*, the sense of the metaphorical comparison is pointed out explicitly.[55]

Similarly, Israel Scheffler notes that the interpretation of the metaphor requires constant learning and ingenuity in trying to understand the metaphorical in terms of the literal.[56] Seeing the metaphorical tenor in terms of the literal vehicle is an on-going project that can never be mastered completely. Metaphors communicate new and unconventional meanings inherent in the tenor through the means of "old language" of the vehicle, which the interpreter must somehow derive from the irregularities of the text.[57]

Scheffler introduces six different approaches to metaphor, each of which tries to explain exactly how the transference of meaning happens. In other words, all approaches are attempting to establish some ground rules, to which the process of comparison and interpretation that is inherent in metaphor would adhere. While all the approaches emphasize the primacy of one mental faculty over the others, none attempts to be all-

inclusive: every approach also admits the possibility of meaning transfer that happens because of some other mental faculty is activated.

2.2.1 Grounding Approaches

According to the *intuitionistic* approach of determining the ground of comparison, the meaning of the metaphor cannot be derived from any analysis of the literal constituents of the metaphor. Rather, seeing and understanding the tenor in terms of the vehicle requires an act of intuition, that "bridges the gulf between the past literal applications of constituents and the emergent metaphorical application of the whole".[58] Noteworthy is that according to intuitionism, the emerging new application is independent and in most cases does not rely on dictionary definitions of symbols to be understood. Thus, the metaphor overrides symbolical value of words, causing them to lose their familiar meaning and giving birth to a new kind of knowledge, which seems to possess more powers of expression than does the sum total of the symbols involved in the process.[59] Consequently, metaphorical meaning is untranslatable and inexplicable in terms of literal meanings.[60]

The *emotive* approach accentuates the fact that metaphors are typically capable of arousing and demonstrating feelings, rather than conveying information.[61] According to the extremists of this approach, the metaphors carry no cognitive content at all and have therefore only affective value, as opposed to the referential value typical of symbols.[62] If the intuitionistic approach was concerned with how the metaphor works, the emotive approach seems to focus on what the effects of the metaphorical process are. Hence as Scheffler notes, if we compare phrases such as a *sharp knife* and a *sharp wind* we soon come to notice that although they appear rather similar, these word combinations have essentially different ways of functioning. In the first adjective noun compound, which is symbolical rather than metaphorical, the validity and degree of the adjective can be

measured empirically, at least to some extent, where as in a *sharp wind* the adjective *sharp* seems to import more emotive content to the combination; in itself the word combination is not meaningful, which makes room for the emotive aspect of the metaphor.[63] In other words, the word *sharp* has no predetermined value in the compound *sharp wind*, it is essentially self-referential, or determined by the context, in which it is used.

The *intensional* approach is similar to the emotive in that it too believes that the metaphor blocks normal reading and causes the reader's mind to concentrate on the peripheral properties, or connotations, of any given phrase, rather than central properties or denotations, which is the case in "normal" reading.[64] However, the intensionalists hold that the metaphorical effect is cognitive, rather than emotive; metaphors are not just a matter of arousing feelings, but also of conveying meanings. Depending on the circumstances, a word or a phrase can have different purposes, but the connoted properties tend to be inactive unless they are released by the obstruction of the conventional reading.[65]

The *formulaic* approach contends that there is some formula, which – given that we have sufficient information available about the literal constituents – specifies the metaphorical meaning of any expression in literal terms.[66] The formulaic approach meets opposition, at least from the followers of the intuitionistic approach, in that the supposition of a formula seems to eradicate the relevance of human intelligence in understanding metaphors almost completely. The supporters of the formulaic approach cite the remark that most metaphorical interpretations can be arrived at by employing information about the past literal applications and principles of comparison to new circumstances. If old principles fail in yielding new meanings, then the understanding of the metaphor rests on either resemblance, similarity or iconicity.[67] Thus as Scheffler notes, the formulaic approach treats every metaphor essentially as a simile, which is either implicit or explicit.[68]

I. A. Richards is perhaps the most well-known follower of the so-called *interactional* approach. The interaction theory unites with intuitionism in opposing the formulaic approach, stating that it would be erroneous to suppose that metaphorical interpretation can be reduced to a certain formula. Therefore, at the basis of the interactionist theory is Richards' statement of the metaphorical understanding as consisting of "two thoughts of different things active together [...] whose meaning is a resultant of their interaction".[69] In effect then, the metaphor acts as a sort of a filter between the two domains, that of the tenor and that of the vehicle, and it is only through this filter that the whole system gains its significance.

The interactional approach has encountered resistance from a number of theorists. For example Lakoff and Turner note that if we are to assume that the interaction theory really works, then it should work in both ways.[70] For instance, let us examine the common conception of passing of time resembling the act of running in many respects; it is not uncommon to say that *time runs* - just as there are slower and faster runners, the time seems to pass slowly or rapidly. It is not difficult to comprehend the metaphoricity of the phrase *time runs*, but if all the implications of the interaction theory were true, then it should be equally easy for us to imagine the act of running in terms of the passing of time. The same is true of the phrase *man is a wolf*. We are used to thinking of humans being given characteristics of animals, but a phrase *wolf is a man* would seem peculiar indeed. As Scheffler says, the wolf-metaphor "organizes our view of man"[71], while the same is not true in the opposite case.

The last theory of metaphor that Scheffler introduces in his book is called the *contextual* approach. The focus of this approach verges upon the interaction theory in that both view-points have a strong emphasis on the contextual variation. According to Nelson Goodman, one of the supporters of the contextual approach, the metaphorical process basically involves ascribing new characteristics to an old word; in other words,

metaphoricity projects new labels on known objects, at the same time defying the prior denial of giving an object that label.[72] Ever present in such contextualization is resistance, because customarily the labels have different applications, ranging from the literal to the metaphorical.[73] Thus far, the definition of metaphor as provided by the contextual approach seems to come close to the definition of the term ambiguity. Goodman answers to this accusation, however, by stating that a label never functions in isolation but rather belongs to a family or a *schema*, which guides the interpretation of the metaphor, whereas ambiguous words tend to be independent.[74]

2.2.2 Evaluation of the Approaches

Consequently, we have six different approaches or theories to the question of how the grounding of the metaphor comes about, i.e. on what basis are we to believe that a certain literal vehicle qualifies, questions, enhances or elaborates the conceptions of the tenor. Although some theories are in opposition when compared to the others, we have seen that in many cases these theories overlap with one another. Hence, it would seem foolish to claim that one approach is correct and the other ones mistaken. This is true even more so, because no theory is capable of giving a concretive method of analyzing the reasons of why the correctness of that approach is proved beyond doubt. It seems that the transference of meaning in metaphor is such a multifaceted process that sufficient evidence can be discovered for rendering any of the approaches credible. Reasonable doubt is called for when weighing the validity of any approach over the others.

For the purposes of this study, it will suffice to say that the feasibility of any approach will be considered, depending on the quality of the metaphor in question, since any one of the approaches may enhance our understanding of the metaphor and seldom does one approach completely discard the possibility of the others. As far as the metaphors of Robert Frost are concerned, it seems that in most cases it is a combination

of rational intuition, suitable context, appropriate interaction, presence of emotion and supposed intention that results in creating the formula for a successful metaphor.

As was already noted in the introductory chapter of this study, it is a typical feature of Frost's poetry that there are no explicit metaphors at all, but rather a great deal of metaphorical implications that all take place at the surface level of the text, ordinary actions of ordinary people that seem to point to unseen structures beyond the reaches of ordinary prose. In most cases, the foundations of this complex and fluctuating formula of metaphor are difficult to discover and even more difficult to explicate, but of course there are also clear instances of the use of metaphor in Robert Frost's poetry. For example the poem "The Road Not Taken" is commonly understood as consisting of metaphorical contemplations about the choices that one has to make in life. The question here remains on what grounds we understand the lines "Two roads diverged in a wood, and I – / I took the one less traveled by" (105) as consisting of a metaphor. In this case, the metaphor is so explicit that the intuitionistic theory seems plausible. The forum alone, a poem, seems to suggest that the speaker is describing an experience, rather than merely trying to find his[75] way through some New England forest.

The emotive approach is applicable as well, because the poem certainly demonstrates and arouses feelings, but the credibility of the formulaic theory seems shadowed by a doubt: is it enough to know the denotational value of the vehicles *two*, *road*, *diverge, wood* to construct their metaphorical tenor? Despite the fact that we have knowledge as to how these words function, the task of making the leap from the literal to the metaphorical level is still left for the faculty of intuition. As for interaction, it can only take place after the two levels have been established. It would then seem that the proper functioning of intuition is a prerequisite for both the formulaic and the interaction theories, whereas the emotive theory would work at least partially on the literal level as well. An interplay of intuition and understanding occurs; something must be added to the

vehicles from the understanding in order for them to be recognized and interpreted as metaphors. The result is a new kind of knowledge, as the intuitionistic approach held.

2.3 Epiphor and Diaphor

As was shown in the discussion of the different theories of metaphor as presented by Israel Scheffler, inherent in the assertion that the metaphorical process of transference involves more than two entities is also another shift of focus. Whereas early theorists such as I. A. Richards were trying to describe the nature of metaphor in terms of the units that it contains, the later theorists have been more concerned with the significance of metaphor in language and the functioning of the metaphorical process. In short, the study of metaphor is now more interested in the different modes of semantic transformation that occur in the process of metaphorical transference of meaning.

Here the introduction of two technical terms about the tendencies of metaphor is of assistance. Coined by Philip Wheelwright, the term *epiphor* is commonly used in reference to the metaphor's capability of widening the scope of human understanding by comparison and implication. As Marcus B. Hester states in his book, for Wheelwright the term *epiphor* means that metaphors are by nature contagious: in their semantic plenitude of implication they tend to implicate wider and wider contexts.[76] Thus the word *milk* in the metaphor *the milk of human kindness*, for example, may implicate another term such as *mother*, which in turn may carry with it the implication of terms *warmth* and *home*, which both may point to *security*. Through this chain of semantic implication the word *milk* carries with it the potentiality of implying the term *security*.

Diaphor, on the other hand, is a term which turns the attention inward when it comes to the nature of metaphor. It is employed to accentuate the concretive creation of new meanings through the metaphorical processes of juxtaposition and synthesis.[77] A worthy example of juxtaposition would be the phrase *a little long while* as a measure of

time. In its literal sense, it is used among some Aboriginal tribes of Australia as an actual measurement of time, but for any Anglo-American reader that is used to measuring time in seconds, minutes and hours, it represents a diaphorical case of metaphorical language. The two adjectives, *little* and *long* seem to point in completely opposite directions, one carrying with it the implication of smallness, another of greatness. The synthesis is a mind-boggler, because it pushes the terms *little* and *long* abruptly to the linguistic foreground, just as was the case with the image of the ocean swinging on a stick in the example above. There is no leap to the level of the tenor, but rather the phrase enforces the concrete nature of the presented object, *while*, whatever the length or size.

2.3.1 Elucidation and Analysis

Of course, the most powerful metaphors display a fusion of both the epiphorical and diaphorical tendencies[78], which makes them successful agents in the process of semantic transformation of meaning. It seems that the most influential images are very coherent, directed inwards, while at the same time they manage to imply a multitude of other terms and indicate a relationship between two lingual entities in a way that is surprising or unconventional yet at the same time acceptable to at least a fraction of the readers.

In this respect, *a little long while* cannot be said to be a tremendously successful metaphor. Although it is certainly diaphorical, it hardly instigates any chain on implication at all. The same seems to be true with metaphors that have strong surreal tendencies. As Lakoff and Turner point out, in the case of the surreal metaphor the poet is deliberately trying to break the conventional conception of image correspondence between the vehicle and the tenor.[79] Thus when we are presented with an image of an ocean that is actively chasing the fish living in it, for example, we are so occupied and puzzled by the sign itself, that our imagination seems reluctant to roam as freely as it might with other metaphors that are more conventional by nature. Indeed it seems that

diaphoricity is an element which renders the metaphor absolute solidity and stability, but it is also a feature that seems to collapse into itself. A decidedly diaphorical metaphor can hardly be said to be very dynamic in that it seems almost frozen to the level of self-referentiality.

The power of the surreal or unconventional metaphor seems to rely heavily on the connotative aspect of the word and would thus be a highly personalized experience – successful for some, meaningless for others, but in general, it is a form of deviation that borders on incomprehensibility. "Normal" metaphors habitually employ other features of language besides the direct interaction between the sign and its signified as well in pointing out metaphorical relationships, such as similarity of structure or form, for example. It could be claimed that the ordinary, conventional metaphor, where the two entities form an epiphorical whole is probably more likely to appeal to larger parts of the reading audience.

Alternative terms for epiphor and diaphor are presented by Douglas Berggren, whom Hester quotes to some extent in his book. In his studies, Berggren coins the dual tendencies of the metaphor *centrifugal* and *centripetal*, the former designating the plurisignative or epiphorical nature of metaphor, while the term centripetal is utilized in reference to the conjunctiveness of metaphors, where several metaphors may focus on the same phenomena.[80] In the ideal case, an appropriate tension should be formed between the two characteristics; if there is no tension, the metaphor may lose its life and be transformed into either a myth (as was the case with the term *witch-hunt*) or literal language (as was the case with the example *time runs*).[81]

However, the researchers of metaphor are seemingly reluctant in giving any concrete examples of strong uses of metaphor, which would successfully unite both the epiphorical or centrifugal and diaphorical or centripetal aspects. This is perhaps much owing to the fact that any such example would be highly dependent on time and place, as

each generation remakes its ideas of what is successful and fresh use of language in literature.

Bearing the aforementioned-mentioned two terms in mind, we may now attempt to dissect one of Frost's more enigmatic metaphor compounds, which appeared first in the collection *New Hampshire* in 1923. The poem in question is called "For Once, Then, Something". It presents us with a seemingly insignificant experience of the narrator peering down into a deep well. It stands out from the majority of poems in the collection in that it is not subjected to the restrictions of form that most of the other poems are: there is no distinctive rhyme pattern, neither a strict meter, which the narrator would follow. According to Berggren's terminology, there seems to be some justification for calling this poem an *isolated pictorial*, which involves an interrelationship of isolated pictures[82]; it is as if the narrator has not yet quite grasped the significance of his experience, but is trying to describe it unprepared, just as it happened. A mere fifteen lines in its entirety, both epiphorical and diaphorical tendencies of the metaphor are certainly activated:

> Others taunt me with having knelt at well-curbs
> Always wrong to the light, so never seeing
> Deeper down in the well than where the water
> Gives me back in a shining surface picture
> Me myself in the summer heaven, godlike,
> Looking out of a wreath of fern and cloud puffs.
> *Once*, when trying with chin against a well-curb,
> 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.
> One drop fell from a fern, and lo, a ripple
> Shook whatever it was lay there at bottom
> Blurred it, blotted it out. What was that whiteness?
> Truth? A pebble of quartz? For once, then something. (225)

Again, intuition seems to guide the understanding into believing that more happens here than what the denotations of words would have it. There is no strong emotive content leading to any specific emotion, if confusion is not counted as one; the emotional stance

of the narrator seems to be that of neutrality. At the level of the vehicle, the decisive force is that of the centripetal or diaphorical quality. After the initial introduction to the problem in lines one to six, the narration is not allowed to wander off into universe. Every line is determined to qualify the experience of peering into the well further, creating the effect of concretion.

With the last line it seems that the narrator considers the polar opposites of the universal/particular relationship of the metaphor himself – a question is raised, whether there was a tenor inherent in the pictorial at all, or whether the whole encounter was just a matter of the physical elements playing with the eye-sight in the water. In the conclusion, "For once, then, something", the diaphorical tendencies are emphasized even further. At the same time, the interpretative faculty of the mind is tied into a firm knot.

It seems that in his pictorial, Frost is playing with the liminal image that the surface of the water forms between the onto-epistemological reality of the physical world and the imagined domains beyond. As an image, the well possesses all the attributes that a pictorial about the metaphysical should possess: it is deep, nearly impossible to climb into, even more impossible to climb out of, and the truths that it holds are seemingly untouched by the effects of time. On some occasions, the water is crystal clear, but a mere drop of distraction is enough to hide the eternal ideas which are "more of the depths".

As such, the well is a most useful tool in hinting at the universality or the metaphysical elements that poetry should realize into a concrete form. The metaphysical level lies just beyond the surface of the text, yet it is the task of the reader to discover the tenors to the metaphors. Epiphorical elements can be excavated from the surface fabric of any poem, but in most cases, they are weaved hard into it by the diaphorical force of the symbols. For the artist, only a fleeting moment of intuition reveals that his/her art may conceptualize something of the depths. Whereas the reading process is mostly driven

forward by the centrifugal force, which prompts us to connect various vehicles with various tenors, it could be claimed that the mind of a poet is governed by the centripetal element or the inward focus, which is required in order to create artistic unity within a complex system of textual elements. Accordingly, as Wimsatt holds, the best poems are unified enough to be analyzed independently "as metaphors without expressed tenors, as symbols which speak for themselves."[83]

2.3.2 Metaphor versus Symbol

It is apparent, as Hester notes, that metaphor is highly dynamic in that it corresponds to the changes of the surrounding world. It makes the world come alive in literature,[84] but only for a short while at a time; there seems to be a "best-before label" to most metaphors, after which they are reduced to the ontological status of the ordinary symbol. Contrastive to the dynamic tendency of the metaphor is then the stability of the symbol, which Hester considers more fitting for the purposes of exact sciences, because they attempt to close the system of knowledge by reducing the world to the concreteness of a symbol.[85] A symbol either works or does not work, depending on how well it manages to fix the given referent to this or that term. It can be applied when it comes to the truths of the world that can be measured empirically.

Metaphor, on the other hand, is more suitable for the purposes of art, since it succeeds in saying something about the infinite aspects of the world as well. As such, it is a most welcome tool in poetry, because at best it manages to talk about the world in a way that is both specific and concrete but at the same time dynamic and general enough to leave room for alternative truths. Metaphor is never a choice of all or nothing, on or off, but rather always moving on the scale, where one end represents figurative use of language and the other one literal.

In other words, metaphor cannot be negated, whereas a symbol can. As René Descartes pointed out, the same is true respectively with infinite aspects of the world as opposed to the finite qualities.[86] Darkness, for example, is simply the absence of light, whereas the infinite ideas of God, nature or love cannot be arrived at by any such negation. The infinite qualities of the world exist only through the interrelationship of entities, such as is formed in the transformative process of creating a metaphor. To say something definite about the infinite reduces it to the finite quality of the symbol, whereas a good metaphor approaches infinity or insinuates it yet is never quite able to lay a firm grip on it.

Thus there would seem to be support to Hester's claim that metaphor is more suitable in expressing truths about the reality than is the symbol.[87] To put it in other words, if notes of a given piece of music are considered similar to symbols, then metaphor is the music that is born from the performance of that piece of music, a fluctuating image complete with nuances that is slightly altered by its every performance and performer. Still, the importance of symbols is not to be belittled – after all, one of the characteristics of a successful poem is that it is capable of functioning on its own as a symbolical system as well as a vehicle in the metaphor.

2.4 From the Particularity of Sensa to the Universality of Sense

At the center of Hester's understanding of poetic language is the belief that a poem does not convey exact meanings but rather experiences. Therefore, it carries with it both particular and universal tendencies at the same time. Hester states that poetic language does not refer anything to us, but rather presents us with an experience, which comes more from reading the poem[88] than from understanding the interrelationship between the signs involved in the poem's making and their relevant signifieds. W. K. Wimsatt formulates the same statement in other words: "A poem should not mean but be", and

continues, "Every real poem is a complex poem, and only in virtue of its complexity does it have artistic unity."[89]

This view conceives the poem as a *presentational symbol*, which in being a direct presentation of any individual object, can also conceptualize notions about the object which are absent.[90] Thus, if a poet was to write a poem about a bottle of shampoo, for example, the product of his art as a presentational symbol might have nothing what so ever to do with common notions linked to the concept of shampoo, such as washing one's hair, shower, cleanliness, or a flowing substance. In Hester's own expression, the shampoo bottle would be transformed into "an appearance of life", which is not life in the actual meaning of the term[91], but rather an artifact that resembles life as it is lived and experienced through the presentation of the poem. Thus, built into the presentational symbol theory is the claim that the subject matter of poetry, in this case the shampoo bottle, loses some of its practical or "normal" functionality when the transformation is made from the representational use of language to the presentational.

A slight modification from the presentational symbol theory is the point of view, which terms the nature of poetical language as *concrete universal*. Here more attention is given to the universal or general nature of poetic language rather than particular; poetry becomes concrete not by escaping from language but by immersing itself into it through an abundance of descriptive detail.[92] In other words, a poem must be capable of speaking of the universal concepts and indefinite aspects of reality through concrete terms and concepts. In doing so, the poetic language gains *iconic signification*; it becomes a symbol, which may point beyond itself, but is also an end in itself that has self reference.[93]

As an example of the concrete universal language Hester mentions the poetic metaphor, which in his terminology is essentially concrete, yet at the same time an abstraction.[94] This leads to metaphysics and the coalescence of the objective and the subjective capacities of language; the concrete universal view suggests that poetic

language ventures beyond the limitations of the physical world, focuses on the "deep" instead of the "surface" truths, and is in reference to reality rather than the natural world.[95] This statement corresponds well with the diaphorical and epiphor tendencies, which were examined in 2.3. As to its particularity and iconic significance, the poem must have diaphorical qualities, turn inwards, whereas universality demands that the meanings are epiphoric, spreading ever wider. The combination of the two is the poetic metaphor, the concrete universal.

The fact that the poem has both particular and universal propensities is further supported by the third theory that Hester introduces, namely that the poem is a fusion of sense and sensa, which has language as its medium.[96] Since poetic language represents a combination of both sense and sensa – meaning, sound and imagery, that is – it can never be fully translated into other languages. Even a successful translation can only translate the sense, while the qualities of sensa are inevitably altered in the process of translation.

The quality of sense emphasizes universality, whereas the quality of sensa centers on the particularity of the experience that is formulated in language,[97] a medium shared by both the reader and the writer. As Hester quotes Paul Valéry, this medium is bound from one side by algebra and from the other side music, and it is the task of all poets to tread the narrow ridge between music and algebra.[98] Valéry creates quite a fitting metaphor exemplifying the difference between prose and poetry by comparing them respectively to the difference between walking and dancing: a poem is like a dance in that it is a system of actions which must please in itself, while prose is like walking in that it always has a definite aim.[99] Prose is always going somewhere. Hence, it is often the case that the importance of the final destination overrides the significance of the method of getting there.

This holds true with Hester's postulation about the poem as a *read* object; judgments of value are suspended in favor of the stream of experience, where the

distinction between what is real and what is imagined is no longer valid or necessary. This is what is termed by Hester and Edmund Husserl as *epoche reading*: the natural world, including the conception of the self, is bracketed in favor of an aesthetic stance of a poem, which allows us to accept all data streaming in either from the physical world or our imagination on an equal footing.[100] The fact that there are no disturbances of ethical considerations imposed by the outside world opens the poem to its own intention. Accordingly, if a poem is unsuccessful as a read object or an epoche, it is because it fails to realize its own essence.[101]

For Hester, it is particularly the use of metaphor that forces the reader's mind from the natural stance to the state of epoche, since metaphorical imagery as such does not correspond with the natural world, nor refer to it.[102] It is much owing to this feature of disparity between language and reality that language gains a heavier stature of its own - the words and phrases "thicken"[103] into forming iconic language.

Lakoff and Johnson seem to verge upon the epoche reading theory in defining their *experiental gestalts*, which are ways of organizing partial experiences into structured wholes.[104] In the process of metaphor, the gestalt of one concept is modified further by the selected elements of another gestalt; for example, in the metaphor "Argument is war" the gestalt of conversation is structured further by the multidimensional gestalt of war.[105] Understanding the gestalt of one concept seems to require that we omit its individual elements: if we think of the killing that war consists, it becomes next to impossible to apply the gestalt of war to the gestalt of conversation. Thus, we have to see the essence of the gestalt instead of its contributing elements, which are temporarily bracketed. In this regard, it seems that the epoche reading theory is a presupposition for the functioning of the experiental gestalts.

3. Poetic Metaphor as a Device of Communication

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson base their analysis of the metaphor on the central finding that not only is our language structured by metaphor, but metaphorical concepts precede our whole system of understanding. As the name of their book *Metaphors We Live By* suggests, we "live by" metaphorical concepts; they form the foundation of many of human thought processes.[106] Thus metaphors are effective devices of communication, but it is only seldom that their metaphorical nature is revealed. In the case of the poetic metaphor, it is the act of foregrounding that normally reveals the use of metaphor – a word or a phrase is used out of its conventional context.

