

Realism and Transcendentalism in the Selected Poems of Robert Frost: The Juxtaposition of Nature and Humanity

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Abstract: The repercussions from global warming sparks concern over the sustenance of the environment as well as of humankind. The purpose of this paper is to induce an ecologically-friendly initiative and responsibility amongst the readers through Robert Frost's poetry in the ecocritical perspective especially at a time when mankind grows detrimentally distant from the sustainable, natural world in favor of robust, widespread industrialization eliciting a picture of bleak present reality. The paper looks into how Transcendentalism and Realism are both present in Frost's poetry despite the long accustomed view of Frost not being a Transcendentalist. The physical and spiritual sustainability and interconnectedness of Nature and human lives are secured by the infusion of Realism and Transcendentalism.

Conclusively, such a relation between Man and Nature evokes understanding the significance of Nature and human nature in evincing a crucially needed ecocentric attitude in the global, political, social and individualized arena of the modern era.

Keywords: Eco-criticism, Realism, Transcendentalism, Robert Frost, Nature, Human Nature

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Context

The 20th century poet of American and high universal acclaim, Robert Frost is the four-time Pulitzer Prize winner for Poetry who has even caught adulation from the then president of America John F. Kennedy. Born in the city of San Francisco in California in the year 1874 - a place experiencing rapid growth of urbanity and industrialization, he is yet distinguished as a pastoral poet. Known as a reserved and reclusive person with an astonishingly creative prowess, his literary mind proves to be a fount of harnessing and projecting reality infused with elements that appeal to one's imagination. His frame of ideas is built on his contemporary scenario of not only New England (where he spent a good deal of his time) but of the entire modern globe as well before and after the onset of the First World War though some of his critics' opine that his poem list towards the old, traditional era rather than the modern era. The years 1865-1900 (after the American Civil War to around the end of 19th century) are considered as the Realistic Period in America. Frost's most influential and popular works have been published after this period. The latter period can be taken as the extension of the Realistic period in which modern literature has been written.

Robert Frost was not initially given much recognition as a poet in his early years in America. His early vocations ranged from working in "mills" to "newspaper reporting" to school-teaching to help increase his family income having lost his father from tuberculosis when "Frost was only eleven years old" ("Robert Frost: Life and Career"). He determined that his status as a poet cannot be perfectly sealed in the States at the time of 1912. So, he shifted to dwelling in Beaconsfield in Buckinghamshire of England. Subsequently, *A Boy's Will* was published in 1913 and later *North of Boston* in 1914.

After receiving the aspired appreciation of his poetry in England, Frost returned to New England in America. There he continued his literary journey with wider recognition of his poetic genius from the period of 1920s by when the young American artists such as Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, Ernest Hemingway, and others migrated to Europe. The latter were known as the "Lost Generation". Robert Frost appears to have been ahead of the "Lost Generation" having been to Europe prior to the exodus of the aforementioned artists.

Frost's poems are sometimes considered as nature poetry considering they deal with nature imagery in most cases. Nevertheless, the fact that there is genuine, mutual nexus between Nature and humanity can be discerned- Nature is of Transcendentalist¹ notion and humanity pertains to Realism² in much contradiction to the horde of Realist writers of his time who were wholly Realists.

1.2 Research Objectives

The objective of this study is to illustrate, using ecocriticism³, how Robert Frost has been on the trail of conceiving and conveying the essence of reality hued in Transcendentalist expression in his poems even when Transcendentalism had lost its strong ground in the realm of Western literature at that time. Though many argue against this notion and even Frost himself declares that he is a Realist, he too is significantly, albeit partially a Transcendentalist. Through his depiction of Nature, one is made to construe that Nature is not non-existent but certainly existent just as much as humanity is existent. Both Nature and Humanity are similar and dissimilar in their traits and are, thus, juxtaposed in the light of this dissertation. Frost's projection of Realism has the quality to spark realization of the drastic repercussions by the adverse interaction between Man and Nature. Nature's forces have been in play for a long time on Earth. With the untrammelled growth of industrial forces and unfeasible oblivion of political authorities to the severe detrimental climate change, the dissertation is an attempt to awaken the obligations Man has towards Nature and eventually towards humanity itself. Frost's partial projection of Transcendentalism prompts Man to see that Nature is not too different from himself, and can help him become closer to nature and be a better version of himself.

1.3 Significance and Uniqueness of the Study

This paper indicates an ecocritical study of and a philosophical investigation into the coexistence of human nature and external Nature that portrays the entwinement of Realism and Transcendentalism in the selected poems of Robert Frost. It should enable the readers' understanding of the harshness of crude reality of the transient globe originating from the industrialization, drastic progress of science and society's colossal loss in religious and political faith during and following the First World War. Many countries including Australia and Arab countries are oblivious to climate change.

