



AN ANALYSIS OF SYMBOLS IN ROBERT FROST’S POETRY JULISTHREE CASILIA GREGORIYANI

IKIP Muhammadiyah Maumere

Email Correspondence: julisthree.gregoriyani@gmail.com

Article Info

Article History:

Received:

February 01, 2023

Accepted:

March 20, 2023

Published:

April 01, 2023

Keywords:

Symbol;
Robert Frost;
Poetry;

ABSTRACT

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

This is an open access article under the [CC BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license.



INTRODUCTION

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

Poetry with the clean which means that consist of the symbols trough the lyrics related to existence. Talking about poetry wants to recognize definition of poetry. Ollia and Jantas (2006) said that, poetry is any form of verbal or written language that is based rhythmically and is meant to tell a story, or particular any form of emotion, concept, or nation of being. A poetry can both be rhyming, or non-rhyming. It uses symbols and has strains and stanzas which have sentences, fragments of sentences or each.

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

poetry, as in the poem the road not Taken observed this poem describes a person have preference in existence. He desired to specific his enjoy of unseen international inside the imagination.

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

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

RESEARCH METHODS

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

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

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

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

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research Result

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

a. “Out Out”

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

Table 1. Table Symbols in Out-Out Poetry

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

b. “Acquainted with the Night “

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

Table 2. Symbol in Acquainted With the Night Poetry

No	Title of Poetry	Kinds of Symbol	Symbol
1	“Acquainted with the Night”	Conventional Symbol	<p>I have been one acquainted with the night (Line 1 & 14)</p> <hr/> <p>I have out walked the furthest city light. (Line 3)</p> <hr/> <p>I have been one acquainted with the night.</p> <p>I have walked out in rain—and back in rain.</p> <p>I have out walked the furthest city light. (Lines 1-3)</p> <hr/> <p>I have looked down the saddest city lane.</p> <p>I have passed by the watchman on his beat</p> <p>And dropped my eyes, unwilling to explain. (Lines 4-6)</p> <hr/> <p>But not to call me back or say good-bye;</p> <p>And further still at an unearthly height,</p> <p>One luminary clock against the sky (Lines 10-12)</p>

c. "A Prayer In Spring"

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

Table 3. Symbol in a Prayer in Spring Poetry

No	Title of Poetry	Kinds of Symbol	Symbol
1	"A Prayer In Spring"	Conventional Symbol	<p>Oh, give us pleasure in the flowers to-day;</p> <p>And give us not to think so far away</p> <p>As the uncertain harvest; keep us here</p> <p>All simply in the springing of the year. (Lines 1-4)</p> <hr/> <p>And make us happy in the happy bees,</p> <p>The swarm dilating round the perfect trees.</p> <p>And make us happy in the darting bird (Lines 7-9)</p> <hr/> <p>For this is love and nothing else is love,</p> <p>The which it is reserved for God above</p> <p>To sanctify to what far ends He will, (Lines 13-16)</p>

d. "Ghost House"

"Ghost House" through Robert Frost posted in 1913 in "A Boy's Will" which represented dreamy days of teenagers. Story of someone who had back to his vintage home only to locate that there rest completely the remains of a cellar. It is made from six stanzas, every with five lines. It has a strict rhyme scheme: the first, second and final lines of every stanza rhyme, as do the third and fourth lines. This

creates two neat rhyming couplets in every stanza, with the very last line performing disjointed as if it have been an addition. Frost’s meter on this poetry is iambic tetrameter.

Table 4 Symbol in Ghost House Poetry

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

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

e. “My November Guest”

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

Table 5 Symbol in My November Guest Poetry

No	Title of Poetry	Kinds of Symbol	Symbol
1.	“My November Guest”	Conventional Symbol	<p>My sorrow, when she’s here with me, Think these dark days of autumn rain (Lines 1-2)</p> <p>She loves the bare, the withered tree; The desolate, deserted trees (Lines 4 & 11)</p>

			The faded earth, the heavy sky, (Line 12)
--	--	--	--

Discussion

a. "Out Out"

This poetry consists of symbol to specific the poet's thoughts. On this poetry, the poet used the word light, the sunset, supper and the saw makes the that means of this poetry greater mysteriously and dramatic for the speaker. Oxford dictionary (2005) said that the light is the power from the sun, a lamp, and so on. The sunset is the time while the sun is going down and night starts. The saw is a tool that has a long blade with sharp points alongside one in all its edges. Supper is the last meal of the day, either a main meal, usually smaller and less formal than dinner.

b. Acquainted with the Night

In "Acquainted with the Night" includes symbol are darkness, light, rain, sky and the watchman. Based on Merriam Webster dictionary (2002) synonyms for darkness are dark, night, black, gloom. It is the state of being dark, without any light (Oxford dictionary, 2005).