But as Lakoff and Johnson remind us, much due to the systematicity embedded in metaphors they not only highlight certain aspects of certain things, but also always hide others; when we understand the process of argumentation in terms of waging a war, for example, we forget that the argument is always also a process of fruitful communication, which aims at deepening the understanding that the arguing parties have of a certain issue.[107] Highlighting in poetry takes place because the poetic metaphor has diaphorical capacities. It gives a narrow focus to a certain structured model of thinking, which the writer elucidates through verse. On the other hand, hiding happens inspite of epiphoricity, because every system of language excludes other notions while it accepts a selected few into its core.

Much pertaining to the two opposite tendencies of the poetic metaphor, the diaphor and epiphor, it is sometimes difficult to determine whether in fact the whole poem should be interpreted as a collection of icons or a compound metaphor, which is trying to communicate something by the means of something else. Equally true, when it comes to the poem's capability of evoking images and concepts, it is difficult to determine where a single metaphor ends and literal language begins. These are typical

features of concrete universal language, which stresses experience over effective communication.

As Wimsatt argues, the origins of the concrete universal view-point date back to Aristotelian theories of poetry. As Aristotle said, poetry is different from other types of writing in that it tends to imitate action but also express the universal.[108] Thus according to the Aristotelian reading, a successful poem should always carry within itself an instantiation of some universal idea. Plotinus developed Aristotle's doctrines further in his studies at the end of the classic period. According to his point of view, an artist's soul is capable of reaching "the forms that lie behind divine intelligence" by omitting the productions of the world.[109] To make the distinctive character of the concrete universal language even more evident, Wimsatt compares poetry to scientific or logical discourse. He concludes that poetry is different from all other discourses in the degree of "irrelevant concreteness in descriptive details"; one of the peculiarities of this irrelevant concreteness is that it seems valuable and enjoyable purely for its own sake.[110]

And yet, many critics of poetry have stressed the importance of communication as a criterion of success in poetry. In I. A. Richards' *Principles of Literary Criticism* it becomes clear that he perceives the poem first and foremost as a vehicle of communication; a bad poem is therefore one where communication is defective, the vehicle inoperable, or the communicated experience worthless.[111] This is typical of many critics of poetry, who have been attempting to give a clear-cut definition of what poetry is ever since the beginning of literary criticism.

This approach starts the task of definition by stating that poetry, as well as all other lingual utterances, is essentially an act of communication, and that a poem's success can be measured simply by determining to what extent the poem manages in fulfilling its role as the medium. Such evaluative approaches usually end up defining and arguing the meanings that the individual words, lines and stanzas carry with them. Most of the

attention is given to the tenor, or the source domain. The target domain, poem itself as a vehicle, seems to possess less value, and is more or less regarded as a transparent agent, whose job is to give accurate factual information about the incidents of the poet's world in a way, where preservation of the originality of the artistic experience is as complete as possible.

In a nutshell, the supporters of what could be termed the communicative approach of poetry are trying to convince the reading audience that a poem should be a replicate of the writer's original meaning. Such thinking can be helpful and is not without its advantages, but in my opinion it seems too mechanical. A poem does originate from a vacuum, nor does it never end in one. To describe a fruit of the artist's mind purely as a vehicle for communication deducts all the features that time and other beings impose on a piece of art before it is completed. As T. S. Eliot notes, a poem is a fresh experience at every step of the reader – writer continuum.[112] Communication is not enough to explain poetry, because the meaning that is being communicated is in a constant state of flux. If poetry is to be understood in terms of communication, it communicates the poem itself. Only incidentally does it manage to relay the experience and thought behind it.[113]

Later literary approaches can be merited in giving the poem a greater ontological status. As Raija Kangaspunta notes at the beginning of her study of Robert Frost, poetical language differs from all other forms of written communication in that it usually makes a lasting impression in the reader's mind as such, whereas prose tends to turn into images more immediately.[114] This point is worth mentioning. In my opinion it is more beneficial to think of a poem and its contributing elements as signifiers that have independent characteristics. A poem should be considered more than a sum total of its signifieds since it ventures beyond language into territory, where mere symbolical signs and their signifieds could never arrive. All things considered, poem is a universe in itself, which constructs a hierarchical and fragmentary system; each poem can be dissected to stanzas,

lines, images, signs, and so on. Although it can be examined as a whole, the specificity of the system is such that the individual fragments can also be regarded for their individual value or as parts of the bigger context.

Another merit of this approach is that in granting the poem individuality as a sign it also liberates the readers and critics from lengthy and often unnecessary, biographical fact-finding missions. If the poem is examined as an independent system of words, which either manages or does not manage to create pleasurable and lasting sensations in the reader's mind, regardless of the experience that originated the artistic process, there is little need to consider whether the poet was honest and serious when composing the poem, or what his original intention of meaning was.

Essentially, poetry is one specific category of representation, which encompasses both the universal and the particular tendencies of language and the diaphorical and epiphorical tendencies of the metaphor. The special relationship that poetry has in relation to the universe was of special importance especially to many of the theorists of the Romantic era. The importance of mythology, divine imagination of the artist and the creative chaos of the universe is accentuated for example in the theories of F. W. J. Schelling. In his *Philosophy of Art*, originally published in 1859, Schelling bestowed a great role to poetry in being the formative element in making sense of the chaotic material that the universe provides the artist with. In this realm of thinking, mythology constitutes the absolute poetry and is also the necessary condition and first content of art, "poesy en masse", [115] which is crafted into particular representations and instantiations by the poet.

Because a product of art has a life in itself, but is on the other hand a part of the world, it must possess two types of unity: within its finite form and in relation to the infinite universe surrounding it.[116] Thus the poem is a combination of the particular and the universal tendencies of language. According to a poem's placement on the particular – universal scale of language, Schelling proposes a division into three types of poetry: in *lyric*

poetry the infinite qualities are informed in the finite[117] – thus, lyric poems use images and allegories as their means of expression and are mostly concerned with the particular domain.

An *epic* poem, on the other hand, is a representation of the finite within the infinite,[118] where particular elements of the poem are subsumed under an infinite structure or universal schema. A *dramatic* poem is a synthesis of the finite (particular) and the infinite (universal).[119] A drama often finds its meanings through the use of symbols, which suggest that the particular experience may be analogous of the universal in some regard.

3.1 Parallelism as Foregrounding

As opposed to deviation, which was discussed in 2.1.1, parallelism can be regarded as another method of creating the effect of particularity and foregrounding in poetry. Leech studies this distinguishing feature of poetic language to some extent in his book. In the widest sense of the term, he defines parallelism in poetic language as a practice that introduces extra regularities to the language.[120] From his discussion it becomes clear that poetry seems to be reducible to certain rules as far as the element of parallelism is concerned. Thus most poetic texts can be analyzed as patterns on several different layers.

At the beginning of the scale that Leech proposes are the regularities between the smallest units of language, such as phonemes and internal structure of individual syllables, the dissection continuing up to the levels of rhythmic structure and alliterative pattern of a given line.[121] At the upper end of the scope are the regularities in the grammatical structure of an individual line or a stanza.[122] In Leech's terminology, the use of parallelism is said to be strong, if the parallel structures are present on several different layers of language and in both the lexical and grammatical choices made by the writer.[123]

Taken to its extreme, Leech's patterning seems to enforce the language of a poem into rather a strict hierarchy. While such scrutiny may be interesting from the linguistic point of view in that it reveals many of the conscious choices that the poet has made in the process of writing, it is questionable whether it is of any genuine use to the purposes of literary criticism. From the perspective of someone, who is trying to gain a wider understanding of a poem and place it into a context, it seems unnecessary to examine the features of parallelism, at least on the levels of phonemes and syllables. However, I think that Leech's meticulous examination of poetry is of some use when it comes to examining the rhythmic structures, alliterative patterns and grammatical structures of the lines. This type of inquiry may grant us awareness of the existence of implicit metaphors and the methods of parallelism that a writer uses in foregrounding certain features of his language over the others.

3.1.1 "The Road Not Taken" as a Parallel Construction

To illustrate the matter of parallelism a bit further, let us pick as an example the final stanza from Robert Frost's well-known poem called "The Road Not Taken". It entails these five lines:

> I shall be telling this with a sigh
> Somewhere ages and ages hence:
> Two roads diverged in a wood, and I–
> I took the one less traveled by,
> And that has made all the difference. (105)

Starting from the smallest unit, the rhythmic structure, it is necessary to map the stressed and unstressed syllables of each line. If X is the symbol of an unstressed syllable and ⁄ the symbol of a stressed syllable, then the first line can be presented with this construction: X/X/X/X/. The line has eight units of rhythm, or *measures*[124] in total, and each unstressed syllable is followed by a stressed one. In this respect, this line is a prime

example of the so-called iambic foot, which is fairly typical in English verse, with a tetrameter, or four feet, verse length.[125]

In the rhythmic structure of this poem the iambic tetrameter is clearly the parallelistic structure. As Leech notes, parallelism always requires some variable feature, or an element of contrast, around which the parallel element of identity is structured.[126] In this case, variation of the identical rhythmic form occurs in lines two and five. Line two, "Somewhere ages and ages hence:" sets the mood for accentuated anticipation with inverting the iambic foot into trochaic; stressed syllable is now followed by an unstressed one. Variation occurs also in the number of measures; the entire line has only six measures, of which four are stressed: /X/X//. Iambic foot is effective again in lines three and four, but in the last line of the stanza, "And that has made all the difference", the rhythmic structure suddenly shifts to iambic trimeter, as if putting a period to the whole poem: X/X/X/.

As far as alliteration, or repetition of initial sounds in syllables, is concerned, there appears to be no significant occurrences of this type of parallelism in the poem, if the pair "ages and ages" is not regarded as one. The same is true when it comes to the grammatical structure. It appears that Frost's poetry in this example imitates the syntactic structure of common speech, with no feature being accentuated or repeated to create the effect of parallelism. However, it is noteworthy that every stanza of the poem follows the *abaab* rhyme pattern – the second and fifth line in each stanza stand out from the rest as to their rhymes, for example "hence" and "difference" rhyme differently when compared to "sigh", "I", and "by". The rhyme repetition of third and fourth line of each stanza builds anticipation of climax, but this is only a mild effect. Clearly, this poem does not want to preach, but follows rather a subdued tone of voice.

The fact that the different rhymes co-occur with the different rhythmic structure is hardly a coincidence. In each stanza, lines two and five form the variable feature

around which the parallel elements are gathered. It seems that lines one, three and four carry the "plot" of the poem, while lines two and five are reserved for creating breaks and accentuation in the flow of the words. On the other hand, it could be argued that exactly the opposite is true when it comes to the roles of the lines in creating contrasts and similarities. Since there is a pair of deviating lines in each stanza, these together form a sort of parallel structure. Thus, it would seem that there are two different elements in this poem – on one hand, lines two and five and on the other, lines one, three and four – both of which are contrastive in some respects when compared to each other, but similar when dissected further within the unit.

As is typical of Frost's poetry, "The Road Not Taken" insists on strict use of form and exact repetition. There are no clear contrasts or similarities between the parallel and variable features of the poem, which would make interpreting the significance of parallelism as simple a task as Leech seems to suggest in some of his examples.[127] As such it seems that the matter that this poem seems to push forward to the foreground of language is the symmetrical form itself, which states the facts in the language of fairly ordinary speech, but puts forward neither clear questions nor straight replies. And yet, it is obviously the flawless use of parallel rhythm structures that differentiates it from all ordinary language.

3.1.2 Parallelism and Epiphoricity

Of course, it is not difficult to induce that "The Road Not Taken" is likely to be more than a simple story about a stroll in the wood. In fact, it would be difficult not to see its metaphoricity in that it describes a crossroads and the choice of selecting only one of the paths. The whole poem is a metaphor in itself, but it seems to foreground nothing new – comparing the decision making process to a crossroads is hardly a new invention in poetry. Indeed, it would not be difficult to criticize Frost of leaving his metaphor

somewhat unrefined. As it happens, this is exactly what Yvor Winters does in his essay by blaiming Frost quite strongly of leaving the poem "incomplete".[128] In Winters' view-point, the burden of making the normative decision that "The Road Not Taken" encompasses should be the task of the author, not the reader, as seems to be the case here.[129] In Winters' opinion, the seeming reluctance of taking firm stand on moral issues and the statement that Frost "is mistaking whimsical impulse for moral choice" disqualifies him as a "great" poet.[130]

Honestly, I do not quite see the relevance of Winters' claim, but I do agree that the observation reveals something essential of Frost's nature as a poet. One that attempts to uncover straightforward decisions or normative guide-lines of good moral action in Frost's verse may be soon disappointed. It is my firm conviction that Frost should be considered first and foremost an aesthetic poet before laying hold on ethical judgments, for it seems that he was more responsive to presenting his message in a suitable style and form than he was with morals that the message might contain. As a consequence, whimsical impulses and spiritual drifting often pass moral choices in Frost's rank of priority.

Therefore, if we read "The Road Not Taken" as one metaphor, then perhaps the freshness about it is that it seems to foreground itself. The poem invites us into reading it for the sake of deriving aesthetic pleasure from the strictly organized sounds and rhythmical patterns of the lines, rather than trying to discover the hidden tenor behind the vehicle, which in this case comes nearly automatically. If the items of deviation and items of parallelism were more clearly distinguishable from each other, then perhaps the poem was more epiphorical in nature.

As far as its capability of evoking different metaphorical concepts is concerned, the poem cannot be claimed to be very successful. Of course, the road as a structural image carries attributes of several things, for example the quality of travel (the unpaved

road appears rather narrow and rural), causal relations (ultimately it leads to another crossroads), or degree of modality (traveling here is a necessity and coming back is not an option). Still, it seems that the vehicle points to only one tenor, namely the fact that making choices in life is not a simple matter, but still one that each of us has to tackle.

Naturally, some epiphorical tendencies could be traced from other words in the poem as well. In the first stanza, the narrator qualifies the woods where the crossroads diverge as "yellow" and one of the paths as "grassy" and such as "wanted wear". Knowing that yellow is the color that most deciduous trees adopt in the autumn, one might infer that the narrator also feels the need to shake off some things to make room for new growth. "Grassy" and "wanted wear" could be seen as a vehicles for the unusuality of the choice – not many have trodden this course, yet grassy does not sound like a path that would be specifically displeasing to walk upon.

The strict use of meter and form is more a rule than an exception with Frost. As Thompson reminds us, Frost was nearly categorically opposed to the so-called pure expression that lacks a clear shape.[131] According to Thompson, there is strong justification to consider form as the most important characteristic of his verse.[132] This on many occasions seems to give Frost's metaphors the inward focus that they have. It is not difficult to find examples to this effect. "The Oft-Repeated Dream" from the longer narrative "The Hill Wife" is another case where the diaphorical side of the metaphor seems to benefit from the prolific use of parallel structures.

Although the metaphor itself cannot be said to be tremendously clever or ground-breaking in giving new interpretations, the steady rhyme and meter seem to make the poem enjoyable on its own account. At the same time, it serves as an introduction to the Frostian dialectics of home and wildness, which will be explored in greater length later in this study. "The Oft-Repeated Dream" contains these three quatrains:

> She had no saying dark enough
>   For the dark pine that kept
> Forever trying the window latch
>   Of the room where they slept.
>
> The tireless but ineffectual hands
>   That with every futile pass
> Made the great tree seem as a little bird
>   Before the mystery of glass!
>
> It never had been inside the room,
>   And only one of the two
> Was afraid in an oft-repeated dream
>   Of what the tree might do.

It seems a trademark of Frost's diaphorical metaphors that a mysterious tone of voice is clearly discernible – such is the case also here. The tree outside the window is not only an element of the natural ontological order, but it is implied with the "tireless but ineffectual hands" that it may in fact be an intermediary in a greater scheme of metaphysical proportions. As such, it is not only a branch of tree that scrapes the window, but something more profound, perhaps the realm of nature that is trying to enter civilization. Winters regards this poem as partaking in the handling of the theme, which was already discussed in "The Road Not Taken" above – the incomprehensibility of the formative decision.[133]

Incomprehensibility is a well-chosen word, for it seems that the metaphorical image of the tree is pulled in two different directions. The first paints a gloomy picture of a pine-tree, familiar from horror movies, while the other one is exemplified by comparing the mighty pine tree to a "little bird". As if this was not enough to baffle the reader, there is a narrow dividing line between the two spheres, that of man and that of nature. In this case it is the transparent pane of glass, which separates the hill wife and her husband from the wild impulses and metaphysics of nature, implying that the whole metaphor is somehow beyond our reach, part of the divine plan.

And after all, it appears that the real nature of man is that which is provided by the security of the house and the protection provided by the parallel structures of meter and rhyme. They are the grounding elements in the "momentary stay against confusion"[134], which Frost himself thought that poetry should accommodate. Here confusion is obstructed with the firmness of the quatrain and the rhyming of the second and fourth line in each stanza with first and third lines forming the variable feature. Nearly as predictable is the iambic foot, which alternates tetrameter and trimeter line length.

The image of the pine that the poem proposes is molded into a metaphor by the humanizing "ineffectual hands" and the animistic "little bird" and further specified by the attributes "dark" and "great". Obviously, it is facile to connect "dark", "great" and "ineffectual hands" into one formidable image, but in all its might, the tree too is just a "little bird" in the metaphysics of being. Every attempt that it makes for the "window latch" is to remain "futile", as if the metaphor was never really able to strike a chord of harmony with the beings of the human domain. Rather, nature is portrayed as the unknown and sublime other, which mirrors itself on the "mystery of glass", but is incommunicable in words – there are no sayings "dark enough" in the vocabulary of man. The battle between the metaphysical world of nature and the ontology of man inside the language is perpetual, but resolutions are few. When going is rough, the lucidity of vision rises from inside the house, from within the form.

This seems a recurrent feature in Frost when he is dealing with limits of any kind. As J. Albert Robbins reminds us, Frost is continually dealing with limits and barriers, especially the ones that separates us as human beings from the wilderness, but if there is any clarity, it is normally achieved by the inward focus of his verse.[135] Marion Montgomery testifies for the same cause in her work. Montgomery points out that there are barriers in Frost's poems which cannot and should not be crossed by man, because the

natural world is moving constantly towards chaos and may hurt those who express their love for it.[136] Thus, if and when Frost chooses to speak with nature, the tone is one of humor or fancy, not of real brotherhood, as is the case for example in much of Wordsworth's poetry.[137]

Although wide generalizations cannot be made from a couple of examples, it seems that the parallelism typical of Frost is not a contributing element as far as the epiphorical power of poetic metaphor is concerned. For Frost, it is rather a tool by which he attains the clarity of poetic vision in a struggle against confusion. Although the use of parallel structures, such as steady rhyme and meter, makes the poem an enjoyable experience in the act of reading alone, it seems that it also limits the epiphorical potentiality of the poem somewhat – the symmetrical elements that please the aesthetic faculty of the mind are sometimes also the ones that hinder the cognitive leaps of the connecting organ.

Perhaps it could even be claimed that this is the sole purpose of parallel structures; although they are quite irrelevant for the epiphoricity of the metaphor, they foreground the poem itself, give it the inward focus or centripetal force that is required if it is to stand on its own as a credible presentation rather than a signifier of something else.

3.2 Classes of Metaphor

As the above discussion of foregrounding suggested, the making of metaphors involves constantly moving words from one side of the literal – figurative scale to the other. As it is the writer who makes this move, it is quite possible for a single word to be interpreted simultaneously both for its figurative as well as its literal value, depending on the reader. Similarly, it is quite possible for an oxymoron and a metaphor to be involved in the same act of comprehension.[138] For example, a phrase such as *the living dead* connects two terms

that form an oxymoron and a metaphor at the same time. If taken for its literal value it is clearly paradoxical. Its meaningfulness relies solely on the reader's capability of making figurative, unorthodox interpretations.

However complex the task of assigning a metaphor its meaning and place on the metaphorical – literal scale may be, language theorists have made numerous attempts at classifying and differentiating between metaphors, each emphasizing slightly different aspects when categorizing differences. In the next few chapters two such classification systems will be examined and put to practice, namely those suggested by Geoffrey Leech on one hand and George Lakoff and Mark Turner on the other.

3.2.1 Descriptive Categories

Representative of Geoffrey Leech's system of categorizing metaphors is that fundamentally the system bases its roots on the question of what the metaphor is like. Thus, Leech's system could be labeled as descriptive in nature.

Just as there usually is no positive way of telling when a word or a phrase in poetry is to be taken for its metaphorical value, it is sometimes very difficult to separate one metaphor from another. As Leech notes, it is often the case that the different metaphors overlap.[139] In *compound metaphor*[140] the vehicle of one metaphor may function on the level of tenor of another metaphor in such a way, that it is difficult to point out exactly where one metaphor ends and another one begins. Poetry often involves the use of compound and *extended*[141] metaphors at the same time; several different metaphors may be developed by a number of figurative expressions simultaneously, one on top of another. As tools for determining exactly how the vehicles and tenors mingle and interact in the case of a compound metaphor, it is useful to mention some of the most significant types of semantic connection that can be present in the metaphor. In his discussion of the

topic, Leech introduces four different categories of metaphor: *the concretive, the animistic, the humanizing,* and *the synaesthetic.*[142]

The concretive metaphor grants an abstract entity a quality of a more concrete nature, makes it more concrete, whereas the animistic metaphor works in roughly the opposite direction on the ontological scale in attributing characteristics of the animate to the beings of the inanimate. Therefore, a phrase such as *There was plenty of food for thought* celebrates the connection of a concrete object, *food,* and an abstract matter, *thought* and could be termed concretive. Likewise, *a room of my own* could be interpreted as a concretive vehicle in a metaphor about one's independence. As an example of an extremely animistic use of metaphorical language, we might pick a passage from Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* that depicts the deportation trains of the concentration camp exchanging greetings: *Its locomotive whistled. The locomotive of Billy Pilgrim's train whistled back. They were saying, "Hello."*[143]

In its shocking ghastliness, Vonnegut's handling of trains serves not only as an animistic metaphor, but also as a prime example of the humanizing or *anthropomorphic* metaphor, where inhuman things are given human-like characteristics or culture dependent modes of behavior. According to Lakoff and Johnson, the humanizing metaphors or *personifications* are the most obvious ontological ones, where an element of another ontological domain is understood in terms of human characteristics and activities.[144] However, we should not confuse personifications with idiosyncrasies. Although "foot of a mountain" is a metaphorical concept in that a mountain does not have feet, it is an idiomatic phrase.[145] We do not live by such expressions; they do not have a particularly interesting role in our system of understanding, nor do they interact with other metaphorical concepts in a sense that it would create new concepts of understanding.[146]

Finally, the definition of the synaesthetic metaphor lies on transferring meaning from one field of sensory perception to the other. Thus, it is not unusual to describe a color as warm or cold and a sound as dull or sharp, for example. With the aforementioned categories of metaphor in mind, we can now analyze a seemingly simple compound metaphor from Robert Frost's poem "Mowing", that draws the whole poem to a conclusion. Here is the poem in its entirety:

> There was never a sound beside the wood but one,
> And that was my long scythe whispering to the ground.
> What was it it whispered? I knew not well myself;
> Perhaps it was something about the heat of the sun,
> Something, perhaps, about the lack of sound –
> And that was why it whispered and did not speak.
> It was no dream of the gift of idle hours,
> Or easy gold at the hand of fay or elf:
> Anything more than the truth would have seemed too weak
> To the earnest love that laid the swale in rows,
> Not without feeble-pointed spikes of flowers
> (Pale orchises), and scared a bright green snake.
> The fact is the sweetest dream that labor knows.
> My long scythe whispered and left the hay to make. (17)

With its fourteen lines this sonnet seems to form an isolated pictorial, as was the case with "For Once, Then, Something". Whereas in for example "The Road Not Taken" there was a feeling of eventuality and progress, this poem, written in one long stanza seems to be a frozen image. Still, a great deal more is "happening" on the literal level than was the case with "The Road Not Taken", which could perhaps be labeled as a speculative poem. This poem is about the toil of hands, not heart, as was the case with trying to decide between two different paths. Movement here is cyclical, repetitive and patterned, as opposed to the linearity and progression in "The Road Not Taken". Yet the rhyme pattern or meter are less rigid, which would seem to suggest that the irregularities of the actual world are mirrored as regularities in Frost's verse, and vice versa. When the main emphasis is on the faculty of thinking, the poem appears to follow a strict meter and rhyme pattern, whereas the poems describing physical labor are more loosely organized.