This study should help increase awareness of the readers of the ecological system bounded by human nature and external Nature. While specialists in policy-making and environmentalists enforce pressure upon saving the earth's ecological system, literature too needs to play a similar role- one by evoking a strong, rotund, intellectual and emotive perception of the threats of climate change followed by an inductive move to avert oblivion to climate change. In case of nature poetry, poets can undertake the responsibility of disseminating their vision of a sustainable natural environment in consonance to the desired, stable human living standards. This paper also indicates a new perspective in attaining poetic appreciation of Frost blending Transcendentalist imagery and Realistic ideas together to create his phenomenal masterpieces.

1.4 Research Questions

These following questions will help elucidate the research:

1. What is the difference between Realism and Transcendentalism?
2. How does the synthesis of Realism and Transcendentalism affect Nature and humanity?
3. How is this synthesis concurrently presented in Robert Frost's poetry?
4. How will applying ecocriticism to the study help understand Frost's selected poetry in this respect?
5. How does ecocriticism help connect Nature and humanity in Frost's selected poetry?
6. What is the consequent effect on viewing Nature and humanity by considering the current state of the natural and human environment?

Through probing into these questions, expository and analytical answers will be uncovered. They will be supported by scholarly critical opinion to illuminate the objectives of the author of this paper.

1.5 Research Methodology

By taking the research objective into account, the thesis is based on qualitative sources of information and a large amount of reading from those different sources. The analytical and biographical information on Robert Frost and his poetry extracted from the critique of various and different scholars and academic enthusiasts will be included in this paper. Articles from online journals and websites and printed books containing critical evaluation of Frost's poetry and regarding Frost himself will be cited. These are regarded as secondary sources of information. Youtube interviews taken of Frost in his lifetime and also of literary critics or scholars pertaining to the topic of Frost and his poetry will also be referred to in this study. These latter will be regarded as primary sources of information. The findings have been added manually.

1.6 Range of Study and Theoretical Framework:

Robert Frost's particular poems- "Mending Wall", "The Road Not Taken", "Birches", "Out, Out", "Fire and Ice", "Stopping by the Wood on a Snowy Evening", "Bereft", "Tree at My Window", "Acquainted with the Night", "Neither Out Far nor in Deep" and "Design" will be considered in this dissertation for reflecting and analysing on his position as a Realist poet who cannot be actually denied, ironically, as one showing certain Transcendentalist capture of expressions in his writings.

This study covers Realism in the context of present reality and of the approach of humanity to Nature and the rest of humanity, and also covers the potential display of Transcendentalism. The latter is not typically found in poems categorized in realistic poems especially whereas they have been written by Frost considered generally as a Realist poet.

The understanding of this study comes to fruition when especially eyed in the ecocritical perspective. Without it, it would not have been possible to find the relevance of the motley of Realism and Transcendentalism and thus, see the connection between humanity and Nature. In this context, this study will also reflect on the divide between humanity and the rest of humanity.

Ecocriticism is being set as the theoretical framework of this dissertation. 'Ecocriticism' is what its acknowledged American founder Cheryll Glotfelty referred to as "the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment" (Barry 2010: 239). Ecocritical study surfaced after Robert Frost's poetry was in full bloom after their publication. The term "ecocriticism" was first coined by William Rueckert in 1978 when he composed the essay "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism". While this same term is used in the USA, its alternative name is "green studies" in the UK. Moreover, while this critical approach emerged in the USA in the late 1980s, it emerged in the UK later in the early 1990s. It initially became a concept in the late 1970s given the meetings of the WLA (Western Literature Association) incorporating it into their discussions with respect to American literature. Even though this critical approach has been thriving greatly in the US, especially since the 1990s, it is still a somewhat marginalized concept. Nevertheless, it is now believed that it cannot be merely reduced to a concept but to an "entity" that exists in reality just as nature and the impacts upon nature are in fact thoroughly genuine and existent (Barry 2010: 243).

Ecocriticism found its strong flow into American literature through the writings of the Transcendentalist writers, namely Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller and Henry David Thoreau. While Nature tends to have a prolific, artistic and philosophical presence in Transcendentalist writings and hence making Transcendentalist literary works highly eligible for ecocritical study, it does not mean that literary writings of realistic genre should be exempted of ecocritical investigation. Nevertheless, Robert Frost's poetry is unique for their coalescence of Transcendentalism and Realism. Upon ecocriticism, American writers are normally "celebratory" in tone by the glorification of nature as done by the transcendentalist writers. On the other hand, the British writers are rather "minatory" in tone as they are more aware of the implications of hampering the ecology under "governmental, industrial, commercial and neo-colonial forces" (Barry 2010: 242). Yet, in his lifetime, Robert Frost, being considered an American Realist poet, appears to have shown the ability of understanding and portraying the interdependence by the symbiotic relationship between Man and Nature, the threats cast by Man upon Nature and vice-versa. Frost's poetic voice has reached a "minatory" tone like the British ecocritical writers but without explicitly voicing his opposition to the adverse workings of the human forces. He leaves it to the readers to think over what is wrong with current society and political engagements.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