The darkness is in reality implied through the point out of the "night" in lines 1 & 14. Oxford dictionary (2005) said that the light is the energy from the sun, a lamp, and so on. Rain is water that falls from the sky in separate drops. Sky is the space above the earth that you may see when you appearance up, where clouds and the sun, moon, and stars seem. The watchman is someone whose activity is to guard a building.

c. "A Prayer In Spring"

This poetry consists of symbol because the poet used the words as a pray to God. The symbol refers to flowers, bees, bird and love. Oxford dictionary (2005) recommend that flowers is the colored part of a plant from which the seed or fruit develops. The bees is a black and yellow flying insect that could sting, live in big groups and make honey. Bird is a creature this is included with feathers and has two wings and legs. Love is a completely strong feeling of liking or worrying for everybody.

d. "Ghost House"

In "Ghost house" poetry, ghosts, raspberries, the toad, the bats, the whippoorwill, and house refers to symbol. Oxford dictionary (2005) stated that ghost is the spirit of a dead individual that a living person believes they might see or pay interest. Raspberries are a small, dark red smooth fruit that grows on bushes. The toad is a small animal like a frog but with a drier and less smooth skin that lives on land however breeds in water. The bats is an animal like a mouse with wings that flies and feeds at night. The whippoorwill is a brown North American bird with a call that appears like its name. House is a constructing for people to live in, normally for one family.

e. "My November Guest"

In "My November Guest" poetry, there are four symbol which includes dark, tree, earth and sky. Oxford dictionary (2005) state that dark is with no or little or no light, especially because it is night. Tree is a tall plant that would live a long time. Earth is the world; the planet that we live on. Sky is the distance above the earth that you may see when you appearance up, where clouds and the sun, moon, and stars seem.

CONCLUSION

Based on the finding and discussion, the author formulate the conclusion of research. From the five poetry of Robert Frost, the symbols are very obvious, where there are the elements of divinity that descended through the conventional symbols. There are 20 the symbols such as light, the sunset, the