Examined as a whole, the prevalent force in "Mowing" is that of diaphorical or centripetal quality, as is the case with the metaphor that is presented with the last two lines. The closing is a mixed metaphor: the inanimistic *scythe* is granted the animistic and humanizing character of whispering. What is more noteworthy is that the content of the whisper is in itself another compound metaphor that resembles an oxymoron; fact and dream seem by nature to be terms of opposite epistemological nature and create a paradoxical situation when placed together in the same context. To make matters even more complex this metaphor is coated with the relative clause *that labor knows.* Hence, the abstract term *labor* is first made more concretive and humanistic by granting it the faculty of knowing. It appears appropriate that the object of knowing is a fact, but this literal line of thinking is immediately contradicted with the synaesthetic copula construction, *the fact is the sweetest dream,* where the two abstract concepts, *fact* and *dream,* are connected and modified with the aesthetic superlative *sweetest.*

Readily at hand there seem to be at least two possible interpretations as to the meaning of the term *dream* in this construction. First, it may hint at the recurrent and subconscious human state of imagination that is reached by sleeping, or second, it may be read as synonymous to the noun *wish.* The former interpretation would seem to suggest that any true knowledge is dream-like and is rendered possible only by the recurrent practice of hard labor, whereas the latter reading would simply seem to point a certain fact that the labor wishes to know. Of course, a third interpretation, which joins the connotations of the former ones, is also possible: *dream* is a wish, but also a recurrent and subconscious state.

"My November Guest" is another clever mixture of different kinds of metaphor. Here it seems that Frost is again seeking shelter from rhyme and parallel structures, but this time barriers are found within the mind of the speaker. Sorrow that inhabits the mind with the coming of the autumn is given humanistic and concretive features within the

five-line stanzas, iambic flow of rhythm and the *abaab* rhyme pattern. Quoted below is the first stanza of the total four:

> My Sorrow, when she's here with me,
>   Thinks these dark days of autumn rain
> Are beautiful as days can be;
> She loves the bare, the withered tree;
>   She walks the sodden pasture lane. (6)

The fact that "My November Guest" is the third poem in Frost's first collection of poetry, *A Boy's Will*, has led many people to believe that the poem is in fact a statement about Frost's general attitude towards his new-found role as a poet. This belief is supported by the fact that in the table of contents of the original version of *A Boy's Will* Frost provided short comments to his poems, given in a manner of an older writer, who is making ironic characterizations of the younger poet's work.[147] The interpretation that "My November Guest" received was simply "He is in love with being misunderstood."[148]

Bearing this in mind, it seems that through his poem Frost is playfully complaining about the ways in which his poems might be understood. However, as the poem suggests, this is not the only cause of sorrow. Sorrow, a decidedly feminine figure, comes for a visit seasonally, both from the outside as well as from the inside. Like a black angel, her love is directed towards darkness, rain, barrenness and withered leaves. November is a particularly potential time of the year in this regard, because it accommodates sorrow and represents death in the annual cycle of emotions, before the absolution and purification granted by the white snows of winter.

Again, it feels like the whole focus of the poem is centripetal or diaphoric, centered around one image only. Initially it seems that the tenor of the metaphor is sorrow itself, but the fact that sorrow is mentioned could be interpreted as implying that there is another tenor, which Frost himself called "being misunderstood". For a young poet who is likely to be misunderstood at least by some critics, sorrow is undoubtedly a suitable vehicle of self-pity and the feeling of martyrdom. But for the reader, it becomes

both the tenor and the vehicle of the metaphor, melting the two sides of the metaphors into one.

3.2.2 Makings of the Epistemological System

Leech's three-stage method of analyzing metaphors provides the means for a more meticulous examination of Frost's truly puzzling metaphor compound in "Mowing". Although the linguistic analysis that Leech proposes is by no means comparable to the "ordinary" reading experience, it may reveal some of the covert ideas that are interwoven in the structure of the text. Stage one consists of separating the literal use of language from the figurative, while the second stage includes constructing the tenor and the vehicle in question and adding semantic elements to fill the gaps in the literal and figurative interpretations.[149] The third task in the course of metaphor analysis, a seemingly simple one, is stating the ground of comparison on which the metaphor is based on.[150]

Consequently, in analyzing the metaphor compound *the fact is the sweetest dream that labor knows*, we must first establish the literal and figurative levels, which should indicate the shifts from the literal language to the figurative. This shift occurs at a point where the literal interpretation is "baffled, usually by a violation of selection restrictions."[151] Of course it should be remarked that the place of such a transition is highly controversial and highly context sensitive, as the transfer from literal to figurative language often includes words that are highly connotative in nature. In the following, the capital L stands for the literal, while the capital F refers to the figurative level of language. Ditto marks (") are placed beneath words which belong to both levels, while a line (-----) indicates a place where a transition has occurred. Since the metaphor in question is a compound of two separate metaphors that are intertwined, there are two figurative levels and the figurative

level of the first metaphor functions also as the literal level of the embedded metaphor.

Hence, stage one of the analysis might look something like this:

L1: The fact is --- ----------- ------- that ------- --------.
F1/L2: " " " --- ----------- dream " labor --------.
F2: " " " the sweetest " " " knows.

The compound having now been dissected into its constructive elements, it can be seen

that the concretive copula construction connects *the fact* to the metaphor *the sweetest dream*,

where *the sweetest* is clearly used in the figurative sense for both the metaphors. *Dream*, on

the other hand, is taken for its figurative value in the copula construction, but used

literally in the second metaphor, which might be classified as synaesthetic, appealing to

the sense of taste and the subconscious state of imagination at the same time. The

subordinate clause, *that labor knows*, is humanistic in nature, and *knows* is obviously the

figurative part in relating to both the *labor* and the *dream*. As to its function, *labor* is similar

to *dream* in that it is used in both the literal sense, in *labor knows* and the figurative, in

dream that labor knows.

It would then seem that in all this line consists of three metaphors, two of which

function clearly on top of each other, while the third links to the literal element of the

second metaphor rather loosely with the relative pronoun *that*. The second stage of

analysis is rather approximate in nature, because it includes constructing figurative and

literal terms that are roughly equal to the original meanings. The objective of this task is,

however, that after the second stage of analysis is complete, all lines should make literal

sense on their own, with the tenors and the vehicles being clearly distinguishable.[152] The

line marked with TEN represents in this examination the tenors. Respectively, VEH

symbolizes the vehicles of the metaphors. Quite naturally, the middle line involves both

tenors and vehicles, while the bottom line reads as the original metaphor compound in its

literal form. In the following, square brackets are utilized to indicate the parts that have

been reconstructed or paraphrased – namely the parts, which were represented by a blank line in the first stage of analysis:

TEN1: The fact is [the most desirable   that [the worker is aware of].
                               recurrent state of imagination]
VEH1/TEN2: " " " [the most desirable] dream " labor [is aware of].
VEH2: " " " the sweetest " " " knows.

Of course, this is only one possible interpretation, and it is not difficult to invent alternative phrasings or solutions to the puzzle. Just as likely would be an interpretation where *the fact* is interpreted as a vehicle that modifies the tenor *dream*. This is typical of the copula verb *be*: the two items that are connected can be flipped around with the meaning of the sentence staying essentially the same. Thus, the line might as well be altered to *the sweetest dream that labor knows is the fact*. Noteworthy is, however, that it is quite possible for one term to convey two different images at the same time: on one hand, it appears that *the fact* is a fiction that is reached while sleeping, but on the other, laboring demands that we stay awake in order to *know the fact*. It is perhaps a defining qualification of a diaphorical compound metaphor that some of the tenors and vehicles seem to collapse into one, as is the case in the middle layer in the analysis above with *dream* and *labor*.

It would seem illustrative of a good case of foregrounding that the third stage of analysis, stating the ground of the metaphor, is not quite so facile as would first seem. As regards the second metaphor, *the sweetest dream*, it is not difficult to make the connection between the adjective *sweet* and the noun *dream*. Both of these words are capable of rendering somewhat similar sensations of pleasure, the former on the tongue, the latter in the brain. The connection between the two and the meaning of the compound seems to emerge from simple intuition and interaction.

But when it comes to *the fact* being *the sweetest dream* and *labor knowing* this dream, the analytical mind is puzzled. Clearly there is a definite connection between these three elements that brings forth a fresh, new kind of cognition, but the question of how exactly

the connection is made remains shadowed by a veil of secrecy; the formula of the metaphor remains unsolved, although intuition convinces the reader that the poet is "on to something" here. At least this rather clumsy attempt at paraphrasing the metaphor proves the intuitionistic claim that most metaphors are in fact untranslatable and seem to rely on intuition for their comprehension. Likewise, it seems indisputable that this metaphor compound is not only cognitive but also affective in nature – it appeals to and arouses feelings.

Here I am proposing an interpretation that the interrelationship of these three metaphorical entities, *fact, dream* and *labor*, forms the beginning of the epistemological chain of Frost's poetry. It begins with the aesthetic stance that Frost's laborers seem to succumb to; facts desire to become known by the recurrence of dreamlike physical labor, where purity of form and movement constitute accuracy of vision and thought. As Poirier holds, thought for Frost's workers "is the knowing that comes only in labor".[153] On the other hand, the presence of nature is likewise compulsory element in the process of knowing, for without nature there would be nothing for the narrator to reflect his thoughts against. However, nature is not an element which goes into the system of epistemology unfiltered. Quite the opposite is true, as Louis D. Rubin Jr. reminds us. It is the capacity of thought and human purposiveness that set man apart from the system of nature.[154]

This intertwining of thought, work and nature forms the beginning of the epistemological system, which ultimately leads to a realization of the universal character of the system of signs and symbols, or as Poirier says, constitutes a relationship with God.[155] Having to do with the dialectics of contemplation and action, as well as the possibilities of communication between men, this epistemological system will be further refined in this study, when other metaphor compounds of thinking and doing are examined.

3.3 Conceptual Categories – Basic and Specific Metaphors

George Lakoff and Mark Turner approach the problem of classifying and analyzing metaphors from slightly different angle as compared to Geoffrey Leech, although both theories are trying to define the smaller constituents of the metaphor. Albeit it appears less definite, it seems that Lakoff and Turner's method of analysis grants us more structural understanding about the ways in which metaphors function.

In their book *More Than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor*, Lakoff and Turner divide the metaphors into two classes: *basic* or *general conceptual metaphors* and *specific metaphors*. According to their quite plausible claim, the number of basic conceptual metaphors appears to be rather small, but we know many of these metaphors automatically or unconsciously.[156] Thus, a basic metaphor is a widely accepted conception of a certain aspect of life that is established in language, "part of the way members of a culture have of conceptualizing their experience"[157]. The basic conceptual metaphors are so "basic" and general, that they are nearly invisible, unless particular attention is drawn to them, but they also form the basis of communication that happens in poetry, for example.

Frequently, a certain word or a phrase is foregrounded when it is transformed into a specific or linguistic metaphor through the process of metaphorization and elaboration. Specific metaphor is usually a composite of several basic metaphors, but always also something that is extended beyond the accepted norms of the basic metaphor;[158] in the case of the specific metaphor there is always an added element, that the author gives to the basic metaphors through the conventions of language to which the basic metaphors are subjected. This added element is of course the creativity of the writer.

Embedded in this theory is also the claim that if basic conceptual metaphors can be differentiated neatly from the specific ones, as Lakoff and Turner seem to propose,

then a close analysis of the text should also provide the means by which this distinction is made. In other words, Lakoff and Turner seem to suggest that the poet's creativity as far as the use of metaphors is concerned can be analyzed quite straightforwardly and reduced to certain features of language. In this respect Lakoff and Turner come close to the formulaic approach to the metaphor that was already briefly discussed in 2.2.1.

As such, the concept of a basic conceptual metaphor seems to verge upon I. A. Richards' definition of the tenor, while the specific metaphor may be likened to the vehicle. However, it would be erroneous to claim complete similarity between these two respective terms, since Lakoff and Turner's use of the term basic metaphor clearly differs from Richards' use of the term tenor, as does the use of specific metaphor differ from the vehicle. Whereas Richards imposes interactionality as the way of transferring meanings between the literal and figurative domains, it seems that Lakoff and Turner are trying to find the formulas that are involved in making the transition. Of course, the formulaic thinking is not without its problems. It seems that Lakoff and Turner presuppose a fairly unanimous, shared experience or a singular interpretation of reality that guides the forming of the basic metaphors. In the era that seems to emphasize segmentations and differences rather than one accepted view of the world, it is questionable how well such thinking holds water. If we erase the common experience, we also eradicate the possibility of the basic metaphor, which causes the whole system to collapse.

Supposing that at least a partial common experience can be attained, however, Lakoff and Turner list a number of basic metaphors that are involved in our conceptualization of life, death and time, for example. The list is by no means all-inclusive, but admittedly it includes many notions that seem to have the quality of *a priori* knowledge, at least in the literature of the western world:

Very General Metaphors:
    Purposes are destinations.
    States are locations.

Events are actions.

Metaphors for Time:
Time is a changer.
Time moves.
Time is a pursuer.

Metaphors for Life and Death:
Life is a journey.
Life is a possession.
Life is a play.
Life is a flame.
Life is a fire.
Life is a fluid.
Life is a burden.
Lifetime is a day/year.
Death is departure.
Death is sleep.
Death is rest.
People are plants.[159]

Of course, a worthy question of just how basic should a basic metaphor can be asked: what entities of reality are seen as primary and divisible enough to be classified as basic conceptual metaphors? Lakoff and Turner have no direct answer to this question, but they do note that often the metaphor that is regarded as basic is in fact a composite of two or more basic metaphors. For example, the basic metaphor 'Time is a thief' can be divided into two, more general constituents, 'Time is a changer' and 'Life is a possession'.[160] Thus, a hierarchical structure is formed, but it seems evident that it is the task of each theorist to close the chain of eternal regression by pinpointing the 'givens' of his/her study, basic metaphors that are not split any further. Equally true, if we suppose that the basic metaphors really are *a priori* features of our understanding and the number of them is limited, it would seem necessary to state that the specific metaphor is *a posteriori* phenomenon and that similar *a priori* concepts can lead to an infinite number of different *a posteriori* postulations.

Although Lakoff and Turner's method of analyzing metaphors can be criticized in many ways, it does seem to shed new light on some of the metaphors that have been

discussed earlier in this study. For example, we can think of Frost's poem "My November Guest" as an embodiment of at least two basic metaphors, namely "Lifetime is a year" and "Time is a changer", which seem to suggest that the speaker is approaching death. Sorrow in this case gets a melancholy tune of letting go of life.

On the other hand, if we think of sorrow as an event that comes and goes with the changing of the year and keep in mind the basic metaphor "Events are actions", then the specific metaphor about the sorrow seems to reject its source domain or be in polar opposition to it. Sorrow is definitely an unlikely actor to fill the slot of action in "events are actions" in that it is best defined by its undetermined nature: it has no clear starting point, nor clear structure or finish. As a specific instance of the "Events are actions" Frost's impression of sorrow is an active image, but at the same time a lingering opponent of the mind that "walks the sodden pasture lane" of the narrator's mind in all directions. At the same time it strips the leaves from the basic metaphor "People are plants", but still has no direct purpose or destination.

3.3.1 The Mapping Theory

Lakoff and Turner's definition of the term metaphor is somewhat nontraditional in that they see metaphor not only as a tool used in literature, but also as an essential part of conventional language that assists us in our forming understanding of everyday conventional experiences.[161] Although I think that this definition of the metaphor hits the nerve with much of what this study is trying to prove, Lakoff and Turner seem to be using terms such as the dead metaphor and deviation somewhat differently as compared to this work.

As was pointed out in chapter 2.1, I. A. Richards made use of the term dead metaphor to refer to a word or a phrase that was no longer seen as a transmitter between different contexts, namely those of the tenor and the vehicle. For Lakoff and Turner, the same term refers to a conventional word that is not interpreted for its metaphorical value

anymore, although it may have once been considered metaphorical.[162] According to them, the whole dead metaphor theory is mistaken in assuming that the things which are not active in our cognition are dead. On the contrary, Lakoff and Turner claim that the things which are unconscious, and "most deeply entrenched" are also the ones that are the most powerful and efficient.[163] Hence it would seem that the most fundamental of the basic conceptual metaphors, or the ones that we are never aware of, are also the most powerful ones.

While I understand the basis of such claim, I find it somewhat difficult to believe. What seems to be causing confusion here are two different definitions of the same term. As an elaboration of the dead metaphor theory, Lakoff and Turner discuss the word *gone* in example such as *He's almost gone* to stand for the tenor *He's almost dead.* Their claim is that the dead metaphor theory would hold the word *gone* to be dead, because it is no longer understood as a metaphor.[164] In my understanding, the word *gone* is dead as far as its poetic value in this utterance is concerned; it does not act as a transmitter between the tenor and the vehicle and cause our mind to leap from one concept to the other, nor does it reveal any new or previously undiscovered aspect of the tenor of dying or the vehicle of *gone.* In all these respects it is dead, but this in my opinion does not undermine the fact that it should still be considered a metaphor, as metaphoricity or literality is rarely a matter of sharp contrast, but rather two different sides of the same coin. In other words, a metaphor may be dead, but it is still a metaphor – it is the task of the poet to breathe new life into it by finding new uses for it as a specific metaphor.

Also under attack for Lakoff and Turner is the concept of deviation that was discussed in 2.1.1 of this study. Lakoff and Turner deny what they call "the deviance position" by stating that "conventional metaphorical thought and language are normal, not deviant".[165] Although I agree with this claim, I would like to point out that such thought and language is also largely unconscious. Indeed, conventional language is
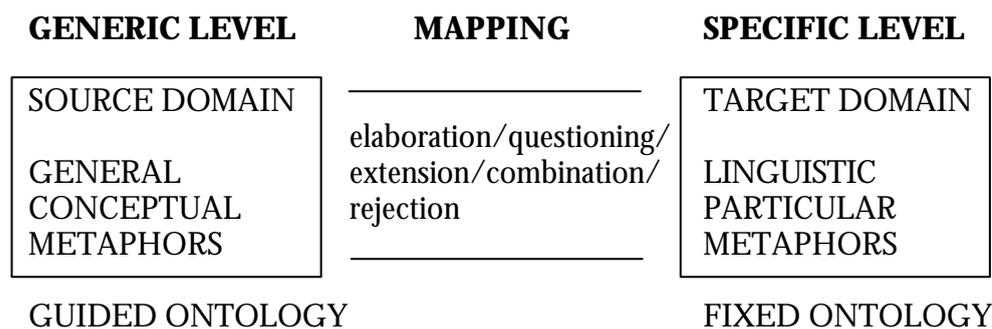
littered with metaphors, but we are not aware of most of them. As such, conventional metaphorical language cannot in my mind be considered very powerful or efficient, as Lakoff and Turner claim, at least as far as the purposes of poetry are concerned. It is the very act of deviation – using words and phrases in a previously undiscovered manner or besides their conventional context – that gives the words some of their poetical power. Thus, rather than making deviation a certain position or a theoretical approach that one has to either approve or deny, I would like to consider it a useful tool in the act of foregrounding that every poet has to come to terms with.

Setting aside the terminological differences, I find Lakoff and Turner's theory about the mapping of metaphors of great assistance when it comes to the study of metaphor. In short, Lakoff and Turner's metaphorical process proceeds in this way: certain aspects of the *source domain*, which includes the basic conceptual metaphors, are *mapped* onto the *target domain* of the specific metaphor in a way, which renders the interpreter of the metaphor new understanding as regards certain aspects of the target domain.[166] The mapping theory views metaphor essentially as a hierarchical process, in which an infinity of specific metaphors is created from a relatively small number of general conceptual metaphors.[167]

In other words, metaphoricity in Lakoff and Turner's view has to do with parts of the source domain structure, or the basic metaphor, being projected or mapped onto parts of the target domain, or specific metaphor.[168] Loosely guiding the process of mapping is the ontological structure of the source domain, whereas the specific metaphors are fixed to the specific ontology of the words in which they are expressed.[169] In this scheme of things, the place of the writer is in between the two domains, extending, questioning, elaboration or discarding the basic metaphors.[170] Depending on this process, different aspects of the source and target domain are highlighted. Notable is that mapping is never a matter of all or nothing, though. On the contrary, parts of the target domain may be

understood directly or literally, while parts are construed through the metaphorical structure of the source domain. Similarly, every specific instance of the metaphor differs as to the degree to which it is founded in the everyday experience or commonplace knowledge.[171]

In the light of the aforementioned assumptions, the following diagram can now be constructed of the process of metaphoricity as proposed by Lakoff and Turner:

GENERIC LEVEL	**MAPPING**	**SPECIFIC LEVEL**
SOURCE DOMAIN GENERAL CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS	elaboration/questioning/ extension/combination/ rejection	TARGET DOMAIN LINGUISTIC PARTICULAR METAPHORS
GUIDED ONTOLOGY		FIXED ONTOLOGY

Essentially, in the mapping process a structure is given to the linguistic metaphor – a practice, which also involves adding power to the text. The *schema* of any given knowledge structure of the source domain becomes conventionalized, as do the *slots* that are required to fill that schema so that they need not be learned again when put to practice on the specific level.[172] Hence, we can very effortlessly understand life in terms of a burden, for example. The schema of the burden has slots for the person who carries the burden, elements and natural forces which make the burden either lighter or heavier, and perhaps also persons who help or hinder the carrying of the burden. Comprehending life through the metaphor of burden requires then that these slots are filled in with a person carrying the burden, things s/he can utilize in helping to carry the load, and so forth.

Since 'Life is a burden' is classified as a basic metaphor, it is understood effortlessly, as are its schema and slots. Therefore, the structures that give power to the text also transfer with seeming ease from the source domain to the target. Apart from the structural power of the schema, power of the metaphor can be derived from four different
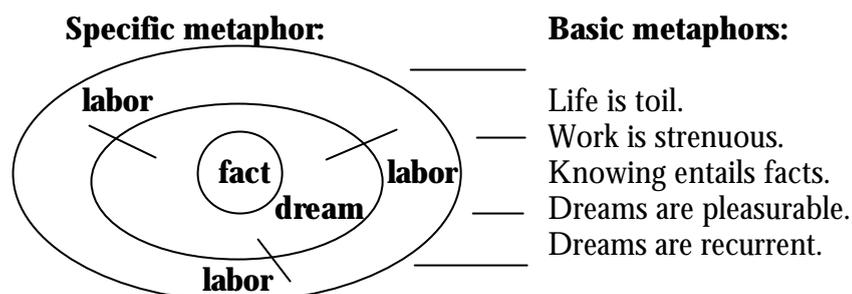
things in the source domain: the power of options, the power of reason, the power of evaluation, and the power of being there.[173] The power of option simply means that there is a multitude of optional elements that any single schema may or may not activate in creating the specific metaphor, whereas the power of reason refers to the metaphor's capability of making reasonable judgments on the target domain by borrowing patterns of inference from the source domain.[174] Similarly, the target domain often inherits evaluative patterns from the source domain, while the power of being there just means that basic conceptual metaphors are powerful because they exist and can be activated without much struggle.[175]

The mapping theory can now be exemplified by Robert Frost's metaphor that was already analyzed by Geoffrey Leech's method. Thus far we have noted about the metaphor compound *the fact is the sweetest dream that labor knows* that it contains within itself two metaphors, *the fact is the sweetest dream*, and *the sweetest dream*, in which the levels of figurative and literal use have been weaved together and on top of each other. As was noted above, *the sweetest dream* is clearly a synaesthetic metaphor, where the ground rules of comparison are devised from intuition and interaction. Further, the whole compound was said to be humanistic in nature, since the inhuman *labor* is here given the human feature of knowing. It was also stated that *the fact is the sweetest dream* resembles an oxymoron in that the words *fact* and *dream* seem to oppose each other, *fact* being decidedly concretive while *dream* seems to require more fantastical elements around it. Finally, this triangular compound was considered as the corner stone in the system of epistemology that is created within Frost's poems that have to do with thinking and doing.

In terms of Lakoff and Turner it seems that the entities *fact* have *dream* have essentially different ontological mappings. *Fact* in any conventional examination possesses a rather stringent schema, whereas *dream* insists only on the feature of recurrence as its structure, but leaves all other slots open to any type of elements. And yet, Robert Frost

manages to apply these terms simultaneously, one strengthening the structure of the other. It seems that Frost's aesthetic system that creates the particular metaphor in this case comes with its own ontology, which also carries within itself its own basic metaphors. These underlying assumptions or general beliefs in this case could be stated as 'Life is toil', 'Work is strenuous', 'Knowing entails facts', 'Dreams are pleasurable' and 'Dreams are recurrent'. Work has the ontological qualities of repetition, physicality and concreteness, whereas dream can be said to be the subconscious, pleasurable, incoherent and recurrent. In between the two is the fact, which leads to knowing and seems to have the greatest ontological status of all according to this metaphor.