While several studies have addressed the point that Robert Frost is merely a Realist, this study focuses on the synthesis of Realism and Transcendentalism in his selected poems with close attention to their ecocritical aspects. The examination and analysis of this combination of literary representations will help support the crucial importance of protecting the ecology constituting Nature and humankind. The potent idea that Frost is also, to some extent, a Transcendentalist other than a Realist can be substantiated by the juxtaposition of Nature and humanity in the ecocritical perspective.

2.1 Transcendentalism and Realism:

Transcendentalism and Realism are irrevocably two different philosophical movements- one reactionary to the other propagating shifts in politics, social domains, psychological perceptions, divine dogma etc. Transcendentalism is known as the precursor determining the power of vivid human imagination. In America, chronologically and officially as a movement, it appeared before Realism. Nevertheless, in fact, the term 'Transcendentalism' was coined only after the movement incurred. The concept of Transcendentalism, as far as exhilarating fancy and imagination are of concern, existed earlier. Subjective intuition stimulated the human imagination for eons since the classical times presented by, e.g. the conceited, epic abilities of gods and goddesses and even human protagonists with extraordinary physical strength among other examples. Later, the human imagination took to more earthly insights as the human brain with its enormous rational faculties broadened. Sensory experience then permeated into the human insight of life to make objective approaches to matters under different, flexible conditions. But, to suppose that the transition from harnessing imagination to harnessing reality happened once would be a misconception. Abrams and Harpham explains in their book *A Glossary of Literary Terms* that the "various Transcendentalists" were "opposed to rigid rationalism" as well as "to eighteenth century empirical philosophy of the school of John Locke, which derived all knowledge from

sense impressions” (413). Deductively, People were familiar with ‘rationalism’ prior to the coming of Transcendentalism. Rationalism deals with ‘sense impressions’ which helps verify the presence of facts and provides empirical evidence in varied circumstances. Rationalism is deeply associated with Realism. This suggests that the two prominent philosophies- Realism and Transcendentalism appeared intermittently in Western culture for some time. It can be understood as a means to treat the varying problems of society of one age or another to which there is not always one simple panacea. So, coming forth to a solution using a single perspective is a highly contextual matter. After Transcendentalism emerged as a spiritual engagement for the masses, however, it soon died after the “crisis of the Civil War and its aftermath” (Abrams and Harpham 1929: 414). Naturally, then Realism came into purview and disintegrated the once intoxicating spiritual immersion (which Transcendentalists like Emerson and Thoreau espoused) in favor of representing human experience approximating reality if not totally equating to reality. However, Frost is a man in this context whereas the aim of Transcendentalists and Realists is common- the representation of Nature in unique ways. Frost’s unique insight carries him to retain certain Transcendentalist aspects and yet, expose the realities brutal historical shifts have brought.

A question may arise- if Frost presented himself as a Realist and if others referred to him with the same distinction, and given that this dissertation unusually penetrates into the Transcendentalist features in his work, why would his work be officially considered as merely Realistic up to now? In an answer to this, it can be deduced that if he presented himself and if he were conceived by others as a Transcendentalist (even partially) in his lifetime, i.e. in the 20th-21st century, he would not have been taken seriously. He lived in the era of Realism and people expected that he convey Realism through his poetry. It is safe to say now that there is scope for liberal viewing and introspecting Frost’s work. With its synthesis of Realism and Transcendentalism, people can gain a pragmatic and wider picture of the world and optimise it for the sustenance of Nature and humanity.

As many arguments conclude, after several historical developments, the modern implication is the confluence of thesis and antithesis resulting in a synthesis. There is a mixture of both Transcendentalism and Realism in Frost’s poetry creating Transcendentalist-Realist poetry. It strikes initially as a polemic concept considering the lucid differences between the two philosophies. But, it is only correct to assert this mixture in light of the further heavy repercussions to follow from human ventures and subjugating conquests over natural and other human environments. This urges the need for an ecological outlook on life.

It is not needless to say, however, that now Realism cannot be etched out of the map of human evolution. The term ‘Realism’ itself was despised not at all because of what it represented but the incorrectly generalized ‘labelling’ perspective typically pertaining to it. Regarding ‘Realism’, J. A. Cuddon points out in his *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* of the “distaste for the term” ‘Realism’ that appears to have rooted from the “fear that Realism would be regarded as a school or movement” which indicates how it is currently thought of (731). So, Realism is basically seen not as a “movement” by Cuddon that implies short term existence, rather a permanent way of observing, appraising and solving life’s concrete problems. One of these concrete problems is, of course, the state of ecology that indoctrination of careless human involvement has devastated.