saw, supper, darkness, rain, the watchman, flowers, bees, bird, love, ghosts, raspberries, the toad, the bats, the whippoorwill, house, tree, sky and earth. Those having the meaning of the symbols. The most dominant meaning are sadness, destruction, instability situation, negative emotions, despair and sorrow.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Berry, T. (2009). *The Spirituality of the Earth* (1979). In M. E. Tucker (Ed.), *The Sacred Universe: Earth, Spirituality, and Religion in the Twenty-first Century* (pp. 69–79). Columbia University Press.
- Cooper, C. (1974). The house as symbol of the self. *The people, place, and space reader*, 168-172.
- Darmadi, S. (2013). Corporate governance disclosure in the annual report: An exploratory study on Indonesian Islamic banks. *Humanomics*, 29(1), 4-23.
- Dharmojo. (2005). *Sistem Simbol dalam Munaba Waropen Papua*. Jakarta: Pusat Bahasa Departemen Pendidikan.
- Finkelstein, N. (2010). *On Mount Vision: Forms of the Sacred in Contemporary American Poetry*. University of Iowa Press.
- Frost, R. (1915). *North of Boston*. Henry Holt.
- Frost, R. (2020). *New Hampshire* (Vol. 3). Standars Ebooks.
- Gilbert, J. (2013). *Monolithos: Poems' 62-'82*. Knopf.
- Gonlin, N., & Reed, D. M. (Eds.). (2021). *Night and darkness in Ancient Mesoamerica*. University Press of Colorado.
- Gradvohl, E. (2012). Katak dan Rahim: simbol katak bertulisan. *Sylogge epigraphica Barcinonensis: SEBarc* , 439-447.
- Hopler, W. (2017). Meet Archangel Chamuel, Angel of Peaceful Relationships.”
- Hutching, T. (2015). E-reading and the Christian Bible. *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 44, no. 4 (2015): 423-440
- Johan, IM (2019). Bird Symbolism in Persian Mysticism Poetry. *International Review of Humanities Studies* 4, no. 2 (2019).
- Kartikasari, DW (2017). The meaning of the Gedog Batik motif is a reflection of the character of the Tuban people. *Moral and Citizenship Studies*, 5 (03).
- Kasim, R. (2007). *Introduction to Literature*. Medan. University of North Sumatra
- Kushner, H. S. (2003). *The Lord is my shepherd: Healing wisdom of the twenty-third Psalm*. Anchor.
- Lehner, E., & Lehner, J. (2003). *Folklore and symbolism of flowers, plants and trees*. Courier Corporation.
- Lennox, M. (2015). *Llewellyn's Complete Dictionary of Dreams: Over 1,000 Dream Symbols and Their Universal Meanings*. Llewellyn Worldwide.
- Lerner, I., Lerner, M., & Lerner, M. (2002). *Inner Child Cards: A Fairy-Tale Tarot*. Bear & Company.
- Loeb, E. M. (1943). A Note on Two Far-Travelled Kachinas. *The Journal of American Folklore*, 56(221), 192-199.
- McIntosh, C., & Turnbull, J. (2005). *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Morris, M. (2005). *Making West Indian Literature*. Ian Randle Publishers.
- Mouterde, R. (2023). The Geometry of the Last Supper: Leonardo da Vinci's hidden composition and its symbolism. *Raphael Mouterde*
- Müller, R., & Kruger, F. (2013). Simbolisme hujan dan air dalam sistem keagamaan Afrika selatan: Kesenambungan dan perubahan. *Pertukaran* , 42 (2), 143-156.
- Muzakki, Ahmad. 2007. *Kontribusi Semiotika dalam Memahami Bahasa Agama*. Malang: UIN-Malang Press.
- Ollila, B. and Jantas, J. (2006). “The Definition of Poetry”. <https://joejantas.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/the-definition-of-poetry>
- Pasztor, E. (2015). Simbolisme langit di Eropa tengah prasejarah selanjutnya—Studi kasus dari cekungan karpatia zaman perunggu. *Handbook of Archaeoastronomy and Ethnoastronomy*. Diedit oleh Clive LN Ruggles. New York: Springer, 1337-48.
- Poirer, Richard and Mark Richard. (1995). *Robert Frost: Collected Poems, Prose and Plays*. New York: The Library of America

- Prasetyo, L. (2019). The Spiritual and Cultural Symbols in a Mahayana Buddhist Temple 'Vihara Lotus'surakarta. *Analisa: Journal of Social Science and Religion*, 4(01), 59-78.
- Prastyarini, E. Y. (2008). Symbolism in Robert Frost's Poems (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim).
- Raflesia, N.N., Bahren, B., & Hage, E. (2019). The Meaning of Symbols in William Wordsworth's Selected Poetries (Doctoral dissertation, UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi).
- Rival, L. (Ed.). (2021). *The social life of trees: anthropological perspectives on tree symbolism*. Routledge.
- Robert Frost". *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Online edition Ed.). 2008. Retrieved 2008- 12-21.
- Rydell, J., Eklöf, J., & Riccucci, M. (2018). Cimetièrre du Père-Lachaise. Kelelawar dan Vampir dalam Romantisisme Prancis. *Jurnal Penelitian Kelelawar & Volume Konservasi*, 11 (1).
- Schleiermacher, F. (1998). *Hermeneutics and criticism and other writings*. Halle University
- Setiawan, I. (2014). Symbols in Robert frost's poems (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim).
- Shyam, R., Cassell, W. A., & Dubey, B. L. (2009). SIS detection of invisible imagery in bipolar depression. *SIS Journal of Projective Psychology & Mental Health*, 16(1), 24.
- Sijabat, R., & Suharti, L. (2016). Sharing Knowledge as the Bridge to Achieve Flourishing Inner Wellbeing: Literature Review. *Economics*, 3(7).
- Sinaga, N. (2016). Biographical Analysis Of Five Selected Poems By Robert Frost (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Sumatra Utara).
- Tarihoran, I. (2016). An Analysis of Symbol in William Blake 'S Poems (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Sumatra Utara).
- Wahab, HA, Abdullah, IH, Mis, MA, & Salehuddin, K. (2016). Euphemisms in the management of remains in the Sarawak Malay community: A cognitive semantic analysis. *Language Journal*, 16 (1), 50-73.
- Warrend, Austin and Walek. (1989). *Teori kesusastraan*. Jakarta: PT. Gramedia
- White, M. D., & Marsh, E. E. (2006). Content Analysis: A flexible methodology. *Library Trends* 55(1), 22-45.