It could be stated then, that according to Robert Frost's system of aesthetics as exemplified here, fact inhabits the dream that is reached through physical labor. The source domain qualities of the dream are mapped onto the qualities of the physical labor (in this case cutting hay with a scythe), and vice versa, since we are discussing a copula construction here. Thus physical labor gains the schema of the dream in its recurrence and pleasure, just as dream gains some of the qualities of labor, mainly the supposition that laboring leads to knowledge of a kind. Fact in this construction is then rendered coherent but somewhat unconscious and fleeting, although it seems to be obtainable through repetition, swift motion and the acquired purity of form that is inherent in physical work such as mowing. Hence, the emerging metaphorical model might look something like this, with the arrows representing the process of mapping between the different domains:

Specific metaphor: **Basic metaphors:**

Life is toil.
Work is strenuous.
Knowing entails facts.
Dreams are pleasurable.
Dreams are recurrent.

Notable is then that in the case of the mixed compound metaphor, mapping seems to occur not only between the source and target domains, but also within the different ontological schemas of the target domain elements. Metaphorical power is derived from both the reasonability and structure of the fact and labor and the extended optionality of the dream. As was noted earlier, it seems that this interrelationship between fact, dream and physical labor forms the foundation of Robert Frost's epistemological and aesthetic system, where a job well-done becomes an entity of the beautiful and a source of knowledge. Of course, such facts cannot be learned from books but rather apprehended through feeling and experience gained from work.

It appears that in his poem, Robert Frost redefines the term *fact* to refer to an element in the beautiful that can only be known through the successful fusion of the two elements, concentration and repetition typical of physical labor on one hand and the flight of imagination and subconsciousness, which is typical of dreaming, on the other. As Poirier holds, the type of knowing that is imposed by this metaphorical construction is "muscular and active", and the dream where the fact becomes actualized is sweet, because it involves images of birth or rebirth of the self.[176] Concentrating on the little things or the actualities of the subject will bring out the facts, the grain of things. Likewise, concentrating on the purity of every sweep of the scythe will unveil facts about the worker and his role in the world. The preconditions and limits that this system of knowing carries with itself will be further defined in chapter four.

However, there are occurrences of other types of dreams as well in Frost's poems. A dream that is reached through rest instead of labor seems to transport men to a state of fancy rather than to the sources of knowledge. A good example of this is Frost's poem "The Vantage Point", which appears just before "Mowing" in *A Boy's Will*. Form is nearly the same, that of a sonnet, but this time the poem is divided into two stanzas. Again, the speaker perceives mankind from his privileged seclusion. As is the case in "Mowing" the

setting is apparently that of mid-summer. While resting amidst nature on a hillside in the

warmth of the sun his spiritual wandering soon become to resemble a dream. The bright

light of the hot summer day, which the poem defines, becomes the target domain of the

metaphor. Perhaps this dream scenario is "the gift of idle hours" that "Mowing"

admonishes or denies later on the same page.

> If tired of trees I seek again mankind,
>   Well I know where to hie me – in the dawn
>   To a slope where the cattle keep the lawn.
> There amid lolling juniper reclined,
> Myself unseen, I see in white defined
>   Far off the homes of men, and farther still,
>   The graves of men on an opposing hill,
> Living or dead, whichever are to mind
>
> And if by noon I have too much of these,
>   I have but to turn on my arm, and lo,
>   The sunburned hillside sets my face aglow,
> My breathing shakes the bluet like a breeze,
>   I smell the earth, I smell the bruisèd plant,
>   I look into the crater of the ant. (17)

The first stanza implies that the speaker has been wandering in the realm of nature, but is

now making a return to the world of man. Thus, we are again on the same barrier as in

"The Oft-Repeated Dream", but in this case the light and tone of the verse are drastically

different. There is no of the fright or fear of the unknown, but rather the speaker is

playfully and willfully wavering, quite free to follow the call of either domain, although he

decides to pursue neither while the dream of the idle hours lasts.

Poirier states that the most notable feature about the whole poem is that it brings

the speaker to an intimate interaction with nature, yet it yields very little or no

metaphoric significance from that realm.[177] When man is alone within the sphere of

nature, his own identity becomes questioned: he cannot "make" the world or determine

his place within its system.[178] Seemingly the only metaphorical conception that the poem

serves to define then is the quality of light and the feeling of whiteness, which was

mentioned in passing also in "For Once, Then, Something", where it became a representation of the metaphysical.

Here the author perceives the world of men, but only vaguely as in a haze, "in white defined". The basic metaphor "Lifetime is a day" might suggest that the speaker is young and still trying to find his place within the universe, but feels at this moment more close to order of nature than that of men. But since there is no structure of "whiteness" that the metaphor could inherit or elaborate, the power of the metaphor remains quite weak and meandering. Neither is there any implication that the poem would attempt to activate basic metaphors which unite men and nature, such as "People are plants". Such interpretations seem almost intentionally blocked by the lazy feeling of the verse, which lolls in its place almost as the juniper with no apparent direction.

3.3.2 Image Metaphors

Image metaphor is another technical term that is established in Lakoff and Turner's study. The mapping of the images resembles the mapping process between the general conceptual metaphors and the specific lingual metaphors as explained above, but instead of concepts, the image metaphor simply maps mental images onto other mental images, either as a part-whole relationship or as an attribute.[179] As an example of a part-whole structure, one might mention an image of a jar and its lid. It would not be difficult to map the image of a jar on a political debate, for example; in this image the jar might contain a group of people debating and the lid could be interpreted as the person who stifles the debate as so often happens in hierarchical systems inherent in politics. In fact, many political cartoons and caricatures customarily make good use of image metaphors.

Attribute structures that are mapped from one domain to another may include color, physical shape, curvature, and for events, aspects such as repetitive versus non-repetitive, open-ended versus completed or brief versus extended.[180] Not unusual is the

custom of comparing a person to a diamond, for example. *He is a diamond in the rough* is a common metaphorical evaluation of someone who seems to possess great potentiality as regards some side of his/her character, but has not yet managed to render his/her craft or art the crystal clarity, toughness and precise form that is typical of diamonds. Usually, the human mind makes the connection between the two images on its own without much guidance from the target. In fact, an abundance of detail in the source domain image often seems to limit image-mappings to highly specific cases. As Lakoff and Turner point out, a proliferation of detail makes the image metaphor "one-shot"[181], or disposable, understandable within a context but not very likely to be utilized outside that specific mapping.

It seems rather paradoxical then that poetry often builds its structural basis on this rather shaky metaphorical quality of one-shot or disposable images that are highly dependent on both time and place. And yet in the optimal situation, a poem manages to appeal to a large number of people even centuries after its original composition. One solution to this puzzle is readily supplied by Lakoff and Turner. As their quite plausible finding states, image metaphors rarely work alone but rather trigger and reinforce conceptual and inferential metaphors, or in the opposite case, attempt to disturb our understanding about the target domain or break our expectations about the image correspondence.[182] Thus, an image metaphor is often only the starting-point in the chain of transferring metaphorical meanings. Comparing the beauty of a person to a rose, for example, may trigger the basic conceptual metaphor of people as plants, which when put together with the concept of time may lead to the understanding of time as a devourer or a reaper.

It could be stated that image metaphors are decidedly epiphorical in nature, triggering wider and wider domains, whereas conceptual metaphors seem to fall under the definition of the diaphor in that they concentrate on mapping a single structure on

another. And of course, it is even more likely that both tendencies are present at the same time, much owing to the fact that clear distinctions between image metaphors and conceptual metaphors are impossible to make. Since nearly every image possesses a structure of at least some kind, it is rather difficult to indicate exactly when an expression in the metaphorical relationship is taken for its imaginistic value and when its structure is involved.

A valid example of the complex relationship between images and structures might be the following. Let us imagine a picture where a single drop of water falls into the surface of a pond. The drop becomes one with the vast body of water, but at the same time it generates a system of circular waves, which proceeds in all directions at the same speed, starting from the point of contact. It would not be difficult to understand this image as a metaphor for a piece of information that someone has leaked to the media; here the drop represents the piece of information and pond the media. Any information that one journalist receives is likely to spread through the whole field of journalists, the closest colleagues receiving knowledge first, of course, but eventually everyone will know the fact that first caused the waves of information, and waves will cease to exist.

Understanding of the drop and the pond involves dealing with image metaphors, but structures and attributes of the event come to play when the spreading of information (or the process of waves) is concerned. As an event, this image is irrevocable and nonreversible: once the drop makes contact with the surface, there is no stopping the waves, just as it is usually impossible to hinder the spreading of information. In this case, power of the metaphor may be derived from the height of the waves, magnitude of the splash, or speed of the motion; the more unexpected and important the piece of information is, the more rapidly it is likely to spread, and the bigger its effect will be. It is quite simple to modify this image to suit different purposes: if we were to imagine several

drops being dropped into the pond simultaneously, for example, the image could be interpreted as an information overflow, where waves are likely to repress each other.

3.3.3 Ironic Synecdoche in Frost's Poetry

One needs only to plough through the index of Frost's collected poems to notice that his verse too is teeming with highly specific cases of the image metaphor. In most cases, the source domain that contains the basic metaphors is adopted from the realm of nature; Frost's poetry often entails giving human interpretations and formulations to natural phenomena such as "Stars", "Birches", "Pea Brush" or "Snow", just to name a few. It is equally often the case that it is a human actor within the poem that does the observations of nature while being surrounded or dazzled by it. As Poirier notes, it is often the case that nature in itself is rather passive and silent for Frost; it is the result of human labor that makes it audible and worth listening to.[183] For example, Poirier considers the whispering scythe in "Mowing" an analogue of Frost's poetic "making"[184]. Poetry inhabits the facts of nature that we must educate ourselves in, but as Poirier states, it would be wrong to think that we can govern the facts.[185]

A good example of human actors functioning within imagistic nature in Frost is the poem titled "Blueberries". Despite its length, nearly four pages or 105 lines, this poem follows a strict structural form for the most part. As was the case with "Road not Taken", the parallelistic structure in "Blueberries" is iambic tetrameter: there are four stressed syllables in each line, where each unstressed syllable is followed by a stressed one. Rhyme pattern is nearly overly simplistic and straightforward, *aabb*, which seems to imply candidness from the author. The most obvious non-parallel variable seems to be the number of lines included in each stanza, which ranges from one to eighteen. This may be due to the fact that the whole poem is in fact a conversation consisting of two human

counterparts, who quite naturally make shorter and longer statements. Yet, the poem seems to roll on effortlessly on its own, starting from the opening stanza:

> "You ought to have seen what I saw on my way
> To the village, through Patterson's pasture today:
> Blueberries as big as the end of your thumb,
> Real sky-blue, and heavy, and ready to drum
> In the cavernous pail of the first one to come!
> And all ripe together, not some of them green
> And some of them ripe! You ought to have seen!" (59)

The flow of the text is interrupted by line number four, where a measure is added, flipping the metric structure around to trochee for a while. At the same time, it creates an element of deviation, which seems to divide the stanza into two parts, much like a breakwater or a pier would do in an ocean. If the extra syllable, which in this case seems to be *real*, was deleted, the whole stanza could be subjected straightforwardly to the iambic pentameter and nothing would stand out. As for the rhyme pattern of the stanza, it seems that the fifth line breaks the norm in that it does not fit into the *aabb* structure, but is rather a compulsory attribute to the fourth line, because without *the cavernous pail*, blueberries would not *drum* in anything. It seems that with lines four and five Frost is looking for an accent, which calls attention to the extraordinary quality of the berries. It follows quite naturally, that the desire of a human being is to be the first one out in the pasture picking the berries.

Thus far, the mental image of the blueberries that Frost's poem provides does not evoke very large schemes in the target domain. However, the epiphorical nature of the blueberry becomes inherent through the elaborate explication that follows. After the initial stanza, attention is soon diverted from Patterson, the owner of the pasture, to the Loren family that is credited in surviving to a great extent on purely nature's offerings.

> "Who cares what they say? It's a nice way to live,
> just taking what Nature is willing to give,
> Not forcing her hand with harrow and plow." (61)

Of course, it is rather tempting to take these phrases out of their context and read a lot more from these lines than simple words justify. Expressed here seem to be sentiments about nature and the poet's place in it that the author himself might correspond to. Yet, one should be cautious in making judgment calls based purely on poems about the doctrines that Frost believed nature to impose. As Poirier comments, it would be far too simplistic to claim that any fact in Frost's poetry should be viewed as a symbol or an emblem of some element of the divine plan of nature.[186] This reasonable doubt seems to be further reinforced by the fact that towards the end, the focus of the poem shifts from nature *per se* to the human attitude towards nature. In the speakers, the Lorens' seeming closeness to mother nature triggers feelings of longing, or even envy. As a resolution, the old friends decide to rush out to the pasture the following morning before the Lorens reach the idolized blueberry patch. After all, it has been a long time since they last picked berries, almost long enough to have made them forget all about the blissful experience of berry picking:

> [...] And the sun shines out warm: the vines must we wet.
> It's so long since I picked I almost forget
> How we used to pick berries: we took one look round
> Then sank out of sight like trolls underground,
> And saw nothing more of each other, or heard,
> Unless when you said I was keeping a bird
> Away from its nest, and I said it was you. (62)

The memory enforces the same ideal further and further, almost to the point where one has to doubt the sincerity of the author. Frost seems to be creating a feeling of intentional irony in portraying the speakers as individuals who have been lost, wandered outside the realm of nature where berry picking is a chore or an every day activity rather than an item of idolization.

The basic concepts underlying the image metaphor become nearly self-evident, leading to a chain of allusion, that reaches undertones of biblical nature: "Nature is a provider." "Realm of nature is that of paradise." "Man has been banished from the

paradise." "Trial of existence is an ongoing process." "Winner of the trial of existence gains access back to paradise." Thus it seems that the image of the blueberries is not the forbidden fruit, but rather a key of re-entering the paradise, at least in the minds of the speakers.

While the middle part of the poem is concerned with spreading the image of the blueberries to wider and wider contexts, the ending of the last stanza seems to crystallize and reinstate the mental image once again that was already presented at the beginning of the poem. With the exception of the last line that forms a metaphor in itself, these lines represent a diaphorical use of imaginistic language, that seems to focus around one image and render it as concrete as possible:

> [...]You ought to have seen how it looked in the rain,
> The fruit mixed with water in layers of leaves,
> Like two kinds of jewels, a vision for thieves." (62)

As is often the case with Frost, the last lines create a puzzle that adds something relevant and new to the level of the conceptual metaphors. Here it is implied that it may be impossible to realize the basic conceptual metaphor "Winner of the trial of existence gains access back to paradise" – the domain of nature appears to be permanently closed to man and entered only in an illegitimate way of stealth and mischief.

Apart from the first stanza, the reader receives no further information about the attributes of the berries that are worth idolizing or imagining: *as big as the end of your thumb*, *real sky-blue*, *heavy*, *all ripe* is as close as we get to understanding the reasons why exactly it is that the speaker covets the berries so tremendously. Neither are we given information as to what the speakers would do once in the possession of the berries. Thus, these specific attributes of the source domain seem to resist being mapped onto anything in the target domain. The mind of the reader seems unable to make any comparisons between the two domains that would be a tell-tale sign of the functioning of the image metaphor, simply because the target domain seems to appear only with the introduction of the

conceptual metaphors in the middle part of the poem. In fact, if the middle part of the poem was deleted, the whole poem would constitute nothing but an accentuated image that is spoken of in utmost admiration, and metaphorical transference of meaning would be unlikely to occur at all.

As a whole, it could be stated that Frost's handling of the image of the blueberries functions as an ironic synecdoche; as the poem progresses, the simple image of the blueberries becomes representative of the more comprehensive idea of nature. More specifically, the image metaphor is used as a wry remark to portray the attitude of people who have a craving back to something that they have in all actuality never been members of. The same cynical attitude towards city dwellers who pretend to be part of the country if it serves their interests can be found elsewhere in Frost, for example in the poem "Christmas Trees", which begins with this poignant image:

> The city had withdrawn into itself
> And left at last the country to the country;
> When between whirls of snow not come to lie
> And whirls of foliage not yet laid, there drove
> A stranger to our yard, who looked the city,
> Yet did in country fashion in that there
> He sat and waited till he drew us out,
> A-buttoning coats, to ask him who he was. (105-106)

Sixty lines in all, "Christmas Trees" too forms an image – not of the trees themselves, but rather about the people who try to replace the natural trial of existence with "The trial by market everything must come to." For the stranger that is presented at the beginning of the poem has come to the country to suggest that the speaker should cut down a thousand of his fir trees and sell them to him, because they would make attractive Christmas trees in the city. The force and attraction of the "trial by market" is further emphasized by speaker's hesitation about the matter: should he yield to the urge of selling the trees for temporary monetary gain or keep the trees and regard them merely for their aesthetic value?

Clearly, the Christmas tree is further from the definition of the image metaphor than were the blueberries in that it remains nearly unspecified in the target domain of the specific metaphor. Rather, the image of the Christmas tree is only the initial point of contact, from which the argumentation between market value and aesthetic value starts to progress. Because it is not bound by words, the image of the fir tree is mainly modified by its epiphorical potentiality. As such, it forms a *presentational symbol* rather than an image metaphor.

It seems clear that "Blueberries" as a whole serves a multitude of semiotic purposes. On one hand, the poem clearly has elements that function as image metaphors, triggering many basic conceptual metaphor - this being especially true of the middle part of the poem - but on the other, it seems to focus on the object itself at the beginning and end of the poem, making the acquired mental image as similar as possible with the original mental image that the author had in mind. Bearing all of this in mind, it could be stated that the essential semiotic function of the middle part of the poem is to trigger the source domain of basic conceptual metaphors from the image of the berries, while the beginning and end are concerned with creating an accurate and believable *icon* of the blueberries. Respectively, the essential semiotic function of "Christmas trees" is to function as a presentational symbol that evokes the general concepts of market value, both in terms of man and nature. Ultimately it seems then, that in both cases the image metaphor is further defined to resemble a synecdoche.

4. Main Themes and Metaphors in Frost's poetry

The artist that he was, Robert Frost liked to keep an air of mystery in his prose writings as well. Despite it was many times requested of him, he never gave a coherent theory as to what he saw as the functions of poetic language. As Gerber puts it, Frost never attempted to take the double roles of a critic and an artist simultaneously[187]. What he did say clearly, however, is that he was strongly opposed to becoming just a "transparent eyeball"[188] of actual events in his poetry. Sticking to the transparency of the fact would for Frost mean getting totally lost. On the other hand, he did not want to make his facts into fictions. In general, he refused transforming reality into something sublime, greater-than-life experiences.[189] For Frost, the practice of poetry has to be strictly factual.

As Poirier puts it, Frost's truth "grows up inside of finite experiences"[190]. If there is a realization of truth, it happens after the fact, for the artist can never predict which incidents will turn into poetry. Finite experiences may lead to infinite revelations, but only in the mind of the reader and not at the level of language. In this respect, it could be stated that Frost was a lyric poet more than anything else, who uses small but very concrete images, which may imply the metaphoricity but never reveal the source domain completely or directly. Metaphorical meaning comes only after the reader has placed the particulars of a poem into a context of his/her own experience. This is the fact that gives Frost's poetry the distinctive voice that it has become known for in the modern world. The adherence to form, on the other hand, represented for Frost a protective element against the chaos and confusion, although at the same time, it was a restrictive element that the writer could play against.[191]

It seems that Frost avoided the question of the poem's referentiality by concentrating on making the language of his poetry as accurate and as appropriate as possible. More than anything, Frost wanted his poems to have a distinctive voice[192] that

would make any questions about the truthfulness of experience unnecessary. By the same token, the importance of the "sentence sound" was a means by which he omits the sublimity of poetic experience. His alternative to the creation of sublime sensation was the creation of sound that would echo the uniqueness of everyday experience.[193] As Gerber states, Frost's aim was a delicate balance between beauty and utility – a song with sense, sung in a language that reflects the language of people around him.[194]

By concentrating on the sound and soundness of his words, Frost finds support from Ezra Pound, another of his contemporaries. In his analysis of poetic language, *The ABC of Reading*, Pound recognizes three ways as to how a word can be loaded with meaning. The first, *phanopoeia*, is concerned with visuality of the words and relies to a great extent on the success of the referential relation between the word and its referent, while in *melopoeia* the reader's attention is turned to the tune of the poem and the sounds that the words make. In *logopoeia*, *phanopoeia* and *melopoeia* are combined in forming phrases, sentences and stanzas.[195] In Pound's opinion, a successful piece of literature manages to employ *logopoeia* in a way that is refreshing and thus reveals something new about the nature of language.

Certainly it can be said that Frost was very deliberate and skilled when it comes to his use of *melopoeia* and *logopoeia*. Mostly sticking to what he saw as the natural choice for rhythm in the English language – the iambic pentameter – he was generally opposed to the experimentations with the poetic form that many writers of his era seemed to promote.[196] For Frost, the constant upkeep of the form was not a restriction but means to a greater freedom of expression. As he concludes in "The Constant Symbol", "the baby giant" must abide to the rules of the language. In this game, form is the only constant symbol.

> To the right person it must seem naive to distrust form as such. The very words of the dictionary are a restriction to make the best of or stay out of and be silent. Coining new words isn't encouraged. We play the words as we find them. We

> make them do. [...] The mind is a baby giant who, more provident in the cradle than he knows, has hurled his paths in life all round ahead of him like playthings given – data so-called. They are vocabulary, grammar, prosody, and diary, and it will go hard if he can't find stepping stones of them for his feet wherever he wants to go.[197]

Indeed it seems that Frost uses form as a shield of security in a world that seems indifferent to the concerns of the individual. There is a sense that a man must learn to find happiness in the little things that he knows instead of continuously reaching out towards the skies.

In the following, I will try to chart a few of Frost's poems in light of the theories that were presented in chapters two and three. The chief purpose of the analysis will be to pin-point Robert Frost's poems on several different levels of language, ranging from particularity to universality, iconic signification to metaphoric meaning, use of images to use of structures. Throughout the analysis, different themes that were central to Frost will be touched upon, but the importance of voice, form and metaphor will be emphasized throughout, since these seem to be three of the most crucial elements in understanding Frost's verse. It should be noted, however, that this is only one take on the subject, which does not propose universal applicability. There is no doubt much more to say about Robert Frost's poetry than what has been said previously in this study and what will be said in the following.

As has been noted earlier, any single poem can be examined as a fusion of particular and universal tendencies of language. It seems that these are the smallest common denominators that nearly all theories and theoretical terms of poetry accommodate. The table below is an attempt to categorize different theories and terms based on their placement on the scale of particular and universal uses of language. Naturally, the classifications are tentative and by no means fixed, since the accentuations of different theoretical terms can always be argued.

Still, some sort of grouping according to shared features seems useful in analyzing poetry. By either falling under the definition of some category or violating against it, the poet's language should reveal, if not its essence, at least different distinguishable characteristics. The presupposition of this typology is that a poem is indeed a combination of different tendencies, sense and sensa, and that its significance moves constantly between the different levels from particularities of text to the universality of meaning, according to the context in which it is interpreted.

	PARTICULARITY OF TEXT	<----------->	UNIVERSALITY OF MEANING
type of poem	lyric	drama	epic
methods of presentation	image, allegory	symbolism	schematism
typical speaker(s)	inferred, present	known identity	narrative, absent
meaning derived from	melopoeia, sensa	phanapoeia	logopoeia, sense
type of focus in language	diaphor	---	epiphor
accented part of metaphor	vehicle	---	tenor
mapping theory	specific metaphor	---	basic metaphors

"For Once, Then Something" was examined as an isolated pictorial, for example, which seemed to focus on the diaphorical power of poetic metaphor. By concentrating on the particular level of language, it ultimately strikes a universal cord as well as images and allegories grow out of their context. In this regard, every atom of every image contains a universe within itself. "Blueberries" and "Christmas Trees", on the other hand, tell a story and portray dialogues, which have conflicting actions and mixed emotions embedded both to the level of the particular text as well as the level of universal sense. It was stated that these poems become ironic synecdoches in portraying people who think they have a craving back to the nature.

In all actuality, "Blueberries" and "Christmas Trees" are examples of dramatic poetry, where the symbolical or conventional value of words and phrases is more essential than is the image or icon itself. The same could be stated about "Mowing", albeit here we have to make some reservations. Although it does tell a story, "Mowing" appears to fall under the definition of lyric poetry more naturally, for here we are dealing more with form

than content. The whole poem is certainly a metaphor, and a very enigmatic one at that, which is more interested in developing the iconistic properties of the image rather than rendering it symbolic networks of reference.