2.2 Ecocriticism in Connection to Realism and Transcendentalism and Frost’s Poetry:

Rendering the ecocritical perspective, the eco-critic is inclined to believe that Nature is not merely a “concept” based on “social and linguistic construction” (Barry 2010: 243). Other than this, Peter Barry also refers to Kate Soper’s apposite “remark” in her “seminal book *What is Nature?*”- “It isn’t language which has a hole in its ozone layer.” So, as Realism progresses and the human mind expand, means with dealing with ecology is indispensable. But, what is more crucial is actually dealing with prolific, internecine human tendencies. Politicians, authorities and corporate bodies have long dismissed the idea of global warming, or ignored their obligations to the preservation of the environment despite acknowledging global warming exists. Science has continually refuted the presence of the incurring disaster. Literature too can provide a similar leverage to evoke eco-consciousness among the masses. So, Frost’s poetry enters into this picture not by directly exposing this reality, but by the Nature imagery and the bridge connecting Man and Nature. Through his poetry, he displays the human tendency of assailing against humankind that can eventually inflict harm against Nature. In a video found in YouTube consisting of a 1963 documentary film “Robert Frost: A Lover’s Quarrel with the World Part 1” directed by Shirley Clarke starring Robert Frost, Frost has asseverated on the subject of “peace and war”- “peace is something that you only get by a war or the threat of war.” The reflection on the binary opposition- “peace and war”- elucidates the human understanding of the ways of the world consisting of impairment to others amongst which, in fact, nature is a victim. By realizing the reality of the repercussion- the “war” by means of the Transcendentalist imagery in Frost’s poetry, one can infer the crucial importance of contriving “peace”- a solution to resolving the problem of global warming.

It is puzzling to consider how Transcendentalism receives importance in this respect. Transcendentalism, in facts, is composed of several variables- idealism, sentimentalization, human imagination and representation of

Nature. Where representation of Nature is of concern, if one impartially delves upon Frost's poetry that helps readers visualize Nature with its vicissitudes, it is clear to see that Nature evokes sustainability not only of itself but also of the human inhabitants. There is always a mention of Nature in Frost's poetry for which W. G. O. Daniels is impelled to say, "his (Frost's) lucidity is such that he who runs may read; there is always an easy grasped meaning or image for the reader- some perception of nature, some comment about birches, blueberry patches, or deep woods filling up with snow" (Neelam). It is still worthy to point out that the artistic delineation of Nature is not for merely salving the senses of the reader by poring through Frost's verses. But what is most riveting is that it serves the purpose of a covert didactic. It is unlikely for a complete Realist to be a didactic, but Frost is one such didactic latently by prompting Man to think of Nature in a different light and question the moral, physical and even emotional state of contemporary humanity. So, the effect of nature imagery in his poetry does not only produce direct conveyance of the state of matters, but plays an evocative role as well sometimes with a subtle hint of progressive and clever use of humour or at other times with the dash of caustic truth. Naturally, in this era of immense intellectual progress, Man can be evinced to ruminate upon the causality of events and alleviate the distress if he has the spirit for it. Frost helps incorporate this spirit in his works.

Human imagination functions in Frost's poetry signifying the varying moods and psyche of the narrator whether nihilistic in his perceptions of the world or insightful and observatory of the outside world. Robert Frost, of course, does not idealize Nature. While most of his poetry centers on humanity, what he eventually creates is the ideal humanity by the symbiotic relationship between Man and Nature.

Furthermore, the aspect of sentimentalization, on the other hand, is a less prominent Transcendentalist feature in Frost's poetry. In particularly one poem, "Bereft", the eco-critic can spot the surge of sentiment rising within the narrator in the beginning of this poem themed on isolation and alienation. However, Nature's forces extricate Man from sentimentalizing and place him in a balanced pedestal by uplifting his senses to make a positive impact. (Here, Nature does not have any heroic role but with its natural functions, humankind is affected in terms of achieving a favourable change in perspective). Many critics point out the almost ubiquitous aspect of alienation and isolation in Frost's poetry and no doubt, Frost himself was a recluse in his lifetime. Yet, Frost, being an egregiously mature poet, rose above this social divide and emblematically creates an atmosphere in his poems to make the readers and critics realize the balance consolidated by the feasible, mutual workings of Man and Nature. Nature throbs with life. Hence, Nature has been personified interminably.

While critics argue idealism cannot be reflected by the work of a Realist poet, idealism has been evidently woven into Frost's poetry to some extent. In this context, scholar Ramesh B. Patel has said, "Frost being the idealist favours the worldly responsibilities, duties, obligations and promises which one can't keep oneself away from otherwise the life will be meaningless" (3).

Another source also explains of the continued significance of idealism in Dr. Link's study "The War of 1893: Realism and Idealism in the Late Nineteenth Century", "Still other critics Link mentions felt that literature should be a blend of the old idealism in romantic literature with the sharper clarity of Realism so that there should be a balance in perception" (Smith 1).

To reimburse the damage caused to Nature, idealism that Frost has instilled needs to be constructed in the minds of the readers. Along this line, Dr. Shruti Tripathi states:

"Amongst the panorama of poets in English Literature, one name stands out not only because of the beauty of the poems, their closeness to the ideals of life but also because of their close association with the divine acceptance of the values of nature. The American poet Robert Frost is an ideal candidate to be read and understood in the context of Ecocriticism" (128).

Undeniably though, idealism has become now an obsolete factor in dealing with the changes of the world. Yet, even Stendhal, deemed as the "first 'real' Realist in a literary context" has indicated in his work "Scarlet and Black"-

"There is a sense of nostalgia for the Romantic and at the same time an understanding that the established perceptions of life, Beauty and mankind are outdated and that to cling to them, as expressed by William Dean Howells, is to 'preserve an image of a smaller and cruder and emptier world than we now live in' (Howells 135)" (Sorenson 3).

Stendhal stresses on the shift from Romanticism- the British equivalent for Transcendentalism- to Realism. Though he is inclined to believe that Realism has taken over in the perception of the world, he still notes the value of Romanticism or Transcendentalism.

Some critics point out the "disarming simplicity" in the works of Frost where "qualities and characteristic of modern poetry" are of concern (Sen 2015: 44). This evinces a traditionalist feature of Frost's writing. Malcolm Cowley declares, "He (Frost) is too much walled in by the past" (Bloom 70). It has been found that critic Schneider too has expressed a similar conviction: "Frost does not understand our time and will make no effort to understand it" ("Frost as a Modern Poet"). Indeed, Frost's works are not abstruse in the way that a Realist poet usually indoctrinates in his work in terms of knowledge and expression compassing human endeavour and functions. However, the aforementioned statements are rather extreme given that these critics

base their assumptions on that that Frost is only a Realist poet devoid of any ecocritical association with his work. Consequently, by taking up the ecocritical viewpoint, Frost is not wholly a modernist. But both traditionalism and shift to modernism coincide in his work in terms of view and setting. It is very difficult to dissolve the inculcation of all traditions passed down from one generation to another. Besides, reiteratively displaying the 20th century reality and its complexities were not the main aim of poetry. In this respect, Dr. S. Sen shares John F. Lynen's understanding, "overt argumentation is not the proper function of poetry" (21). But, in fact, Frost was preparing the future generations in confronting reality. From the ecocritical angle, his poems reflect a mediation of the problems of reality with the inclusion of Nature. Dr. S. Sen sees through the "realist attitude to life and poetry" of Frost who "presents life's realities, not so much in terms of photographic verisimilitude, but in terms of imaginative comprehension. Thus, we see the blend of fact and fancy in Frost's poem" (13).

Ecocritics like Terry Gifford assert the life-affirming qualities of Nature, "Nature is the name under which we use the nonhuman to validate the human, to interpose a mediation able to make humanity more easy with itself" while contending against the American Wordsworth critic Alan Liu's view of Nature being an "anthropomorphic construct" (Barry 2010: 244-245). The interpretation of these opinions exudes the fact that human interest remains in the centre. But, Gifford also asserts "the general physical presence" of Nature. Human interests can be fashioned in a way to be aligned with the sustainability of Nature.

The eco-centered reading of Frost's poetry in this dissertation is conducted in an immersed manner. Peter Barry himself professes, "Often it is just a matter of approaching perhaps very familiar texts with a new alertness to this dimension, a dimension which has perhaps always hovered about the text, but without ever receiving our full attention before" (248). So, in order to achieve this effect, it is important to note that Nature does not appear in Frost's poetry in one unified form. The reflections of Nature on human involvement are anthropomorphic. While human nature varies from person to person, Nature's presence varies "from poem to poem" (Sen 2015: 54). Victorian art critic John Ruskin has coined the term "pathetic fallacy" (attaching human attributes to the surrounding environment) for:

"... our instinctive tendency to see our emotions reflected in our environment, which seems to be another form of the habit of seeing everything as centered upon ourselves: 'All violent feelings', he says, 'have the same effect. They produce in us a falseness in all our impressions of external things, which I would generally characterize as the 'pathetic fallacy'." (Barry 2010: 253).