By the same token, "Road Not Taken" seems to be one notch closer to the definition of drama than "Mowing", although it too follows rather stringent form, which in Frost seems to be a trademark of lyric poetry. As was noted earlier, "Road Not Taken" is fundamentally a parallel construction, which seems more keen in defining the sensa qualities of the impression of crossroads than crafting the sense of making the choice between on of the paths. The aesthetics of the sound and imagery outweigh the ethics of moral choice.

4.1 The Design that Was Not There

Examples of epic poetry are more difficult to come by in Frost, perhaps because Frost was decidedly against elevating his observations into schemas of universal stature. In most cases, he did not wish to force the reader into accepting any predetermined interpretation for his metaphors. It seems that a few exceptions to this rule can be found, however, from the collection *A Further Range*, which was published in 1936. Here I am referring to two poems, namely "Design" and "Departmental". Of course, they are far from being epics of mythical proportions, which one would be more likely to find in romantic prose.

As Gerber notes, Frost was in general overtly hesitant or "timorous" in dealing with larger mysteries of life or the metaphysics of this world and the next.[198] And yet it seems that both "Design" and "Departmental" seem to guide the reader rather heavily into following a certain path of reading by undertaking ethical considerations. We are lead onto the gates of the next world, but not offered even a peek beyond the line. Besides the

unwillingness of making moral judgments, which is archetypal of Frost, trust in instincts

replaces reason and reasoning, which Winters considers a categorical sign of romanticism

in Frost.[199]

Frost himself said of the "Design" that it is very "undramatic in the speech

entirely", which according to Poirier gives it an induced feeling of near stasis.[200] In other

words, it resembles an equilibrium, where not much happens at the level of surrounding

reality. In this respect, this sonnet resembles "Mowing" or "The Vantage Point" as an

isolated pictorial, but here it seems that the scope moves from the particularity of text to

the universality of thought very quickly.

> I found a dimpled spider, fat and white,
> On a white heal-all, holding up a moth
> Like a white piece of rigid satin cloth –
> Assorted characters of death and blight
> Mixed ready to begin the morning right
> Like the ingredients of a witches' broth –
> A snow-drop spider, a flower like a froth,
> And dead wings carried like a paper kite.
>
> What had that flower to do with being white,
> The wayside blue and innocent heal-all?
> What brought the kindred spider to that height,
> Then steered the white moth thither in the night?
> What but design of darkness to appall?
> If design govern in a thing so small. (302)

The overtly religious or Christian tune of this sonnet hardly remains unnoticed. It seems

proved beyond doubt that the speaker is pondering about the ways of nature and God,

and whether there is a possibility of design to all things.[201] The position of faltering belief

is a recurrent feature in Frost, as Johannes Kjørven reminds us in his study. It is often the

case that the facts and beliefs are pulling in opposite directions, and as a consequence,

Frost's poetic language is caught between expressions of belief and unbelief.[202]

The metaphoricity of the imagery overruns the iconic value of the phrases in

"Design"; we are lead into reading the poem for its symbolical value. Certainly at play are

the conceptual metaphors, for example "Life is a possession" and "Nature is a devourer",

mixed together with the diabolical and yet unstated image of the spider's web. On one hand, it seems that the web in all its fragility and symmetry would necessarily have to be an element of the divine design, yet on the other, the purpose of the design is the destruction of another life. As Randall Jarrell remarks, the whole poem is full of such ambiguous opposing pairs and contradictions; it is a "catastrophe that is too whitely catastrophic to be accidental, too impossibly unlikely ever to be a coincidence".[203]

Another part of the divinity discussion has to do with the white heal-all, which seems an element of innocence and purity, and yet it seems the perfect camouflage for the deadly spider. As was the case in "For Once, Then, Something" and "The Vantage Point" Frost uses white as a color which implies metaphysical considerations. White takes on many symbolical meanings in Frost's poetry. In "For Once, Then, Something" it represented an evasive conception of the ultimate truth, in "The Vantage Point" the separation from society and spiritual wandering, and here it is employed as a sign of the diabolical nature of the divine design. Among other things, whiteness is the paradoxical symbol of life that springs from death, as Kangaspunta remarks.[204]

Thus, the specific metaphor of "Design" is an inventive mixture of the image and concept metaphors, where most of the power of the text comes from the epiphoricity of the imagery. It evokes several schemas in the mind of the reader, on two occasions rather bluntly with simile constructions ("Like a white piece of rigid satin cloth–", "Like the ingredients of a witches' broth–"), which seem to carry the reading towards biblical interpretations of funerals and witchcraft. Hence, the sense of the poem becomes more stressed than does the sensa, the message more emphasized than the form. This poem craves to be put into context, examined as a representation of a greater scheme.

In this regard, it would seem justified to treat "Design" as an epic poem rather than lyric or drama. The drama elements are not there, simply because all the action that there is is rather one-sided; the game of life is already over, when the moth has flown into

the carefully crafted web of the spider. Thus, a dramatic version of this poem might have to do with following the events before the moth flew into its death. And yet, the poem contains some elements of a lyric as well. It captures a specific moment in life and the feelings that go with it. The narrator is present, and although he does not take part in the action with his persona, he imagines the morals that go with it.

Still, perhaps the matter that categorizes "Design" under the epic most clearly is the way in which it guides the reading process with its content. As Poirier notes, "Design" seems to activate a readily accepted agreement about how reality is perceived; reality forms itself in shapes that one then "finds", sending signals that offer "more than you can cope with" yet "less than you need"[205]. Thus, the relation between the perception and the universe is one of correspondence, where the truth of the original experience of Christianity is not questioned. In effect, the narrator is trying to discover the ways in which his perception might fit into the predetermined plan explained to all Christians by the Bible. But as Poirier has it, Christianity was for Frost only one of the ways in which he can feel baffled about something,[206] not a normative rule of ethics.

Although it is loaded with similar type of material and God is even explicitly mentioned, "Departmental" follows a clearly lighter tone of voice when compared to "Design", almost to the extent that it starts to resemble a children's rhyme with its short, easy-to-read lines and the prevalent *aabb* rhyming. A fairly long poem, 43 lines in all, "Departmental" contains only two stanzas, or in fact 41 lines and a two-line conclusion. The first 41 lines could be labeled the unfolding of the comic drama about the ants and the last two its conclusion. In other words, we are told an entertaining tale or a fairy-tale, as it seems, and then given its moral, if there be any. Compared to the "normal" iambic foot of the "Design", this poem follows a rather un-Frostian dactylic foot in trimeter for the most part, where each stressed syllable is followed by two unstressed ones. The actors

of the poem all come from the world of the insects. The narrator stays neutral, holding no

moral dispositions, until the last line:

> An ant on the tablecloth
> Ran into a dormant moth
> Of many times his size.
> He showed not the least surprise.
> His business wasn't with such.
> He gave it scarcely a touch,
> And was off on his duty run.
> Yet it he encountered one
> Of the hive's enquiry squad
> Whose work is to find out God
> And the nature of time and space,
> He would put him onto the case.
> Ants are a curious race;
> One crossing with hurried tread
> The body of one of their dead
> Isn't given a moment's arrest–
> Seems not even impressed.
> But he no doubt reports to any
> With whom he crosses antennae,
> And they no doubt report
> To the higher-up at court.
> Then word goes forth in Formic:
> "Death's come to Jerry McCormic,
> Our selfless forager Jerry.
> Will the special Janizary
> Whose office it is to bury
> The dead of the commissary
> Go bring him home to his people.
> Lay him in state on a sepal.
> Wrap him for shroud in a petal.
> Embalm him with ichor of nettle.
> This is the word of your Queen."
> And presently on the scene
> Appears a solemn mortician;
> And taking formal position,
> With feelers calmly atwiddle,
> Seizes the dead by the middle,
> And heaving him high in air,
> Carries him out of there.
> No one stands round to stare.
> It is nobody else's affair.
>
> It coudn't be called ungentle.
> But how thoroughly departmental. (287-289)

The stress is on the melopoeia, the sound and the feel of the lines, and phanapoeia: much of the appeal of the poem has to do with the reader's ability to envision the comings and goings of the ants on the tablecloth. Although the ponderings of time and space and God are mentioned briefly but openly, the over-all tone is that of comedy, much owing to the nearly asthmatic rhythm of the verse. There seem to be no philosophical allusions or predetermined religious morals, but rather neutral narrative, where the speaker is absent, and the actors are known. The reader is not forced into accepting any deliberate interpretations about how the reality and its perception should coincide. It suffices for the narrator to label the actions of the ants as "departmental", without going any further into ethical considerations – perhaps he is not a member of the metaphysics department.

Of course, it would be easy to infer humans as the tenor of the metaphor, if one was to read the whole poem for its metaphorical quality – particularly since one of the ants is named "Jerry McCormic". Gerber is one of the theoreticians to do so, calling the whole poem "a near-perfect combination of thought with art".[207] As a result of taking such a path of interpretation, the supposed ant-life is crafted into a presentational symbol, where ants are given names and different traits of character.

Although comparing people and their labors to those of ants is hardly a new invention, it is tempting to read the poem as a commentary about the state of the human society, where everyone does his task, but nothing holds the puzzle together and no-one sees the big picture. It seems that this is the point, expressed in a manner of laconism, yet very little new is revealed about the nature of man. The mapping happens by the means of inhumanization and humanization on the other hand, between the basic conceptual metaphors of "People are ants" and "Ants are soldiers" to the humanized specific metaphor of "Jerry McCormic" and the "solemn mortician". The concepts and structures that the specific metaphor accepts are inherited from the source domain with little or no elaboration. Consequently, if it is examined solely as a metaphor, the poem is a

dramatized and animated version of the basic metaphors, but not one that aims at opening new horizons.

Equally tempting is to compare the rhyme and meter of the poem to the movements of the ants. The dactylic foot seems to proceed akin to the way that ants move, with great intensity and breathtaking speed. The theme is developed in each line, but it is often necessary to read the next line before the full meaning of the previous one is revealed. Like in any good drama, the direction of the movement or the development of the plot remains hidden. We are not given any clues as to where the next turn of events will take the story. In this reading, the sensa of the poem seems more important than the sense, and it is tempting to read the poem as an epoche or an autonomous icon, suspending natural judgments.

However, this line of reading is soon blocked by the fact that much of the terminology of the ant-life is adopted directly from the sphere of man. The appearance of life that we see incorporates several features from the social sphere of humans, particularly those that have to do with different branches of government and the hierarchies by which people rule each other. Consequently, it is nearly impossible to avoid references to the source domain; mind seems to leap in that direction, even if we do not desire. Perhaps this upkeep of ambiguities could be called a trademark of Frost. As Poirier reminds us, Frost had a positive attitude towards elusiveness of meaning.[208] Playing with readers' interpretations was often his game, to the extent where the supposed truthfullness of verse is on many occasions only a cover-up for his role as a trickster or a deceiver.[209]

4.2 Facts that Form Fellowships: Frostian Aesthetics of Work

Although the sincerity of Frost's verse can sometimes be doubted, we can rest assured that metaphysics and the greater design of things was something that Frost contemplated

and considered honestly on many occasions. Even if his lines are often deceptive or "nonreferential"[210] as Poirier puts it, Frost seemed sincere in believing that human actions, especially labor, reveal and help create the nature[211], are part of the natural order of things. As was already briefly noted when discussing the metaphoricity in "Mowing", the importance of physical human labor as the starting point to the different ways of knowing cannot be overstated when discussing Frost's verse.

The same phenomenon can be found in "The Tuft of Flowers". Again, we find the repetitive pattern of work being reflected into the structure of the poem, and again fact, dream and knowing are mixed together to form one concretive metaphor. The poem is written in 20 consecutive couplets, each having an *aa* rhyme pattern, which alternates iambic pentameter and iambic tetrameter line length. The speaker is at the same time the principal actor, very much present. This is an account of what it feels like to make the hay, but somehow the focus of text seems to turn quickly inward, rather than making the outward leap to different dimensions. If this poem is regarded as a metaphor, then it is an example of a diaphorical one, where language serves the purpose of crystallizing the image of the moment.

There is a definite direction and purpose to the labor involved here, but the poem itself seems to linger on instead of progressing from one point to the next. Therefore, it is tempting to interpret the whole poem as an icon, which does not refer the reader to discovering the basic metaphor but is self-referential and points to the fellowship between men that it creates from within itself. This is the matter that differentiates "The Tuft of Flowers" from "Mowing" most clearly. Here someone else has already done the mowing before the speaker comes about to turn the hay, which is drying in the sun.

This for Frost is the type of knowing that forms fellowships between men, because it is to be believed that the mower has left certain items behind for the following worker to find. Indeed, communication between the two actors happens, but only with a

little help from mother Nature: it is only after the "bewildered butterfly" distracts the

worker's attention and interrupts his stern and solemn thoughts that he discovers the tuft

of flowers that the mower has spared from his scythe. The feeling of loneliness is soon

replaced by a newly realized brotherhood between men. Thus, the love of natural beauty

becomes the determining factor in the good ethics of being. Quoted below is the last half

of the poem ("he" in this case representing the bewildered butterfly):

> I thought of questions that have no reply,
> And would have turned to toss the grass to dry;
>
> But he turned first, and led my eye to look
> At a tall tuft of flowers beside a brook
>
> A leaping tongue of bloom the scythe had spared
> Beside a reedy brook the scythe had bared.
>
> The mower in the dew had loved them thus,
> By leaving them to flourish, not for us,
>
> Nor yet to draw one thought of ours to him,
> But from sheer morning gladness at the brim.
>
> The butterfly and I had lit upon,
> Nevertheless, a message from the dawn,
>
> That made me hear the wakening birds around,
> And hear his long scythe whispering to the ground,
>
> And feel a spirit kindred to my own;
> So that henceforth I worked no more alone;
>
> But glad with him, I worked as with his aid,
> And weary, sought at noon with him the shade;
>
> And dreaming, as it were, held brotherly speech
> With one whose thought I had not hoped to reach.
>
> "Men work together," I told him from the heart,
> "Whether they work together or apart." (22-23)

For Frost the dilemma about being a nature poet is to find a suitable equilibrium between

the society of man and the sphere of nature. As Harold H. Watts points out, it is often

necessary for Frost to eliminate the dialogue of society versus man in order to be able to

focus on the dialogue of nature and man, have as little human pressures as possible coming from other people.[212] Consequently, the typical man in Frost's verse is a nomad, who opens up towards nature, but is at mostly incapable of communicating directly with others of his kind.

However, in "The Tuft of Flowers" Frost seems to find a solution to the persistent problem by using the realm of nature as an intermediary between men. Nature is used as a reflector, on whose surface man may leave hints or clues of his presence for his fellow beings to discover. Thus, the chain of communication begins with the realization of the aesthetic value in the interrupted moment that the mower experiences "in the dew before the sun". The will to communicate the aesthetic pleasure to another being of the same order or simply the desire to keep beauty alive causes the mower to spare the flowers.

The little butterfly acts as the notification, like a tag on the mailbox which reads "you have mail" in the epistemological order of men. Hence, the tuft of flowers beside a reedy brook becomes to resemble the poem itself as a vehicle in the act of communication. It serves no immediate purpose, but is a signified or an icon in itself, which the speaker finds pleasing solely in the act of perception. Initially merely an empty sign, the flowers gain properties of a symbol when the speaker places them into an imaginary context or a scheme. For the reader, the whole experience reads as one experience. However, much pertaining to the nature of man, the pure aesthetics are soon replaced by ethics of being, when the speaker begins to feel the unity of men at work.

The actors of Frost's labor are constantly remaking the ideas of themselves through labor. Curious is that "The Tuft of Flowers" concludes with the introduction of a dreamlike state that is discovered somewhere within the domain of work, as was the case in "Mowing". As was already noted, Poirier devotes quite a lot of attention to the epistemological nature of Frostian labor. As Poirier states, the "muscular and active

knowing" involved in physical labor paves the way to a dream-like state of being and ultimately to images of birth or rebirth of the self.[213] In short, the epistemological system of Frost's labor poems could be presented in the following manner:

particularity of text and metaphor	-------->		universality of being and experience
repetitive, physical labor	thought, knowing	dream	rebirth of self, realization of God

In "Mowing", the narration follows this pattern directly, in "The Tuft of Flowers" the experience and realization of truth is negotiated by the involvement of a third agent, in this case the butterfly and the tuft of flowers, which come before the thought and knowing.

It is not difficult to see that the formula above seems to fit into the definition of lyric poetry. As we have seen earlier, a lyric poem starts with a depiction of one particular moment, or one specific metaphor in the target domain, and proceeds to the feelings connected to it – or one specific metaphor in the target domain, but when placed into a larger context, the experience is cast towards the universal end of the scale of the source domain. At the same time, physical action is replaced by mental contemplation. Thus there is a strong reason to believe that concentrating on the grain of things will ultimately bring out the essence or truth of any given subject.

In "The Ax-Helve" the formula of physical work leads to a concretive tie between two men, although this time there is no dream and consequently no allusions towards God or rebirth. A long drama, "The Ax-Helve" examines the human relationship between two neighbors. The ax-helve becomes the epiphorical vehicle of the metaphor, which quickly spreads its meaning through an expansive network of meanings. Unlike in "The Tuft of Flowers" the focus of verse is not on form, which here varies rather freely, but on the unfolding of the story and the tensions that arise from within.

From the handicraft of making a great ax-helves the story eventually evolves to knowledge and the birth of friendship between the narrator and his neighbor, Baptiste, who – being also versed in country things – wants the narrator to have better tools for chopping wood. What seems to be questioned is the type of knowledge that is provided and cherished by craftsmanship on one hand and the society on the other. Is it better to have an education and be content with machine-made ax-helves or to be uneducated but have the form pure? It is clear which kind of knowledge Baptiste supports, but the narrator's stance towards the human effort of his counterpart is that of skepticism, as is typical in much of Frost's poetry.[214] Quoted below are lines 69–81 and 94-102, the latter excerpt bringing the poem to a conclusion:

> He liked to have it slender as a whipstock,
> Free from the least knot, equal to the strain
> Of bending like a sword across the knee.
> He showed me that the lines of a good helve
> Were native to the grain before the knife
> Expressed them, and its curves were no false curves
> Put on it from without. And there its strength lay
> For the hard work. He chafed its long white body
> From end to end with his rough hand shut round it.
> He tried it at the eyehole in the ax-head.
> "Hahn, hahn," he mused, "don't need much taking down."
> Baptiste knew how to make a short job long
> For love of it, and yet not waste time either.
> [...]
> But now he brushed the shavings from his knee
> And stood the ax there on its horse's hoof,
> Erect, but not without its waves, as when
> The snake stood up for evil in the Garden–
> Top-heavy with a heaviness his short,
> Thick hand made light of, steel-blue chin drawn down
> And in a little – a French touch in that.
> Baptiste drew back and squinted at it, pleased:
> "See how she's cock her head!" (187-188)

In more ways than one, "The Ax-Helve" resembles "Blueberries", which was discussed earlier in this study at the end of chapter two. The style and design of narration are similar, progressing in long stanzas that have alternating rhythms and no apparent rhyme pattern, sometimes using even direct quotations from the speakers, of whom there are

again two. The semantic function of the ax-helve is in many ways comparable to the icon that was formed of the blueberries: it marks only the starting point of observation, and ultimately we learn more about the people whom the ax-helve brings together than we do of the helve itself.

Metaphoric mapping happens between the basic metaphors of "Knowing entails facts", "Nature is purity of form", "Realm of nature is that of paradise" and the target domain where the specific metaphor of the ax-helve is further qualified by the attributes "slender as a whipstock", "free from the least knot" and "native to the grain", for instance. Thus the target domain seems to question the source domain of the basic conceptual metaphor "Knowing entails facts" to a degree. Knowledge is certainly not always "slender" and "free from knots", yet this is the kind of knowing that the icon of the ax-helve seems to hold in greatest value. At the same time, it further enforces the basic conceptions "Nature is purity of form" and "Realm of nature is that of paradise".

The main significance of the ax-helve is its symbolic and practical meaning to people, not what it is like in the perception alone. In this sense, the ax-helve is a vehicle in the chain of communication, but a man-made one, as opposed to the blueberries or the tuft of flowers in previous examples. Therefore, the narrator is again prone to skepticism of biblical proportions up to the point, where the innocent but human-made helve of an ax becomes a representation of the snake in paradise. Two worlds and sets of values collide: those of education and cultural sophistication on one hand and the rural set on the other, where the wisdom of hands and heart are more essential than the wisdom of the head.

Jarrell applauds the last stanza of the poem as "an instant of grace", where the thing in itself, man's wit and classical style unite into one.[215] Richard Poirier is rather more subtle and fairly pessimistic in his behalf. He considers the same passage an another example of Frost's poetry that deals with man's fall from paradise. According to Poirier,

Frost's work poems, "The Ax-Helve" among them, are usually representations of the "intermediate realm", where something of the thing and something of the self are connected.[216] In an ideal world, the ax-helve should follow the lines of nature rather than the rules of bookishness, but in a fallen world it is often impossible to reach purity of natural form,[217] especially since the ax usually inflicts damage on natural order of things when placed in the hands of men. Thus, we have to be content with approximations,[218] such as ax-helves, which become representative of the human battle between cultural education and natural instinct inherent in craftsmanship.

4.3 The Desired and Undesired Harvest

At times the dialogue between Frost's men and nature may be interrupted, as Watts makes clear,[219] but it is often in the harvest of one form of another that the realms of men and nature are connected again. In many of Frost's poems, man takes on a more active role, is not just a passive agent or a spectator in the world of nature.[220] In particular, expressed in Frost's verse is a heartfelt tribute in for men who love their work within nature.[221]

This was the case in "The Ax-Helve" and this is the case also in "After Apple-Picking", which is another one of Frost's poems that depict physical work. As Poirier states, it is a "dream vision" where labor once again penetrates to the essential facts of natural life.[222] Sleep and dreaming are again present, but here with a different flavor. Whereas in "Mowing" and "Tuft of Flowers" the summer dream was an active one, here it is the drowsiness and the scent of the ripe harvest that fill the air. For Gerber on the other hand, "After Apple-Picking" serves as another instance of doubt and deception: in all its charming simplicity, we should be mindful of the fact that a poem is usually more than a sum total of its words:[223]

My long two-pointed ladder's sticking through a tree

Toward heaven still,
And there's a barrel that I didn't fill
Beside it, and there may be two or three
Apples I didn't pick upon some bough.
But I am done with apple-picking now.
Essence of winter sleep is on the night,
The scent of apples: I am drowsing off.
I cannot rub the strangeness from my sight
I got from looking through a pane of glass
I skimmed this morning from the drinking trough
And held against the world of hoary grass.
It melted, and I let it fall and break.
But I was well
Upon my way to sleep before it fell,
And I could tell
What form my dreaming was about to take.
Magnified apples appear and disappear
Stem end and blossom end,
And every fleck of russet showing clear.
My instep arch not only keeps the ache,
It keeps the pressure of a ladder-round.
I feel the ladder sway as the boughs bend.
And I keep hearing from the cellar bin
The rumbling sound
Of load on load of apples coming in.
For I have had too much
Of apple-picking: I am overtired
Of the great harvest I myself desired.
There were ten thousand thousand fruit to touch,
Cherish in hand, lift down and not let fall
For all
That struck the earth,
No matter if not bruised or spiked with stubble,
Went surely to the cider-apple heap
As of no worth.
Once can see what will trouble
This sleep of mine, whatever sleep it is.
Were he not gone,
The woodchuck could say whether it's like his
Long sleep, as I describe its coming on,
Or just some human sleep. (68-69)

The form of the poem, one long stanza and the alternating length of the lines seem

perfectly fitting to describe the feelings of the exhausted apple-picker; meter and rhyme

"appear and disappear" nearly as randomly as do apples on a windy day on boughs of a

tree, sometimes hiding behind leaves, other times showing clearly. Like the apple-picking,

the poem too is a labor of love, where a pattern may be found, but is soon lost again.

Thus as Gerber notes, the surface and the symbols behind it are analogical.[224] In all its length, the poem resembles the action that it depicts. As a metaphor, the poem is full of potentialities and allusions. It is similar to the metaphoricity of "Mowing" or "The Tuft of Flowers" in that it partakes in an event of harvest that is very physical, repetitive, and seemingly endless. Here the laborer is once more alone or detached, and the epistemological dividing line between different states of consciousness is more clearly defined than perhaps anywhere else in Frost's poetry. As the dream thickens, facts and knowing grow out of their context, but the realization of God is left for the reader's imagination.