These "violent feelings" indeed produce false "impressions" of "external things" which would contribute to sentimentalization. But, Frost stabilizes the use of sentimentalization in his poems so that his message evokes human responsibility which is rational and moral at the same time.

Peter Barry suggests that "eco-centered reading" focuses "outside" rather than "inside". One may wrongly focus on the psychology of individuals to explain the outer atmosphere, such as by how one generally studies Shakespeare's *King Lear* (251). Barry's angle on eco-centered reading is more optimal. This can be feasibly applied to some of Frost's poetry. The focus on the "outside" such as the disturbance to nature by the erection of walls in "Mending Wall"; the human occupation over nature's territories in "The Road Not Taken" and "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening"; Nature's physical, beneficial presence as trees in "Birches"; its complete absence in the urbanized sphere of the narrator's environs in "Acquainted with the Night"; the ways of the world in "Design" etc.- all give a rotund glimpse of the human state and the natural state- two of which upon interaction Man has become the victor. It indicates the concrete impact upon Nature which is the result of human encroachment. It seems that in many of these poems including "Bereft" and "Out, Out-" that Nature, as it appears personally to the reader or sometimes temporarily to the narrator, is awfully vitriolic against or oblivious to the human spirit. But, this is a wrong supposition. Realistically, sensory experience of the outside is needed for empirical evidence of the truth. By the time Frost wrote his poems, Nature has been in some ways vandalized and maltreated- an exceptional example of the bold actions of Man. This state of Nature on the "outside" whether good or bad determines the psychology of Man- disturbed, neurotic and power-hungry, or stable, vigilant and altruistic.

On the other hand, Frost's setting of nature conveys to the reader that Nature is an empowering force. For ideal reasons upon ecological balance and harmony, Nature is in touch with the narrator not by puerile or over-spiritualized communication where Nature directly speaks to Man in some form of dialogue or preternatural contact. But, by Nature's own natural functions, Man sees Nature and finds some, if not all, elements of himself- a propeller of absorbing his own immediate existence. So, juxtaposing Nature and humanity carries forth the fruits of immutability of vibrant life that a nature poet envisages.

Ironically, Robert Frost avers he is "not a nature poet" and neither "strictly a humanist" in a conversation between him and correspondent Bela Kornizer under NBCUniversal Media. It is a question whether the ecocritical perspective is coincidental as Frost may not have ever consciously meant to convey the ecocentric attitude the world needs. But, it cannot be denied that the focal importance of nature under threat in the midst of humankind should no longer be an elusive issue. As an ecocritic, the author of this dissertation

intends to disseminate the values contrived from Frost's Realist poems which are Transcendentalist in some profound aspects.

Frost's Transcendentalist-Realist poetry gives off different meanings depending on the angle of circumspection. Nature is affected by the correlation of Man's actions and the level of importance his understanding imparts to Nature's existence throughout centuries. Taking the ecocritical perspective into account, the nuances of Nature in Frost's poetry are all but natural and valuable in understanding human nature itself other than the broad reality of earth in the face of ominous environmental degradation.

III. CONTENT ANALYSIS

3.1 The Coalesce of Realism and Transcendentalism in Frost's Poetry and the Readers' Reaction to his Poetry

Since poetry and literature remains an incontinent mode of expression, there is always a route in continuing its pathway of purging the poetic soul of its impurities. The Romantic Period in America which is alternatively known as American Renaissance Period or the Age of Transcendentalism set its timely mark from 1828 to 1865. The pathway of the Transcendentalists veered towards balancing morals by confronting reality and fancying to escape reality. Imagination fluttered in the presence of nature. Edgar Allan Poe's poetry constitutes some vital constituent of Nature- raven, cats, the seashore etc. Walt Whitman amplified his relationship with Nature using the metaphysics. All the Transcendentalists have their own stream of vision wherein they romanticise life's aim to achieve the harmony of humankind with Nature. Nature merely ameliorated man's needs and desires. But, that pathway of purging the poetic soul is quite rugged, yet, nevertheless almost the same pathway when it comes to Frost's poetic sojourn. When the Civil War and the Reconstruction loomed in the near distance flanked by industrialization and urbanization, the cloud of Transcendentalism started to clear from the path. Clarity and sharpness of the true scenario of social, economic and political life beamed repugnantly and shook the old consciousness- the Transcendentalist tradition. Human misery came into purview in full scale. This is not to say that it was entirely absent in the previous time period. Poe himself has created works having inflictions of dark human misery by means of abnormal nature in man as envisaged by Poe. Keats himself brooded over "the weariness, the fever and the fret" in the midst of a torrid life as versified in his "Ode to a Nightingale". But, what became different this time is the entirely blunt force of life as it is- not as what it is not. The scenario is neither tainted with nor pushed to aggravation. Nature did not elevate man's position in the spiritual level. Realism and rationalism became synonymous. Yet, the lucid, spotless truth was not easy to permeate into the minds of all the masses in the time of early Realism. Truth was not what they sought for- at least not the frank truth without mere embellishments of consolation and alleviation of distress. So, the responses from the readers and critics were initially not unlike from those who surfaces from beyond Plato's Cave. Such a response was so prevalent in particularly America that being slowly shed of its Transcendentalist notions of fantasy, idealization and sentimentalization took a great deal of time. Even in the 1890s (well past the inception of the Period of Realism), Frost- the later revered Realist poet faced numerous rejections of his poems. The Atlantic Monthly magazine stated candidly having rejected his poems- "We regret that The Atlantic has no place for your vigorous verse" ("Robert Frost Biography").

He remained incognito for twenty years until his traverse in his poetic direction to England- being then culturally older and richer in the domain of literature- enabled him to flourish as a poet. But, even later on, his works have not been exempted from the captious remarks of the critics. The American critic Lionel Trilling saw the infusion of terror- "the terrible actualities of the life in a new way"- in Frost's realistic and pragmatic works including the poems "Design" and "Neither Out Far Nor In Deep" (Naem). Critic Malcolm Cowley states harshly in an article "The Case Against Mr. Frost", "Some of the honors heaped on him are less poetic than political. He is being praised too often and with too great vehemence by people who don't like poetry" (Stafford).

However, some other critics including Randall Jarrell makes complimentary remarks upon the richness and vigor instilled by the sense of terror in Frost's writing. His simple understatement in expressing the gist of reality brought out the truth observed by empirical observation that has been so important since the rise of rationalism along with Realism.

It took the readers of Frost's time to entirely digest the blunt facts. But, Frost did not entirely leave out the Transcendentalist tradition entirely. Generally, some of the substantial components of Transcendentalism include idealism, sentimentalization, imagination and nature. With respect to Frost's literary contribution, scholar Sathi Reddy states, "Frost's view is to face the music in the real world instead of taking a temporary shelter in an imaginary world" (114).

In agreement to this, one can admit that self-deception is only detrimental. Frost avoids this. It would seem hard to realize a Realist poet would immerse himself in the 'imaginary world'. But, incredibly, Frost's Nature is the 'music' that remains in the bosom of his poems with variant roles allowing vivid prosperity to exist in the 'real world'. The subject matter represents largely humanity not without its juxtaposition to Nature. Nature also represents the setting of the poems. More importantly, sometimes, this 'music' acts as the blithe

nurturer of one's imaginations as in "Birches" or else as the ostensibly pernicious counterpart to man's peace and equanimity as in "Bereft". So, Nature here has a twofold role: firstly, as a backdrop to his poems, it allures the readers by the stimulation of the senses and secondly, it is the personified device that mirrors humanity evocatively. The latter role governs his poems most spontaneously when eyed from the ecocritical perspective. He has incorporated Nature in living terms with humanity. One may think that the vivid, creative delineation of Nature in his poems should have salving effects upon the readers. In some of Frost's poems, there is such a perception. In other areas of his poems, Nature appears to be malicious. However, in this case, this reflects nature as the mirror image of humanity. This mirror image of humanity indicates the human tendency to dominate. Nature seems to have been derived its humanistic features from humans themselves. After all, humans have displayed their evil atrocities by dint of wars and armed conflicts causing nature to later retaliate by its own laws. Nature, hence, appears to be avenging itself against the human race or in other places, just portraying the bleak reality faced by humankind. Frost's pessimistic quality opened by the incisive portrayal of reality is what bothered his readers and critics. But, when seen in the ecocritical view, only sharp-edged words of his poems full of the bitter image of Nature alongside humanity can alarm the people to understand the crucial relation between Man and Nature. Man and Nature are interdependent. Adverse impacts upon Nature result to adverse impact upon Man and vice-versa. In this ecocritical study of Frost's selected poems, the equivalent position of Man and Nature will be evaluated even where it seems that Man has the upper hand upon Nature and vice versa. Many do not believe in the threats made against the earth's ecological system. Frost's poetry is in a way the guidepost to direct the misled into harnessing this reality. It should have been initially welcomed in the American domain of literature even before finding wide recognition in England. After visually experiencing the state of the natural environment afflicted by the human environment, Nature's subsequent intervention brings out the intrinsic side of actual humanity. The vivid description of Nature in action or merely setting boosts the senses of the readers who have been otherwise stuck in the rugged spot of Realism left without any trace of imagination and inspired by the pragmatic conditions of Earth. Should Frost have left the place of Nature out of his verses, his writings would have lost their verve and purpose.