As to its modality, the metaphor of apple-picking is closer to obligation or necessity than it is to possibility or ability; the ethics of work and nature force the apple farmer to take his ladder and climb one tree after another until all apples are in the cellar, despite weariness, bad weather, or physical aches. And despite all his effort and devotion, the farmer is unlikely to harvest every single one of his apples. In this sense, apples truly are "symbolic of spirit", as Poirier has it.[225] Although it may appear a fun activity at first, enthusiasm or desire are not enough to carry the laborer all through the harvest. Instead, one needs to be humble, pervasive and diligent – happiness is a realization that will happen sometime long after the fact, somewhere behind language in the middle of the long winter nights.

This spirit seems to work against the interpretation that Gerber proposes in his behalf. In my opinion, the actualities of imagery and sound are far too emphasized in order for the poem to be read as a simple allegory of a man's life, proceeding in orderly fashion from the spring towards winter, "ascending from the eager grasping of youth to the letting-go of age", as Gerber suggests.[226] If such was the case, there would be no need for the abundance of detail that we receive regarding the dream-like state of drowsiness, which the speaker so easily succumbs to. It seems that the self-referentiality of the icon is

again more important than is the referential relationship between the symbols and their referents.

And yet, the source domain of the metaphor is not difficult to chart. Presently available are the familiar basic metaphors, "Life is a toil", "Lifetime is a year", and "Time is a devourer", for example, but a new one with a religious flavor is revealed as well. "Man has fallen from grace" is an unpronounced metaphor that Poirier seems to pick out from the source domain metaphors of the poem.[227] At the same time, it is also one that could be added to the list of basic metaphors in "The Ax-Helve" above. Admittedly, words like "heaven" and the concept of the apple-tree itself are enough to convince the reader that something is said also about the confusion which men live in after their banishment from paradise. Still, as Poirier concludes, it would be erroneous to consider Frost a specifically religious poet, for it is only a coincidence that his words partake in the mythologies, which take a Christian shape.[228] After all the confusion, more attention is paid to the melopoeia and the feel of the verse than the elevated considerations of religious proportions.

A striking opposite to the harvesting of the apples in "After Apple-Picking" is provided in "Unharvested", where nothing is harvested by man but the scent of apples. If read in immediate succession to "After Apple-Picking" it seems that the narrator has had a peculiar change of heart. Whereas in "After Apple-Picking" every apple that so much as touched the earth was deemed worthless, "went surely to the cider-apple heap" as of no worth, here it is particularly the mass of fallen apples that is the greatest source of joy and delight to the speaker. Perhaps this is because the apples in this case are not a token of his unfinished duties, but someone else's concern, or quite possibly no-one's headache at all: The fact that the tree is behind a wall is a relief: at least the speaker knows that it is not in his department:

A scent of ripeness from over a wall.

> And come to leave the routine road
> And look for what had made me stall,
> There sure enough was an apple tree
> That had eased itself of its summer load,
> And of all but its trivial foliage free,
> Now breathed as light as a lady's fan.
> For there there had been an apple fall
> As complete as the apple had given man.
> The ground was one circle of solid red.
>
> May something go always unharvested!
> May much stay out of our stated plan,
> Apples or something forgotten and left,
> So smelling their sweetness would be no theft. (304-305)

As to its form, the poem is another alteration of the Frostian sonnet form, which seems to combine features from both the Italian and the English sonnet form quite freely. There are two stanzas, as there are in the Italian form,[229] but instead of an octave and a sestet, the poem comprises a ten-line narrative and a quatrain finish, which gives the poem its epigrammatic closing. The rhyme pattern, *abacbcdade edff*, contains six different rhymes and is also an alternated version of the typical sonnet rhyme-schemes.

It is inviting to see the form of the poem as an analogue to the narrator's inclination to derive sudden delight from a scheme of action that has been altered; "May much stay out of our stated plan" seems a justification also for the deviation in form. As Poirier reminds us, Frost is keen on the upkeep of form, but insists that form cannot be forced but rather has to find itself "by almost lucky accident".[230] In this case, the lucky accident is the discovery of a disheveled form. The narrator strays from his normal paths, as does the author from the sonnet form, which leads to a gestalt moment, much like the one in "The Tuft of Flowers". The exception is that this time information exchange occurs more between man and nature than within the sphere of man. It is perhaps owing to another man's negligence, not love of work, that the speaker receives his aesthetic sensation of pleasure.

A peculiar linking feature to "Blueberries" is found within the last line, where Frost is playing with different ideas of ownership. Whereas the unharvested and ripe blueberries were determined "a vision for thieves" at the end of "Blueberries", here the sweet smell of the unharvested apples "would be no theft". In "Blueberries" the two speakers wanted to own the vision and the sanctified idea of the blueberries. The berries as physical objects were theirs to take, so long as they made it to the unharvested patch in time, but the thought that such luck would fall on their hands seemed like a theft in itself. Here the situation is flipped around. The physical apples, or what there is left of them, are irrevocably out of the narrator's reach, because they are set behind a social barrier, a wall built by another man. However, the scent of the apples is something that not even the rightful owner of the apples cannot own. Hence, the narrator can benefit from the idea of the apples with no remorse.

An image of the apple is one that persuades the interpretation towards paradise once more, although it should be noted that in "Unharvested" there is not the slightest hint or desire to take a bite of the forbidden fruit. The explicit metaphor, "light as a lady's fan" seems to guide the reader in a similar direction as well; as it happens, Poirier sees Eva's charms and seductiveness behind this simile.[231] Certainly, it is difficult to read against this pattern. As a matter of fact, the familiar Frostian basic metaphor "Man has fallen from grace" becomes specific in the particular domain of the poem with "For there there had been an apple fall / As complete as the apple had given man." In the concluding quatrain there is even a wishful suggestion that perhaps the fall might not have occurred at all, if that other famous apple had remained "unharvested" in a like manner.

The Eden myth appears and reappears through much of Frost's verse, to the extent that some critics have considered it one of the archetypal patterns of Frost. George W. Nitchie states, for example, that a considerable portion of Frost's work can be

examined in light of the Eden myth.[232] And yet, Nitchie emphasizes that the fall of man

and the myth of Eden as such are not ubiquitous in Frost's work; it is rather the case that

the assumption of the Eden myth is a useful tool for the critic, because a great deal of

Frost's poetry seems to concern itself with themes and motifs that are the offspring of

Eden in one form or another.[233] In other words, Frost often reflects on the handling of the

myth of Eden by other writers, even if his poetry itself is not climbing the branches of the

forbidden tree. This being the case, it is useful for the interpreter to keep the Eden myth

"lurking somewhere in the background", when trying to shed new light of Frost's

poetry.[234]

4.4 The Safety Within Form

As has been stated by now on several occasions, form is the most typical Frostian method

of attaining security when chaos threatens from the outside. In the cases when the wild

tune threatens to smother the orderly conduct of the poem, the form and content fuse

into one single protective layer, where they are no longer separable from each other. As

Thompson has it, the mystery, wonder and magic of poetry for Frost is in the happy

marriage of structure and meaning, which together produce an autonomous unit that

defies attempts of separation.[235]

In "Desert Places" the obvious fear that is spoken outright is desolate state of

loneliness and the loss of poetic vision and expression. Not only is the poem a beautiful

reminder of Frost's unique tone of voice, but it is also a perfect example of the successful

marriage of form and content. Not much happens from the outset of things, as is typical

of Frost's diaphoric lyrics. The narrator is alone and the realm of nature is rapidly

becoming less and less recognizable, hence the focus of the text turns inward. In this

regard, "Desert Places" is an isolated pictorial, but it depicts more the mental state of the

narrator than the conditions of the surrounding reality. Doyle remarks the same thing,

stating that the deserted field soon takes the narrator's mind to explore beyond nature's desert places.[236]

The image unfolds in four quatrains, which follow *aaba* rhyme-pattern. Iambic tetrameter is the prevalent meter with the exception of the first line that opens in an untypical dactylic foot and later dissolves into a trochee. With its monosyllabic "snow", "night", and the repetitive "fast" the first line accents itself very strongly, like a heavy snowfall that appears in big flakes from nowhere. Doyle proclaims of the first stanza that it would be difficult to find other four lines of poetry where sound and meaning form a more perfect agreement.[237] Indeed, it is without hesitation that one can endorse this claim. The dactylic foot reappears in the first line of the last stanza, which gives the ending a decisive force of persistence, as if the narrator was proclaiming his fearlessness in the face of the world:

> Snow falling and night falling fast, oh, fast
> In a field I looked into going past,
> And the ground almost covered smooth in snow,
> But a few weeds and stubble showing last.
>
> The woods around it have it – it is theirs.
> All animals are smothered in their lairs.
> I am too absent-spirited to count;
> The loneliness includes me unawares.
>
> And lonely as it is, that loneliness
> Will be more lonely ere it will be less–
> A blanker whiteness of benighted snow
> With no expression, nothing to express.
>
> They cannot scare me with their empty spaces
> Between stars – on stars where no human race is.
> I have it in me so much nearer home
> To scare myself with my own desert places. (296)

It seems obvious that the whole poem essentially aims at defining one metaphor – the voids within the individual. The most important conceptual metaphor that the poem serves to elaborate is along the lines of "Loneliness is unhappiness". Thus the image of the snowfall becomes the vehicle of loneliness. In this regard, the image finds

reaffirmation from Lakoff and Johnson's basic spatialization metaphors "Emotional is down", "Bad is down", and "Unconscious is down."[238] As an ontological event, snowfall is characterized by randomness, continuity and unpredictability: it happens with no regard to human interaction or intervention. Once it is on the ground, snow hides recognizable patterns and forms. This, it seems, is also the pattern of human melancholy and depression. In this regard, the specific metaphor reinforces the basic metaphor. The target domain is further qualified by the adjective "benighted", repetition of "fast", and the alliteration of "f" sounds, which all seem to reinforce the image of non-controllability and social and intellectual feeling of darkness that is perceivable in the narrator. The greatest fear by far is the one where the narrator would lose the structure of his own voice, have "no expression, nothing to express."

As to its content, the poem is somewhat similar to "The Vantage Point": both are meditative experiences of loneliness outside the sphere of man. The difference is of course that here we are in a barren desert, that seems void of all systems of ethics or aesthetics. This is the nightmarish flip side of the system of epistemology that was born in "Mowing" and "The Tuft of Flowers". There is no chain of feeling or knowing being generated, "no expression, nothing to express." It appears that the narrator cannot get his hands on anything concrete, because all known landscapes of perception are rendered useless by the blanket of snow.

For some reason the whiteness of snow does not take on the whimsical qualities that the bright sun-shine received in "The Vantage Point", where it became a tool of defining the world of men, "in white". Although snow is usually a symbol of purity and innocence, the Frostian snow seems to stifle the free fancy, define nothing in its whiteness. In the desert places, there can be no talk of spiritual wanderings in any direction, snow and loneliness weight us down. Man stands alone in the midst of his void, deprived of society and his feeling of self.

A contrary example of the Frostian feeling for snow is provided in "Good Hours". Here snow is handled as a revelatory element that puts society on a kind of pedestal, instead of muting the individual voids within. At the same time, "Good Hours" is a good example in the exercise of artistic freedom through the strict use of form. In order to understand this poem as an experience of liberation, one needs to be aware of Frost's dialectics of home. As Poirier points out, Frost made a clear distinction between his set of homely, domesticated things and those that lie beyond that circle, those which Poirier calls the "extravagance".[239] This duality – the need to unify further within the home circle on one hand and the whimsical impulse to follow the drift of life on the other – is a theme that is commented on by other critics as well. Nitchie, for example, writes that Frost's verse maintains its twofold nature between these two opposite poles, never resolving the question of duality nor clearly revealing where author himself stood on the issue.[240]

For Frost, the idea of home is on one hand an emblem of security, but at the same time, it possesses potential for stifling the individual will and can easily become an instrument of social constraint. Outside the circle of home, there is always the "drift"[241] of life, which the characters in Frost's poetry are frequently facing. On most occasions people manage to resist the drift, but sometimes the physical or mental wanderings beyond the borders of home do occur. There is experimentation with the limits of the form, but in most cases, the drifter returns to his own domesticated circle of things.

Such is the case also in "Good Hours". As to its form the poem is similar to "Desert Places", except that the rhyme-pattern is now *aabb* instead of the *aaba* above, and the length of the line is slightly shorter, alternating trimeter and tetrameter for the most part. In the initial stanza the foot varies decidedly between iambic and dactylic, but later the iambic foot wins its ground, allowing only an occasional variation. The firm quatrain of the stanzas seems as appropriately picturesque and traditional as is the setting itself, which here is that of a domesticated set. We are peeking into the life of a small village,

late at night in the middle of winter. The narrator seems to perceive the village from outside the set, although it is clearly implied that he belongs to the same set himself.

The narrator is no stranger in this village, but for some reason he still seems eager to distance himself from it for a while. The reader is the sole companion for his winter evening walk, that first heads away from the center of the set, reaches the border but then makes a sharp turn back towards the middle. The narrator is like a yo-yo on a string, whose other end is in the firm grip of the community. As is usually the case with Frost's poems that deal with the harmony of home, every line rhymes nicely.

> I had for my winter evening walk–
> No one at all with whom to talk,
> But I had the cottages in a row
> Up to their shining eyes in snow.
>
> And I thought I had the folk within:
> I had the sound of a violin;
> I had a glimpse through curtain laces
> Of youthful forms and youthful faces.
>
> I had such company outward bound.
> I went till there were no cottages found.
> I turned and repented, but coming back
> I saw no window but that was black.
>
> Over the snow my creaking feet
> Disturbed the slumbering village street
> Like profanation, by your leave,
> At ten o'clock of a winter eve. (102)

The single feature that is foregrounded most heavily is the strong use of the past tense and the repetition of the past possessive "I had". The fact that the poem is titled "Good Hours" seems to suggest that the narrator benefits something from such a practice in willful alienation. But still, there is a general feeling of sadness weaved into the seeming serenity of these lines, which is further emphasized by the use of the past tense. On one hand, the narrator enjoys his freedom and solitude, but on the other, he seems to wish for companionship.

The "youthful", happy life is happening only a few meters away, but the distance seems to grow into light-years as the poem progresses. His own mind seems to be on the outward bound, but hesitation enters when some distance is put between the meandering walker and the village. By the time we reach the end of the third stanza, it seems obvious that the crossing of the border into "the drift" was not an act encouraged by the close-knit community of slumbering inhabitants. Quite on the contrary: such pointless wandering with no direction is deemed a "profanation" that the narrator has to repent.

As is often the case with Frost, the greatest punishment imaginable for the crime of straying too far from the set seems to be being permanently banished from the society. In the first two stanzas there are all the positively charged words of the picture postcard, such as the shining windows in the middle of the purity of white snow, the homely lace curtains and the comforting sound of the violin. Although all of these things are artifacts of the narrator's imagination, they are quite enough to convince him that he will be missed inside the circle. In the last two stanzas the poetic temperature of the words drops to sub-zero with images that border on the total blackness of the void, religious repentance and profanation that creaks of sacrilege and destruction.

As to its language, "Good Hours" is not quite typical of Frost. Although it describes a common occurrence, a winter evening's walk, and follows the chosen form to every last detail, it does so in a language that is loaded with symbolism. It is a conventional way of writing a poem. Perhaps more Frost-like would be to turn the judgmental tone of the last stanzas into more enigmatic by concentrating more on the level of the words and the sounds themselves. Of course it is a pleasant piece of poetry; due attention is paid to *phanopoiea*, *melopoeia* and *logopoeia* alike, but it seems almost too easy to read through. The words are too transparent, and the end-result, in my opinion, is not as refreshing and new as it could be.

The reader's imagination is not given much room to roam at the level of the specific metaphor, but neither is the poem very intent on spreading its metaphoricity into wider concepts. There are too many pointers and road-signs that lead us straight to the source domain, where the basic metaphors "Loneliness is unhappiness" and "Loneliness solidifies the feeling of self" are fighting an ongoing battle. As a result, the specific metaphor of the poem swings between the two basic conceptions like a pendulum on a clock, as the narrator walks out into the unknown, repents and comes back. We are being taken along for the walk, but given only short leash.

4.5 The Necessary Limit – Or "Straight Crookedness"

Although "Good Hours" may not give the reader as good a ride as possible, the poem is a fairly typical Frostian definition of freedom. Freedom for Frost is never a simple thing, but something that must come with its limitations. As Poirier states in his book, "form or 'home' must include the desire for what is beyond them"[242]. Although the Frostian characters may wander out beyond the reaches of the familiar things, they take the limits of form with them. In the safety of the domesticated set, Frost finds potential freedom that may or may not be actualized. Nitchie asserts Poirier's claim in stating that the freedom enjoyed by the Frostian worker is freedom from external restraints, but it is by no means absolute, for there are always restraints imposed by the material of work and the skills of the worker.[243]

Freedom spells freedom of the mind, not so much freedom of action. In this light, home is a far more acceptable source of freedom than is the wilderness of the surrounding realm. In the wildness of nature there is freedom with no restraints, but it seems for Frost too immoderate to become an actuality that one could enjoy. Instead some areas, namely those where complications would be likely to arise from external restraints, are willfully declared off limits, devoid of interest.[244] Frost's narrator in "Good Hours" is not trying to

free himself from the constraints of the home, but feels free to take an interest in the drift, to be on the "outward bound". This freedom emerges not from the rejection of home, but rather from within the confinements of the domesticated set of things, people and ideas.

In fact, the awareness that freedom as well as every poem and every metaphor comes with its limits is a moral virtue for Frost.[245] It would be against his definition of poetry to admit freedom but deny limits. Poetry should be the act of including some of the "drift" of the extravagant into the accepted form of poetry. As Frost himself states in "The Figure a Poem Makes", the whole project of poetry is to conjoin the wildness of nature or the wildness of the mind with the coherent theme and form of a poem. The success of a poem can be measured by the feeling that one derives from the lines, rather than the mere apparent smoothness of the language. "Straight crookedness" is what the reading audience should be on the lookout for:

> If it is a wild tune, it is a poem. Our problem then is, as modern abstractionists, to have the wildness pure; to be wild with nothing to be wild about. We bring up as aberrationists, giving way to undirected associations and kicking ourselves from one chance suggestion to another in all directions as of a hot afternoon in the life of a grasshopper. Theme alone can steady us down. [...] The line will have the more charm for not being mechanically straight. We enjoy the straight crookedness of a good walking stick.[246]

The key idea in this passage is Frost's curious mixture of wildness and conventionality; he acknowledges the fact that a touch of the wild makes a poem more interesting, but still, that "crookedness" should be viewed through goggles of conventional perception and form.

In "Acquainted with the Night" Frost defines his position by means of a metaphor. Here it becomes clear that the speaker is enjoying both types of freedom, freedom from constraints of society and freedom towards the possibility of exploration. Thus as to its setting, the poem is in many ways similar to "Good Hours", a walking experience into the willful alienation, taking place in the deepest hours of the night. As in

"Good Hours" it seems that there is an unpronounced mystery behind the serenity of the lines. It runs the length of a sonnet, but is organized against all norms, into four tercets and a concluding couplet.

> I have been one acquainted with the night
> I have walked out in rain – and back in rain.
> I have outwalked the furthest city light.
>
> I have looked down the saddest city lane.
> I have passed by the watchman on his beat
> And dropped my eyes, unwilling to explain.
>
> I have stood still and stopped the sound of feet
> When far away an interrupted cry
> Came over houses from another street,
>
> But not to call me back or say good-by;
> And further still at an unearthly height
> One luminary clock against the sky
>
> Proclaimed the time was neither wrong nor right
> I have been one acquainted with the night. (255)

It is indeed difficult to read the lines in neutral light after Frost's own comments about the problems of modern poets, who have to tackle demands of wildness with nothing to be wild about, for this is exactly how the lines read. Built into the voice of the tercet and the interlocking rhyme structure (*aba bcb cdc ded*) there is a feeling of benevolent amusement at the emanation of the braggart young speaker, who proclaims to have done it all, known all sorts of wild things.

Despite all the effort and exclamation filled with vigor, he has progressed nowhere, as the cyclical pattern and the repetition of the initial line at the end of the poem suggests. "The time was neither wrong nor right" implies that the society could care less about his adventures. The ravings of the young adventurer are to remain forever an "interrupted cry" that came from somewhere and disappeared into nowhere of the past perfect time frame, if he cannot make anything concrete or worthwhile of his ventures into the extravagant. As Doyle remarks, the type of knowledge that the adventurer gains

from his journeys into the night remains rather unspecified; "acquainted" implies more than recognition, but certainly a great deal less than friendship.[247] Present tense is the proper Frostian mode of expression when treading the high-wire between the wild tune and forms of convention, because it is in the immediacy and brevity of the present tense that man must the worth of his experience.

Thus, the poet is left stranded, doing his spiritual wanderings at the edge of the wilderness, struggling to get a hold on things yet trying to stay true to the "wild tune" of the night and the quest for truth. As Robbins says, Frost is constantly dealing with limits through his poems, particularly the barrier that separates man from the wilderness.[248] However much meddling there is at the border, the barriers must be kept. Man is never allowed an unobstructed view into the wilderness beyond the border. In Montgomery's phrasing it is on the limits between the natural world and the world of man that the "breathless swing between subject matter and form" is visible most distinguishably.[249] The ability to ride the "breathless swing" is also the capacity that ultimately determines what real men are made of.[250]

For a New England poet such as Robert Frost, the two most obvious elements of wilderness are the ocean and the forest, which are present in numerous poems. Suitable examples of the borderline struggle between the sea and the men are found in "Sand Dunes" and "Neither Out Far Nor In Deep", for example. The sea-line that changes shape and place eternally is a most fitting metaphor for the Frostian involvement of the limit between men and nature. Accordingly, both of the aforementioned poems are instantiations of the same basic ideal, namely that the barrier between nature and man is indisputable, but not by any means left unexplored. In "Sand Dunes" the focus of the text is diaphorical, bent on the iconic signification, whereas "Neither Out Far Nor In Deep" seems to be an epiphorical interpretation of the same theme – the metaphor of the quest for truth becomes more clearly defined. The statement made at the beginning of the last

stanza "They cannot look out far. / They cannot look in deep." (301) seems to express a similar position in the search for truth as does the surface of the water well in "For Once, Then, Something"; one may almost discern what lies at the bottom beyond the surface of the water, but only momentarily.

In "Sand Dunes" there is an implication that the information exchange between the two domains is barred, not only flowing from nature to man, but also in an opposite direction from man to nature. Quoted below is the last part of the poem, the pronoun 'she' in this case representing the sea:

> She may know cove and cape,
> But she does not know mankind
> If by any change of shape
> She hopes to cut off mind.
>
> Men left her a ship to sink:
> They can leave her a hut as well;
> And be but more free to think
> For the one more cast-off shell. (260-261)

Both domains leave marks of their presence for the other one, but there is an implication that men give more than what they get in return. For every "ship" and "hut" there is only the occasional "cast-off shell", much like the "pebble of quartz" at the bottom of the well in "For Once, Then, Something". Thus, the cyclical process of information exchange is to no avail. The secrets of nature remain unsolved for man, and likewise, nature will never "know mankind". Man is resilient, despite the hardships that the ocean may cause.

In "Neither Out Far Nor In Deep" there is an insinuation that nature has differences built within the system as well. The knowing of the sea does not represent the same kind of knowledge as does the land, a point that is exemplified by the last two stanzas of the poem:

> The land may vary more;
> But wherever the truth may be–
> The water comes ashore,
> And the people look at the sea.

> They cannot look out far.
> They cannot look in deep.
> But when was that ever a bar
> To any watch they keep? (301)

The realm of sea seems even more foreign and enigmatic to man that is that of the forest. Since man has grown used to living within forest although never being able to reveal its deepest secrets, the ocean presents the source of greater mystery for the majority of the man-kind. As Kjørven remarks, the sea is "unknown and monotonous",[251] perhaps somewhat similar to the image of the landscape that is becoming filled with snow in "Desert Places". In the ocean there are no clearly defined forms, "no expression, nothing to express" at least if it is perceived from the shore.

"Nature is the sublime other" seems to be the basic conceptual metaphor, which these images serve to elaborate. And yet, they do not manage to say much about it, perhaps much owing to the fact that the ocean in all its vastness represents all that which is left undefined for man, whereas in the forest there are clearly perceivable forms and shapes that one can lay a hold on. As Poirier notes, "Neither Our Far Nor In Deep" could be said to be a case of people trying to bestow some of the tasks of the poet onto the realm of nature.[252] The request is made against the ontological order of things, "it is illegitimate", and therefore not answered; metaphors are not born in heaven or the sphere of nature but in the minds of the poets.[253]

Nitchie is thinking along the same lines, holding that the ocean in "Neither Our Far Nor In Deep" is capable of communicating little more than itself – it is more likely to drown you than reveal anything of the secrets of life.[254] And still, people hold fast to their watch, because the ocean has been a symbol of the infinity for as long as anyone can remember.[255] It is the task of nature to present the poet with material, the task of the poet to reflect on that material and represent it according to his own system of epistemology.

Yet at times it seems that man is gaining ground in his tug-of-war with nature, when romantic disposition and the awe in face of the sublime elements of nature are replaced by human capacity of reasoning. The ending of "Our Hold on the Planet" is very explicit on the matter:

> [...]
> We may doubt the just proportion of good to ill.
> There is much in nature against us. But we forget:
> Take nature altogether since time began,
> Including human nature, in peace and war,
> And it must be a little more in favor of man,
> Say a fraction of one percent at the very least,
> Or our number living wouldn't be steadily more,
> Our hold on the planet wouldn't have so increased. (349)

This piece is rather a rare occurrence in Frost's verse, because it relies more on the human capacity to think than in does on the capacities of feeling and intuition, which are typically the trademarks of Romantic poetry. At the same time, the poem grants nature a dual role of both a friend and a foe,[256] instead of the quiet indifference, which seems more usual in Frost. The narrator is looking to reassure his audience of the justification of human kind's existence, which is also an altogether un-Frostian disposition. Cynical doubt, resilience or hesitation would be more likely attitudes of men towards nature. As Gerber notes, Frost seldom trusted reasoning or thinking in his poems, and even if he slipped occasionally in practice, in theory he never admitted the legitimacy of the power of reasoning.[257]

Still, the human hold on the planet can never exceed all limits. This sort of reasoning is called for in the poem titled "There Are Roughly Zones", where men feel betrayed by the acts of the sublimity of nature. The skeptical questioning of the divine design appears once more, when the cold winter night is about to freeze a peach tree, that has been planted by man. The amorality of nature is a lesson that man is seemingly incapable of learning, no matter how hard he tries. The narrator is hard-pressed to believe

that there are no reasonable explanations nor ethics involved in the processes of nature.

As to the nature of men, there is a doubt:

> [...]
> It is very far north, we admit, to have brought the peach.
> What comes over a man, is it soul or mind–
> That to no limits and bound he can stay confined?
> You would say his ambition was to extend the reach
> Clear to the Arctic of every living kind.
> Why is his nature forever so hard to teach
> That though there is no fixed line between wrong and right
> There are roughly zones whose laws must be obeyed?
> There is nothing much we can do for the tree tonight,
> [...]
> But if it is destined never again to grow,
> It can blame this limitless trait in the hearts of men. (305)

The fact that the poem is placed immediately after the heavenly scents of the apple-tree in "Unharvested" seems to suggest that the peach tree in question here is a similar element of labor and strive for men, which should carry fruits of human labor. Since it is useless to point the accusing finger at nature, fight against that which has no morals, the blame is ultimately laid on men, who caused the whole scenario to take place by attempting to extend their "hold on the planet" one step too far.

But why is it that man should give up his belief in form and metaphor on the most remote reaches of his domain? Certainly even a dead tree is still a fruitful source of metaphor, although perhaps that of withering, although it can no longer be utilized as a source of aesthetic pleasure as was the case in "Unharvested". The suggestion that the tree might die implies the dismantling of pattern, abandonment of the poetic design. Perhaps this is why Frost changes careful rhythm and meter of "Unharvested" to flat verse and speculation. Here the erosion of form hits home, because it is not someone else's tree that is being discussed, but apparently that of the narrator's own family.

The two realms, that of the source and that of the target domain are clearly overlapping, but the narrator is nevertheless incapacitated, unable to create structure. And although the poem begins with "We sit indoors and talk of the cold outside" there is

no solace in numbers, because as we remember from previous accounts, Frost's men are often overtly dubious about the motives of their human counterparts. It is usually the love of physical labor and form that ultimately lead Frostian characters into visions of knowing, rebirth of self, and the feeling of society, but here that road is effectively blocked.

As Kjørven has it in his study, the narrator's inmost self does not feel and think in isolation in Frost's verse.[258] If the speaker is unable to reflect meaningfully on his surroundings, unable to create his subjectivity through a system of similarities and differences, he is also unable to take possession of his self.[259] This was the case above in "Desert Places", and this is the case in "There Are Roughly Zones" as well. Simple reliance in poetic instinct is not enough for Frost; the self-definition of the subject must be particularized by reflective clarification.[260] In other words, the inward focus of the verse and the diaphorical tendency of the metaphor must find support in the realm of nature if they are to measure as elements in the definition of the self.

4.6 The Loss of Form in Wildness

The pursuit of finding similarities between the wildness of nature and the conventions of man sometimes swells to a question of metaphysical proportions in Frost's poems. A poem of great similarity but also of considerable disparity when compared to "Good Hours" is the poem placed just before it in the collection *North of Boston*. "The Wood-Pile" is another example of Robert Frost's poems that describe solitary walks. Here the setting differs radically from the safety of "Good Hours", however. Instead of the snugness of the slumbering village street, we are taken into the middle of a frozen swamp with no road signs, no way to retrace our steps. There is no turning back because we are lost, walking in circles, and the question of how we happened to wind up there in the first place does not help in the least in getting out. Only linearity or direction that there is are

the surrounding trees, which do not deliver us from the void, because they are "straight up and down", "too much alike to mark or name a place by".

It will suffice to say that we are "far from home" and deep into the extravagant. The only sign that anyone has been in this anonymous place years before us is the odd wood-pile that has been left to rot in the middle of the cold swamp. To the speaker this is a source of great astonishment that leads to deep melancholy. It seems bizarre that someone should go through the trouble of cutting and splitting the wood, only to forget the neatly organized pile afterwards in the middle of the forsaken swamp. There is no sign of the easy casuality of the "Unharvested", because from this rotting crop the speaker cannot harvest any aesthetic pleasure. Here is the conclusion of that lamenting line of thought as expressed in the last twelve lines of "The Wood-Pile":

> The wood was gray and the bark warping off it
> And the pile somewhat sunken. Clematis
> Had wound strings round and round it like a bundle.
> What held it, though, on one side was a tree
> Still growing, and on one a stake and a prop,
> These latter about to fall. I thought that only
> Someone who lived in turning to fresh tasks
> Could so forget his handiwork on which
> He spent himself, the labor of his ax,
> And leave it there far from a useful fireplace
> To warm the frozen swamp as best it could
> With the slow smokeless burning of decay. (102)

It is noteworthy that since we are far from the security of home, there is none of the solace of the steady rhyme or meter that was found in "Good Hours", for example. Neither is there any happiness in the apparent failure of man's stated plan, as was the case in "Unharvested" above, perchance because the wood-pile has required an enormous amount of human effort to build. The fact that it remains "unharvested" after all the strain is equally blasphemous as if the apple farmer in "After Apple-Picking" was to leave his apples in the cellar to rot after all the labor and anxiety that the harvest caused.

All forty lines of the poem are written in flat verse and one long stride, as if the narrator was out of breath, distressed and anxious to have his say about such a unfortunate turn of events. Since the narrator is himself in a disheveled state of mind, the form of the poem ends up being random. For the reader, who takes pleasure in the aesthetic harmony of sounds, it is not an experience of great joy. It seems that by moving so far into the realm of extravagant the narrator has exhausted all of his potential for *freedom towards* something. When the free volition with direction is exchanged for nomadic zigzagging in the no-man's land, the conclusion is a little more than nothing.

Richard Poirier discusses this poem in some detail in his book. Poirier likens the narrator's state of conscience in "The Wood-Pile" to what Wallace Stevens, one of Frost's contemporaries, described as "impoverished, being on the dump"[261]. Poirier claims that this state of being, when connected with the wintry, desolate barrenness and the feeling of being lost, results in the disposal of metaphorical language and the possibility of locating any reassuring resemblances.[262] Certainly, the spatial devastation and the resulting incapability of creating metaphors seems in accord with Lakoff and Johnson's theory about our most fundamental concepts being based on spatial metaphors.[263] Consequently, in "The Wood-Pile" Frost seems to flip the relationship between the tenor and the vehicle upside-down by giving nature more authority as the independent actor; we begin to modify the tenors or themes found in our lives by seeking their vehicles in nature.

As the poem progresses, the things of nature interact more and more with the sphere of man. The little bird that guides the narrator to the wood-pile in the first part of the poem seems oddly curious about man's activities and is described with the playful human term "foolish". It acts as a notification, much like the "bewildered butterfly" in "The Tuft of Flowers", except that here it does not instigate a chain of knowing, but rather a chain of losing human identity. Likewise, the living tree comes to the man's aide

as well in holding the wood-pile upright, when man-made stakes and props rot and fall over. Even the clematis is a bit manlike in wrapping its strings round the pile, "like a bundle" ready to be placed under some strange Christmas tree. Finally, the process that was left unfinished by the absent-minded or negligent man is taken to its conclusion by the "slow smokeless burning of decay" that likens the human action of burning wood for heating the home. Although "decay" is an undeniably negative term in the circle of home, it represents rebirth and unity of all things natural in the realm of nature.

Thus it would seem that nature comes to rescue the soul of the narrator that is lost in the middle of the non-symbolical nature by taking on some home-like characteristics. Of course, all of these characteristics of nature are items of the man's imagination: the real motives of the bird, tree, and clematis are impossible to define and even more impossible to communicate to the human awareness, because our understanding of nature's systems begins from our own theoretical system of making sense in the world. Poirier states that the whole poem is rather a "pathetic" attempt in the human capacity of "making a claim on an alien landscape", or in the words of Stevens as quoted by Poirier, an attempt to replace "nothing that is not there with the nothing that is"[264].

Such an interpretation, where man is seen as capable of taking on metaphysical powers of creation, would seem to suggest that the poetry of Frost enforces a strong belief in the omnipotence of man over the omnipotence of nature. On the other hand, "The Wood-Pile" could be interpreted as a sign of a man's despair in the face of the terrible void of lost meanings.

While I see the justification of both of these readings, I do not agree with either of them completely. If a careful reader of Frost was to select only one word to best describe the theme of man versus nature, nature versus man, then I think that that word should be indifference. Both nature and man exist in Frost's poetry independently, despite one

another. They possess many attributes of similarity, which seems to suggest that they originate from the same source, but are by the core of their beings entities of different onto-epistemological order.

Any exchange of information or communication seems to happen not directly to one another but by an intermediary of some sort; nature and man can learn from each other, but only occasionally and through their actions. A third agent is required as either enters the other's realm, as any direct *tête-à-tête* communication is likely to fail. And still, there is an on-going desire in Frost's verse to understand things for what they are,[265] see them from their own perspective, whether it is a beautiful bundle of flowers or a pile of rotting wood, and to see how the new form of understanding changes the subjective notion of the self.

The same desire to probe and to understand is often present when men study the differences and similarities in the parallel systems of understanding of their human companions. For not only are Frost's speakers suspicious of one another, but they have essentially different systems of knowledge. Very often the differentiating element between is set by different conceptions about the possible existence of divinity. As Kjørven affirms, this becomes apparent for example in the poem "Mending Wall". Come spring-time, the friendly neighbors of the poem set out together to fix parts of the stone wall that the winter frosts and rabbit-hunters have torn down. The wall itself has no practical function to either of them, since neither has any farm animals that the wall would fence in or out, and yet it must be fixed.

The very first line, "Something there is that doesn't love a wall" seems to suggest that the speaker believes in the existence of some other-worldly design,[266] whereas the speaker's neighbor is rather a believer of handed-down sayings, rural virtues and commonplace knowledge, which require that neighbors be separated by walls, even when such barriers have no reasonable or practical justification. It is a matter of different ways

of seeing and thinking – the "pine" does not reason along the lines of "apple orchard".

There is no use in trying to convince the other, for they are representatives of different

breeds: both have adopted a principled view of what it means to know something, have

settled for a while the problem of self-definition.[267] And so they progress along the wall,

lifting boulders from the ground to repair the gaps in the wall:

> [...]
> He is all pine and I am apple orchard.
> My apple trees will never get across
> And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.
> He only says, "Good fences make good neighbors."
> Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
> If I could put a notion in his head:
> "*Why* do they make good neighbors? Isn't it
> Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.
> Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
> What I was walling in or walling out,
> And to whom I was like to give offense.
> Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
> That wants it down."
> [...]
> He will not go behind his father's saying.
> And he likes having thought of it so well
> He says again, "Good fences make good neighbors." (33-34)

Certainly, the image metaphor of the stone wall is fertile and an epiphoric one, because it

quickly triggers different conceptual notions having to do with walls and fences. Power of

the specific metaphor can be derived from a number of different things: the effect of

closing in or out grows stronger with the increase in height, while on the other hand,

bigger boulders may imply that there are more holes in the wall, and so on. A stone wall is

equally intriguing as a system that limits information exchange between the two sides. It

has modalities both of enabling and restraining – a wall of greater stature may hide more,

enhancing the sense of security within, but it makes it equally more difficult to see what

is happening on the other side. Therefore, it is not just any fence that makes "good

neighbors", but a fence of appropriate height and material.

The different systems of belief that the characters have seem to suggest that there are in fact two different kinds of basic metaphor being pitched against one another in the target domain. In the source domain of the first basic metaphor, "Family is one" the guiding ontological belief seems to be one that instructs to respect neighbors, but keep them outside the perimeters of the home circle. In the other, "Mankind is one" there can be found remnants of the belief that the return to the paradise is still possible, if people manage to rid themselves of the self-imposed boundaries. As a shared feature, both source domains believe that their basic metaphor represents the natural order of being. Any attempted infiltration into the opposite domain, an attempt "to put a notion in his head", is deemed an act of "mischief" – a very strong word in Frost, which is used to suggest the upsetting of something settled.[268]

Yet it seems a paradox that the upkeep of an act of separation brings the two sides of the dispute together year after year. Because they construct the separative element together in full agreement of each other, the wall becomes a joint possession, a symbol of their common knowledge, which is actually initiated by the speaker, as is demonstrated by lines 12-14:

> I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;
> And on a day we meet to walk the line
> And set the wall between us once again. (33)

If it was not for the initiative of the speaker, the wall might eventually crumble and fuse the two types of knowing into one. As Poirier's useful remark goes, here it is not so much the fence itself that makes good neighbor, but the *making* of the fence, [269] in the sense that by separating from each other they also become aware of the other one's presence.

Whatever the true metaphoric meaning of the stone wall may be, it seems unquestionable that the whole poem is a good exemplification of the departmentalized view of society, which is prolific in Frost's poetry. Each individual has his own slot to uphold and maintain, both within the system of epistemology as well as the greater

ontological scheme of things. This is what Kjørven calls the theme of "compartmentalized living": self-revelatory speech that overcomes social barriers is a rare occurrence in Frost's poems, and it usually requires an extraordinary set of circumstances in order to appear.[270]

It is an often stated fact in Frost criticism that the differences in the systems of knowing often coincide with the urban/educated – rural/uneducated distinction in Frost, as was the case in "The Ax-Helve" and "Mending Wall", for example. Roger D. Sell reminds us, for instance, that it is only on rare occasions, as in "The Tuft of Flowers" that the socio-cultural barriers are diminished or overcome. [271] And yet, the differentiations of different social cultures do not appear merely for their own sake. As Sell further remarks, on most occasions they are used as vehicles in metaphors that trigger more fundamental questions of freedom and individuality.[272]

In other words, social barriers in Frost's poems are specific instantiations of his basic metaphors, which are placed under examination and elaboration through versification. Social barriers are there with their "roughly zones" for the poet to play with, as is the case in "Not Quite Social".

> Some of you will be glad I did what I did,
> And the rest won't want to punish me too severely
> For finding a thing to do that though not forbid
> Yet wasn't enjoined and wasn't expected, clearly.
>
> To punish me overcruelly wouldn't be right
> For merely giving you once more gentle proof
> That the city's hold on a man is no more tight
> Than when its walls rose higher than any roof.
>
> You may taunt me with not being able to flee the earth
> You have me there, but loosely, as I would be held.
> The way of understanding is partly mirth.
> I would not be taken as ever having rebelled. [...] (306)

The poet offers only "gentle proof", descriptives instead of fixed prescriptives. The urban sphere and cultural education may uproot men from earth and from "understanding", but

it is stated clearly that the true nature of things is revealed by jest rather than by preaching.

The poet makes subtle remarks, but leaves ethical prescriptives for others to worry about. In keeping with the disposition presented in "Departmental", "his business wasn't with such"; it is not the poet's affair to make value judgments in favor of either the rural or urban culture. Both have their undeniable virtues, the city perhaps in its greater sense of community and the countryside in being able to establish a closer contact with the "grain of things". The poet's attitude is a case of showing but not telling. Similarly, the poetic metaphor of Frost is an icon of life, not a symbol of what it lacks.

4.7 Interplay of the Finite and the Infinite

Undoubtedly one of Frost's most famous and also one of the best-liked poems is called "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening". As Gerber notes, it has been "analyzed, explicated, dissected – sometimes brilliantly – but altogether to the point of tedium."[273] Nevertheless, it is another worthy example of the Frostian smoothing of the "crookedness", an enigmatic meditation between the spheres of home and extravagant, and more than anything, in its charming simplicity it is also a thoroughly enjoyable reading experience. It is also another case of Frost's tackling of barriers, of both social and ontological nature, which seems to give evidence that Frost could perhaps be called a Cartesian in his handling of barriers. And so it goes:

> Whose woods these are I think I know.
> His house is in the village, though;
> He will not see me stopping here
> To watch his woods fill up with snow.
>
> My little horse must think it queer
> To stop without a farmhouse near
> Between the woods and frozen lake
> The darkest evening of the year.
>
> He gives his harness bells a shake

> To ask if there is some mistake.
> The only other sound's the sweep
> Of easy wind and downy flake.
>
> The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,
> But I have promises to keep,
> And miles to go before I sleep,
> And miles to go before I sleep. (224)

Perhaps one of the main attractions of this poem is the fact that it is fairly easy to read, but considerably less facile to grasp. It is therefore not surprising that it has inspired a flood of interpretations and questions from the reading audience. "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" is also one of the few poems that Frost comments directly in his prose writings. Although he was as pleased with his writing of the poem as he was with the people's eager response to it, Frost's amusement soon escalated into irritation and down right skepticism towards the whole project of explicating poetry, as people began asking irrelevancies about the origins of the poem, such as who the man in the poem is or what the snow and woods stand for.[274] In "The Constant Symbol" he seems to smile benevolently at all of us who tend to ponder too long over his lines:

> There is an indulgent smile I get for the recklessness of the unnecessary commitment I made when I came to the first line in the second stanza of a poem in this book called 'Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening.' I was riding too high to care what trouble I incurred. And it was all right so long as I didn't suffer deflection.[275]

As was the case with "Good Hours", it comes as no surprise that Frost has chosen the safety of the quatrain as a vehicle of his expression in "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening"; we are well within the home circle of the form. The contemplative trance-like feel of the poem is further enhanced by the choice of the rhyme pattern, *aaba*, where the rhyme of the third line in each stanza becomes the source rhyme for the next stanza – thus, the poem forms a chain of rhymes that is only intensified by the strong repetition of the rhymes in the last stanza.

Here, then, is the speaker of Frost again in his original mood, contemplating the possibility of crossing the limit of home into the extravagant in his quest for understanding. It is characteristic of Frost's characters that the speaker is not completely turned inward, but neither is he wholly on the outward bound. There is room for both the revelatory insight as well as the reflective clarification, as Kjørven notes.[276] But the crossing of the limit into the extravagant never occurs. Nature and man come face to face to study each other. The third agent, or the intermediary between the different epistemological orders is in this case the horse, who is an accustomed traveler in both domains. Although the drift is strong, this time the circle of home is stronger. Promises are kept, and the woods remain unexplored.

Going back to Descartes, it could be stated that Frost's stance on the issue of human – nature interaction can be explained accurately by Descartes' theory of cause and effect. In his meditation upon the nature of human consciousness, Descartes arrives to a conclusion that all knowing must have a cause, which precedes it and initiates the chain of thought, since an idea[277] cannot function infinitely as a source of another idea. Since he counts out the possibility of infinite regress of ideas, eventually all our ideas, as well as all the things of the corporeal order, must originate from the same primary idea.[278] The cause of any idea or thing must, according to Descartes, have at least as much reality as has its effect. In other words, the cause of any idea is always more perfect than is its effect.

As an illustration of this point, Descartes takes an example of a stone.[279] The rationalist that he was, Descartes calls his only truly trustworthy faculty "natural light", which is for him also one of the defining characteristics of a human being. Since in his philosophy our sensory perception is only a passive faculty that observes things, but may also lead us astray, we cannot derive the objective[280] idea (the mental image) of a stone directly by perceiving its formal manifestation. Just as obviously, our idea of a stone can not give birth to the actual thing. And yet it is clear that the two entities – the idea of a

stone as presented to us in our imagination and the corporeal thing itself – are of the same origin. In other words, the stone and its idea are the effects of the same cause.

Applied to "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening", this theory would seem to suggest that the woods and the idea in the poet's mind as he perceives them are two different effects of the same cause: one is the formal thing and one is the objective idea. In my opinion, the discovery of this pattern of thought puts an end to any speculation as to how well the poem communicates the snowy wood or what its meaning is, or who the man in the poem is. The idea of the poem and the snowy wood are of the same essence, but do not have any direct correlation or relationship with one another. By the same token, neither can be fully derived from the other.

According to Descartes, we as finite and imperfect beings can never gain full knowledge of the idea of the cause behind the effects, because it is infinite and perfect substance – God, which for him represents the whole picture of nature.[281] For Descartes there is some of the idea of God in each of us, since we clearly seem to have a consciousness about ourselves. Ultimately, all ideas and beings are permutations of this same cause. Since God is not a deceiver, his existence or truthfulness of the infinite cause need not be doubted. Just as we can never grasp the mountains, as in putting our arms around them, but can touch them, we can never grasp the idea of God.

Nevertheless, we can still "touch" the idea of God, somehow know or understand that it exists.[282] The same is true as regards different types of human knowledge that were discussed earlier in relation to "Mending Wall". The neighbors' different ways of perceiving the world are effects of the same general cause, but in general they cannot communicate directly with each other, because they are separated by the onto-epistemological barrier, which in this case was compared to the wall of stone.

As Kjørven says, the decisive factor is that God is utterly beyond reach for Frostian characters.[283] The speaker may perceive instantiations of the infinite cause, have

his original moments, but still has no adequate means of communicating them to others.[284] The truth must be found in finite experiences: it is only after work – be it mending the wall or writing a poem – begins to yield its own language, that the speaker can be sure of his sense of knowing.[285] In the words of Richard Poirier, what is needed is "a point of vibrant interjection" of the self and the subject matter, and still, the knowledge that one receives is likely to stay ephemeral,[286] nearly impossible to communicate to others.

In Descartes' theory, we can perceive clearly only a few attributes of the corporeal beings of the formal reality, namely those of extension and duration.[287] In the case of the snowy woods, the clearly perceivable ideas would seem to be, first, the shape and size of the trees, and second, the shape and movement of the snow flakes. These are also the ones that have the most iconic signification. But it is the poet's mission to touch or at least hint upon some of the infinite ideas and causes as well. Although he can perhaps never deal with them directly, he can strive for them through his use of metaphors.

In "Stopping by Woods" there are words that seem to suggest the undefinable attributes of things and ideas, such as the sweeping sound of the "easy wind", that is strangely human in that it comes lazily, with little effort, or the woods' attributes of "lovely, dark, and deep". Clearly these are elements of the metaphorical understanding, which come with the basic metaphor "Nature is a mystery". "Deep" implies that the speaker has not lost his sense of spatialization metaphors, is clearly not lost within himself, as was the case in "Desert Places", for example. He is in the woods, where it is easy to apprehend spaces and directions, as opposed to the field in "Desert Places" and its "blank whiteness of benighted snow". And although the snow-fall is plentiful it does not stifle individual voices, perhaps because the speaker has "promises to keep" and a clear sense of ethics.

A certain sense of detachment from the society, or compartmentalization in the words of Kjørven, is required in order for the Frost's characters to maintain their sense of freedom and identity. If there were no barriers, the notions of freedom and individuality might disappear altogether. The greatest thing by far is not to be free from constraints, but to establish a sense of your own space, a sense of freedom within constraints, as well as your own language, whose rules may be exposed to others momentarily through revelatory insight.

5. Conclusion

> What if it should turn out eternity
> Was but the steeple on our house of life
> That made our house of life a house of worship?
> We do not go up there to sleep at night.
> We do not go up there to live by day.
> Nor need we ever go up there to live.
> A spire and belfry coming on the roof
> Means that a soul is coming on the flesh. (386)

This study began with the "dark trees that scarcely show the breeze". It comes to a conclusion with "the steeple on a house of life", an image picked from Frost's poem "A Steeple on the House". Both images are metaphors that portray Frost's disposition towards poetry. In effect, "steeple on the house" and "dark trees that scarcely show the breeze" are what Hester called true lies. They are the formative elements in Frost's epistemological system, whose semantic function is often to please as much with the outer appearance, sentence sounds, and the plot of the poem, as it is to puzzle with the level that lies behind the surface of the text, embedded in the structural formation of the metaphors. The final outcome of Frost's poetry is a song with sense, an agreeable fusion of sense and sensa, which contains all the utility of a pitchfork or an ax-helve, but is nevertheless most pleasing to touch and to behold.

Indeed, there are no certainties offered to the mysteries of life's eternal questions in Frost's poems. There are no structures of belief given as elevated objects of worship, as a steeple on the house would be, for all things and all issues must be exposed to questioning. As states, Frost is essentially a skeptic, who refuses to give final answers, but still manages to avoid developing a negative attitude towards life.[288] The house of life is there, from the dark murkiness of the cellar to the windy corridors of the attic, as is the house of poetic language, which always organizes something of the wild, something of nature, and something of ourselves within its walls of structure. The outcome is an approximation, a credible appearance of life, which adheres only to its own rules.

In the face of the extravagant the house of Frost's poetry is both a place of solace and a place of restraint, one that has an indefinitely large number of previously undiscovered nooks and corners, into which the aspiring poet can build his metaphorical conceptions of the wild tune mixed with structure. Truth does not proclaim itself from the roof of the house, nor does it expose itself to easy accusations. Instead it arises quietly from the ground, from the grain of things, and only eventually does it rise to hover in the heights above the house. The metaphor is there for the poet to discover, but it is only through lucky accidence that he can lay bare its essential attributes and domesticate it into his own epistemological system of being. When one finds a metaphor, it needs to be qualified, fitted into the mold.

Metaphor is undoubtedly the most important tool of understanding the world for Frost. This view is clearly expressed in Frost's poetry, as well as in his prose writings. It is also a perspective that much of the criticism written about Frost's verse serves to elaborate. Yet at the same time, metaphor is also a device that the writer has to question constantly, modify and mix together with other metaphors. First and foremost, metaphor is a device of epistemology and a device of communication for Frost, just as the elements of actual world – be it a stone wall, an ax-helve, or a tuft of flowers, can function as connecting organs between two epistemological orders.

It is in this manner that the philosopher-poet organizes his view of the world into the concrete form of the poem, and as an end-result, the poem not only collapses towards the finite expression and iconic signification, but also opens up towards the infinity inherent in the symbolical networks of meaning. As to its sensa, the poem must possess all the proper elements of a house in its solidity of structure and form. As to its sense, it must have all the flexibility of a small tent, be flexible enough to allow the blowing wind to pass through unobstructed, stay true to the ground even as different eras read different things into it.

By paying more attention to the icon, Frost gives his metaphors independent features of the signifier instead of attempting to discover vast networks of referential meanings between the signifier of the particular poem and signifieds of the universal domain. Ultimately, the iconistic elements and the diaphorical qualities of the metaphor are emphasized in Frost's poems. In other words, structure and appearance of the house of poetry is more important than is the reaction that the passers-by might receive from looking at it. Through diaphoricity, inward focus of versification and meter, Frost builds the conception of the speaker's self, safety of the form, and the specific domain of the poem, while the epiphoricity of the metaphor that opens the poem towards universality of experience is generally given less attention.

The vast use of parallel structures renders Frost's poems more iconic signification and therefore tends to make them less likely vehicles of communication between different domains, in many occasions limiting their epiphorical potency. The quatrain and the modified sonnet form often appear in Frost's lyric poems and isolated pictorials, whereas the longer dramatic narratives between two or more people often take place within the freedom of flat verse. In is on these occasions of conversational dramas that Frost's metaphors usually find fertile soil and function most effectively as vehicles of communication between different domains.

On the other hand, when the solitary speaker of Frost's poetry is on the verge of the wilderness, safety is often pursued from within form, but on its own it is not enough to mark a place by or give a sense of identity, provided that there are no structures to reflect upon in the surrounding reality, as was the case in "Desert Places". The speaker must have at least some sense of space or limitation in order for the communicative metaphor to appear; mere freedom from external restraints is not enough.

Social and cultural barriers are ever-present in Frost's poems, because each character comes with his/her built-in limitations. There is a strong implication to believe

that the social barriers in Frost's poetry are specific instantiations of his basic metaphors, which are examined and elaborated through versification. They are the roughly zones, willfully erected by the society of man for the poet to play with. The most notable socio-cultural barrier in Frost's poetry is undoubtedly the one that separates rural people from urban folk. On most occasions the speaker in Frost's poetry attempts to stay a neutral agent in this division, not siding with either group, but in poems such as "Blueberries" and "Christmas Trees" there is a feeling of decided irony when the rural sphere is confronted by the urban set. The urban – rural distinction often implies differences in systems of knowledge as well, as was the case in "Mending Wall". It is on these occasions that the poetic metaphor realizes its task as a unifier of two different information structures and social classes.

On some occasions there is a suggestion that rural people have a better contact with the sphere of nature, as in "The Ax-Helve", but on most occasions it seems that none of the Frostian characters are really at home in the wild. Rather, the home of the rural people is to be found in the manageable environment, on the green fields of New England, presumably mowing hay or collecting the fruits that mother Nature has bestowed on the sphere of man. It is also on these occasions, often having to do with physical work, that there is a momentary feeling of brotherhood between men, but in general Frost's actors are solitary and compartmentalized, defining and redefining their own space and own existence within the confines of the society.

The aesthetics of good, clean physical work often initiate the Frostian chain of epistemology, which on many occasions leads to visions of rebirth of self, as well as suggestions of God. This is the optimal sort of communion for Frost's rural characters, where the aesthetics of beauty and the love of work become ethics of good conduct. At the same time, the aesthetics of physical work manage to eradicate barriers that normally separate men from each other. In the physical acts of mowing or apple-picking, such

barriers become irrelevant. As opposed to the system of epistemology that is born from physical labor, the dreams dreamt in the idle hours rarely lead to more than blurry visions in white. However, the mere love of physical work is not enough to convince two individuals to work side by side as one. That love has to be reflected through an intermediary of another ontological order, pointed out by a butterfly, for example, as in "The Tuft of Flowers" or a little bird as in "The Wood-Pile".

Despite the rare occurrences of common understanding, nature and men tend to remain alien or indifferent, existing inspite of each other, separated by an insurmountable metaphysical barrier. Doyle is one of the many theoreticians committed to this view. He describes Frost's man–nature relationship as oblivious; whatever man may see in nature is a reflection of his own mind or heart.[289] In the sphere of man, the most natural human unit for Frost is either that of the individual or the immediate family, for men rarely know the way that other men know – a fact, that seems to give the human interrelationship of Frostian populace a Cartesian character. All humans are effects of the same cause, but cannot reach each other nor the cause of their existence directly. Nevertheless, owing to the laws of causality one individual can learn of another one's presence and systems of thinking by studying the effects of human actions.

Although Frost's poems cannot be said to be especially religious in character, there is an extraordinary amount of specific metaphors that serve to define the basic metaphors of biblical nature, "Man has been banished from paradise" and "Realm of nature is that of paradise", for example. When conjoined with the basic metaphor "Nature is a mystery" and the differences in systems of epistemology that nature and man profess, it seems that the gates of paradise are likely to stay closed for Frostian characters. In the meantime, truth must be found in the sounds and visions of little things, the sweet scent of apples, soft whisper of the scythe, depths of the dark forest, or pebbles at the bottom of the well. Such is the stuff that Robert Frost's poetry is made on.

NOTES

[1] Robert Frost, "Into My Own," *The Poetry of Robert Frost*, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1979) 5. Unless noted otherwise, all further references to poems in this study are from this collection of Frost's poetry, given parenthetically in the text.
[2] Richard Poirier, *Robert Frost: The Work of Knowing*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990) 30.
[3] John Hollander, "Foreword," *Robert Frost: The Work of Knowing*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990) xvii.
[4] Yvor Winters, "Robert Frost: or, the Spiritual Drifter as Poet," *Robert Frost: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. James M. Cox (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962) 60.
[5] Ibid., 60.
[6] Philip L. Gerber, *Robert Frost* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1966) 55.
[7] Robert Frost, "The Constant Symbol," *The Poems of Robert Frost* (New York: Random House, 1946) xvi.
[8] Gerber, 132.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid., 131.
[12] Poirier, 10.
[13] Gerber, 45.
[14] Ibid., 39.
[15] Poirier, 5.
[16] Gerber, 48.
[17] Ibid., 47.
[18] Terence Hawkes, *Metaphor* (Bristol: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1977), 64.
[19] Ibid., 67.
[20] George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980) 17-18.
[21] Ibid., 22.
[22] Ibid.
[23] I. A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936) 89.
[24] Ibid., 93.
[25] Ibid., 102.
[26] Hawkes, 73.
[27] Ibid., 74.
[28] Jacques Derrida, "White Mythology," *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Brighton: The Harvester Press Limited, 1986) 257.
[29] Ibid., 256.
[30] Ibid., 257.
[31] Hawkes, 96.
[32] Ibid., 96-99.
[33] Richards, 125.
[34] Derrida, 241-242.
[35] Ibid., 218.
[36] Richards, 106-107.
[37] Ibid., 125.
[38] Derrida, 234-235.

[39] Ibid., 241.

[40] Ibid., 237.

[41] Ibid., 238.

[42] Ibid., 249.

[43] Ibid., 241.

[44] Hawkes, 75.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Richards, 123-124.

[47] Ibid., 124.

[48] Gregory Corso, *Mindfield* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1995) 34.

[49] Ibid., 60.

[50] Christine Brooke-Rose, *A Grammar of Metaphor* (London: Martin Secker and Warburg Ltd., 1958) 105.

[51] Ibid., 146.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Geoffrey N. Leech, *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry* (Hong Kong: Longman Group Limited, 1973) 151.

[54] Marcus B. Hester, *The Meaning of Poetic Metaphor* (The Hague: Mouton & Co. Publishers, 1967) 23.

[55] Ibid., 24.

[56] Israel Scheffler, *Beyond the Letter. A Philosophical Inquiry into Ambiguity, Vagueness and Metaphor in Language* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1979) 82.

[57] Ibid., 81.

[58] Ibid., 83.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid., 87.

[62] Ibid., 88.

[63] Ibid., 89.

[64] Ibid., 97.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid., 92.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid., 93.

[69] Ibid., 107.

[70] George Lakoff and Mark Turner, *More than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989) 132.

[71] Scheffler, 116.

[72] Ibid., 119.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Ibid., 119-120.

[75] I will use the masculine versions of pronouns in referring to the narrator in this study. This is by no means a statement of any kind, but merely an attempt to simplify the textual structures.

[76] Hester, 16.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Lakoff & Turner, 92.

[80] Douglas Berggren, *An Analysis of Metaphorical Meaning and Truth.* Unpublished Doctor of Philosophy dissertation, Department of Philosophy, Yale University (1959), pp. 399-403.

Quoted in Hester, 17.

[81] Douglas Berggren, "The Use and Abuse of Metaphor, I" *The Review of Metaphysics*, XVI (Dec. 1962), pp. 243-44. Quoted in Hester, 18.

[82] Bergren 1959, p. 215. Quoted in Hester, 17.

[83] W. K. Wimsatt, Jr. "The Concrete Universal, " *The Verbal Icon. Studies in the Meaning of Poetry*, (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1954) 80.

[84] Ibid.

[85] Ibid.

[86] René Descartes, "Meditations on First Philosophy," *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes, Volume II*, 1641, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, Dugald Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) 31.

[87] Hester, 17.

[88] Ibid., 68-69.

[89] Wimsatt, 81.

[90] Hester, 69.

[91] Ibid., 70.

[92] Ibid., 73.

[93] Ibid., 74.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Ibid., 75.

[96] Ibid., 82.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Ibid., 84.

[99] Ibid., 85.

[100] Ibid., 118.

[101] Ibid., 128.

[102] Ibid., 164.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Lakoff and Johnson, 81.

[105] Ibid.

[106] Ibid., 6.

[107] Ibid., 10.

[108] Wimsatt, 71.

[109] Ibid.

[110] Ibid., 76.

[111] I. A. Richards, *Principles of Literary Criticism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1970) 156.

[112] T. S. Eliot, *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1964) 126.

[113] Ibid., 30.

[114] Raija Kangaspunta, *Main Themes and Symbols in Robert Frost's Poetry*, Unpublished Laudatur Thesis, Department of English, University of Tampere (1979) 1.

[115] Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, ed. & trans. Douglas W. Stott (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989) 45.

[116] Ibid., 78.

[117] Ibid, 18.

[118] Ibid.

[119] Ibid.

[120] Leech, 62.

[121] Ibid.

[122] Ibid., 64.
[123] Ibid., 65.
[124] Ibid., 63.
[125] Robert M. Adams, "Poetic Forms and Literary Terminology," *The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Volume 2*, ed. M. H. Abrams, (New York: W. W. Norton Company, Inc., 1993) 2507-2508.
[126] Leech, 66.
[127] Ibid., 67.
[128] Winters, 61.
[129] Ibid.
[130] Ibid., 61-63.
[131] Lawrance Thompson, "Robert Frost's Theory of Poetry," *Robert Frost: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. James M. Cox (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962) 19.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Winters, 61.
[134] Robert Frost, "The Figure a Poem Makes," *Complete Poems of Robert Frost* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1961) vi.
[135] J. Albert Robbins, "America and the Poet: Whitman, Hart Crane and Frost," *Stratford-Upon-Avon Studies 7: American Poetry*, ed. Irvin Ehrenpreis (London: Edward Arnold Publishers Ltd., 1965) 61-62.
[136] Marion Montgomery, "Robert Frost and His Use of Barriers: Man vs. Nature Toward God," *Robert Frost: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. James M. Cox (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962) 139.
[137] Ibid., 140.
[138] Leech, 147.
[139] Ibid., 160.
[140] Ibid., 159.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Ibid., 158.
[143] Kurt Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse-Five*, 1966 (New York: Dell Publishing, 1991) 70.
[144] Lakoff & Johnson, 33.
[145] Ibid., 55.
[146] Ibid.
[147] Poirier, 31.
[148] Ibid.
[149] Leech, 154.
[150] Ibid., 155.
[151] Ibid., 154.
[152] Ibid.
[153] Poirier, 291.
[154] Louis D. Rubin, Jr., "Four Southerners," *Stratford-Upon-Avon Studies 7: American Poetry*, ed. Irvin Ehrenpreis (London: Edward Arnold Publishers Ltd., 1965) 36.
[155] Poirier, 291.
[156] Lakoff & Turner. 5.
[157] Ibid., 9.
[158] Ibid., 8.
[159] Ibid., 52.
[160] Ibid., 40.
[161] Ibid., 138.
[162] Ibid., 128.

[163] Ibid., 129.
[164] Ibid.
[165] Ibid., 124.
[166] Ibid., 38-39.
[167] Ibid., 26.
[168] Ibid., 58.
[169] Ibid., 83.
[170] Ibid., 51.
[171] Ibid., 83.
[172] Ibid., 61-62.
[173] Ibid., 64-65.
[174] Ibid.
[175] Ibid., 64-65.
[176] Poirier, 293.
[177] Ibid., 35.
[178] Ibid., 71.
[179] Lakoff & Turner, 90.
[180] Ibid.
[181] Ibid., 91.
[182] Ibid., 92.
[183] Poirier, 286.
[184] Ibid.
[185] Ibid., 284-285.
[186] Ibid., 284.
[187] Gerber, 112.
[188] Poirier, 146.
[189] Ibid., 145.
[190] Ibid., 148.
[191] Ibid., 244.
[192] Ibid., 146.
[193] Ibid., 145.
[194] Gerber, 116.
[195] Ezra Pound, *Lukemisen aakkoset (The ABC of Reading)*, trans. Hannu Launonen, Lassi Saastamoinen (Helsinki: Otava, 1967) 34.
[196] Gerber, 89.
[197] Frost 1946, xxii-xxiii.
[198] Gerber, 164.
[199] Winters, 65.
[200] Poirier, 244.
[201] Ibid., 255.
[202] Johannes Kjørven, *Robert Frost's Emergent Design: The Truth of the Self In-Between Belief and Unbelief* (Bergen: Universitet i Bergen, 1978) 43-44.
[203] Randall Jarrell, "To the Laodiceans," *Robert Frost: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. James M. Cox (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1962) 89.
[204] Kangaspunta, 32.
[205] Poirier, 250.
[206] Ibid., 252.
[207] Gerber, 105.
[208] Poirier, 254.
[209] Ibid., 334.

[210] Ibid.

[211] Ibid., 300.

[212] Harold H. Watts, "Robert Frost and the Interrupted Dialogue," *Robert Frost: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. James M. Cox (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1962) 108.

[213] Poirier, 293.

[214] Watts, 111.

[215] Jarrell, 96.

[216] Poirier, 279.

[217] Ibid., 280-281.

[218] Ibid., 283.

[219] Watts, 106.

[220] Ibid.

[221] John Robert Doyle, Jr., *The Poetry of Robert Frost: An Analysis* (Johannesburg, NY: Witwatersrand University Press, 1962) 237.

[222] Poirier, 293.

[223] Gerber, 133.

[224] Ibid., 136.

[225] Poirier, 294.

[226] Gerber, 137.

[227] Poirier, 299.

[228] Ibid., 299-300.

[229] Hugh C. Holman, *A Handbook to Literature* (Indianapolis: Odyssey Press, 1972) 504.

[230] Poirier, 258.

[231] Ibid., 261.

[232] George W. Nitchie, *Human Values in the Poetry of Robert Frost: A Study of Poet's Convictions* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1960) 72.

[233] Ibid., 75.

[234] Ibid.

[235] Thompson, 20.

[236] Doyle, 161.

[237] Ibid.

[238] Lakoff and Johnson, 15-17.

[239] Poirier, 90.

[240] Nitchie, 169.

[241] Poirier, 96.

[242] Ibid., 98.

[243] Nitchie, 88.

[244] Ibid., 89.

[245] Poirier, 97.

[246] Frost 1961, v-vii.

[247] Doyle, 167-168.

[248] Robbins, 62.

[249] Montgomery, 146.

[250] Ibid.

[251] Kjørven, 42.

[252] Poirier, 159.

[253] Ibid., 159-160.

[254] Nitchie, 47.

[255] Ibid.

[256] Gerber, 158.
[257] Ibid., 58.
[258] Kjørven, 27.
[259] Ibid.
[260] Ibid., 165.
[261] Poirier, 140.
[262] Ibid., 139.
[263] Lakoff & Johnson, 17.
[264] Poirier, 142.
[265] Kjørven, 171.
[266] Ibid., 44.
[267] Ibid., 90.
[268] Poirier, 101.
[269] Ibid., 105.
[270] Kjørven, 127.
[271] Roger D. Sell, "Socio-Cultural Differentiation and Freedom," *Robert Frost. Four Studies.* Acta Academiae Aboensis, Ser. A, Vol. 57: 2 (Turku: Painotalo Gillot Oy, 1980) 90.
[272] Ibid., 91.
[273] Gerber, 130.
[274] Ibid., 131.
[275] Frost 1946, xix.
[276] Kjørven, 194.
[277] Descartes uses the term *idea* to mean the representations or images of the corporeal things in our minds.
[278] Descartes, 28-29.
[279] Ibid., 27.
[280] The word *objective* means in Descartes' philosophy that which is the object of thought. Its opposite is the term *formal* or sometimes also *actual*.
[281] Descartes, 31.
[282] Ibid., 32.
[283] Kjørven, 44.
[284] Ibid.
[285] Poirier, 278.
[286] Ibid.
[287] Descartes, 30-31.
[288] Doyle, 210.
[289] Ibid., 219.

REFERENCES

Adams, Robert M. "Poetic Forms and Literary Terminology," *The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Volume 2*. Ed. M. H. Abrams. New York: W. W. Norton Company, Inc., 1993.

Brooke-Rose, Christine. *A Grammar of Metaphor*. London: Martin Secker and Warburg Ltd., 1958.

Corso, Gregory. *Mindfield: New and Selected Poems.* New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1995.

Derrida, Jacques. "White Mythology." *Margins of Philosophy*. Trans. Alan Bass. Brighton: The Harvester Press Limited, 1982.

Descartes, René. "Meditations on First Philosophy." *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes, Volume II (1641)*. Trans. John Cottingham, Dugald Murdoch, and John Cottingham. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

Doyle, John Robert. *The Poetry of Robert Frost: An Analysis*. Johannesburg, New York: Witwatersrand University Press, 1962.

Eliot, T. S. *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*. London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1964.

Frost, Robert. "The Constant Symbol." *The Poems of Robert Frost*. New York: Random House, 1946.

----------. "The Figure a Poem Makes." *Complete Poems of Robert Frost*. New York: Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1961.

----------. *The Poetry of Robert Frost*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1979.

Gerber, Philip L. *Robert Frost*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1966.

Hawkes, Terence. *Metaphor*. Bristol: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1977.

Hester, Marcus B. *The Meaning of Poetic Metaphor*. The Hague: Mouton & Co. Publishers, 1967.

Hollander, John. "Foreword." *Robert Frost: The Work of Knowing*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990.

Holman, Hugh C. *A Handbook to Literature*. Indianapolis: Odyssey Press, 1972.

Jarrell, Randall. "To the Laodiceans." *Robert Frost: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Ed. James M. Cox. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1962.

Kangaspunta, Raija. *Main Themes and Symbols in Robert Frost's Poetry*. Unpublished Laudatur Thesis. Department of English, University of Tampere, 1979.

Kjørven, Johannes. *Robert Frost's Emergent Design: The Truth of the Self In-Between Belief and Unbelief*. Bergen: Universitet i Bergen, 1978.

Lakoff, George and Johnson, Mark. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980.

Lakoff, George and Turner, Mark. *More than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989.

Leech, Geoffrey N. *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry*. Hong Kong: Longman Group Limited, 1973.

Montgomery, Marion. "Robert Frost and His Use of Barriers: Man vs. Nature Toward God." *Robert Frost: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Ed. James M. Cox. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962.

Nitchie, George W. *Human Values in the Poetry of Robert Frost: A Study of a Poet's Convictions*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1960.

Poirier, Richard. *Robert Frost: The Work of Knowing*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990.

Pound, Ezra. *Lukemisen aakkoset. (The ABC of Reading)*. Trans. Hannu Launonen and Lassi Saastamoinen. Helsinki: Otava, 1967.

Richards, I. A. *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936.

----------. *Principles of Literary Criticism*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1970.

Robbins, J. Albert. "America and the Poet: Whitman, Hart Crane and Frost." *Stratford-Upon-Avon Studies 7: American Poetry*. Ed. Irvin Ehrenpreis. London: Edward Arnold Publishers Ltd., 1965.

Rubin, Louis D, Jr. "Four Southerners." *Stratford-Upon-Avon Studies 7: American Poetry*. Ed. Irvin Ehrenpreis. London: Edward Arnold Publishers Ltd., 1965.

Scheffler, Israel. *Beyond the Letter. A Philosophical Inquiry into Ambiguity, Vagueness and Metaphor in Language*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1979.

Schelling, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph. *The Philosophy of Art*. Ed. and Trans. Douglas W. Stott. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989.

Sell, Roger D. "Socio-Cultural Differentiation and Freedom." *Robert Frost: Four Studies.* Acta Academiae Aboensis, Ser. A, Vol 57: 2. Turku: Painotalo Gillot, Oy., 1980.

Thompson, Lawrance. "Robert Frost's Theory of Poetry." *Robert Frost: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Ed. James M. Cox. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962.

Vonnegut, Kurt. *Slaughterhouse-Five (1966)*. New York: Dell Publishing, 1991.

Watts, Harold H. "Robert Frost and the Interrupted Dialogue." *Robert Frost: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Ed. James M. Cox. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1962.

Wimsatt, W. K. Jr. "The Concrete Universal." *The Verbal Icon. Studies in the Meaning of Poetry*. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1954.

Winters, Yvor. "Robert Frost: or, the Spiritual Drifter as Poet." *Robert Frost: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Ed. James M. Cox. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962.