3.2 The Latent Purpose of Man Building 'Borders'

Nature is engraved in Frost's many poems such as "Mending Wall", "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening", "Birches", "Bereft", "Neither Out Far Nor in Deep" and "Design" with a mystical aura. It produces a pensive hold upon humans prodding them to view nature with its stark, unexaggerated appeal not without realistic apprehension of the mutable aspects of life. Frost instils this depth of perception through the narrator's roles in his poems. At the same time, he does not refrain from expending nature to capture and retain the essential truth of humankind's position in the universe- his irrevocable limitations that leave him quite powerless. Yet, in the ecocritical view, to counteract this powerlessness, he gains ascendancy over the human environment- but, more easily so over the natural environment when the constituents of the latter environment are immobile. In certain extremes, this can be the result of nihilism⁴.

Nihilism is well-known and particularly, intensely felt among the vast populations of the urban world. Even when the pasture surrounding Frost's home in New England wore the vivid visage of calmness and serenity with its steep mountains and plenteous verdure, Frost had a sense of self-sequestration from society partly because of the familial loss he faced in his lifetime and the social changes that appeared which may have induced him to reject the approaches of society. He did not abandon any moral values, but indeed he challenged certain if not all traditional values from time to time (this is clearly reflected in his poem "Mending Wall"). So, he was partially a nihilist. This sense of partial nihilism within him brought with it the feeling of mistrust and paranoia towards those advocating certain old traditions doggedly. (It will be also considered in this dissertation that the neighbour too in the latter poem is nihilistic). Consequently, there came the urge for him to isolate himself from others as much as possible. An interview of Jay Parini, the 1998 biographer of Robert Frost mentions of Frost's impression of Lawrence Thompson, Frost's authorised biographer from the 1940s until Frost's death. In a YouTube video showing an interview with Parini, it has been found that Thompson appeared to Frost as "prying" and that Frost "came to despise" him even though Frost himself picked Thompson as his official biographer ["Robert Frost: Biography, Poems, Quotes, The Road Not Taken, Education (1999)"]⁵. Regarding Frost's penchant for seclusion from society, critic William Stafford mentions of Frost's estrangement from his first wife Elinor White who became intimately involved with another man considered as Frost's "rival- a formidable one". This led to a downward spiralling of Frost's peace of mind resulting him to incur "an almost suicidal journey, never fully explained, to North Carolina's Dismal Swamp in the fall of 1894" (Stafford). This indicates the reason for the way he isolated himself from the world. Apparently, given such circumstances, Frost was an impassioned person in his lifetime with deep sentiments. But, those sentiments were subdued in his poems allowing the narrators of his verse to be objective as much as possible. After all, he is known as a Realist poet. Nonetheless, some traces of Transcendentalism can still be found in his poetry which

will be discussed shortly. Deductively, Frost must have found relief by versifying on his observations of the world of his time.

The New England vista has provided has brought inspiration for him to reflect on the deep human problem. Following the demolition of justice through corrupt political and social systems and internal day-to-day conflicts within an economy, nihilism has been a profound theme in modern literature and yet it is a perception that has been negatively taken. It is not too surprising to find nihilism being deeply embedded in realistic literature such as in the poems of Frost. Particularly, in Frost's "Mending Wall" (1914), traditional values are being abated by the narrator. The narrator's observations are characteristic of Frost. The "fences" imply the erection of keeping up with tradition. With his realistic insight, the narrator sees the futility of the "fences"- a human, therefore, an unnatural construction. But, what he does not see is the latent reason behind his neighbor's dogmatic belief that "Good fences make good neighbors". A mindful reader on the other hand can discern the reason. The narrator can clearly see the position of his property and his neighbor's- the apple and pine trees in their respective positions and neither can those trees trespass into each other's territories. The neighbor irrespective of knowing this or not continues to build "fences" with the pretext that his traditional belief cannot be revoked. One of the major findings in this dissertation is that there is a kind of furtive indication within the neighbor's act. It is worthy to concentrate on the role of the neighbor not only in relation to the narrator and his properties but also to the modern humanity fragmented by destruction and the possibilities of destruction. The neighbor is one other kind of nihilist who keeps upholding the traditional values by pretext. He prefers seclusion whereas 'togetherness' is an impossible condition given that, to him, it breeds mistrust. Of course, he lives in merely a pasture where destructive intentions are hard to find. The idea of nihilism seems implausible but, in every one of Frost's poems, the characters reflect modern humankind, their nature and their tendencies which need to be put in a broader spectrum of reality. This way, the micro can represent the macro. Dr. S. Sen concludes with respect to the equivalence between regionality and 'universality' that "though Frost chooses to describe people of a particular place (New England), he is able to move towards universality. With their peculiar regional characteristics, he also brings out their basic humanity" (95). It can be understood that changes in the social system such as from rurality to urbanity causes the nihilistic approach. Upon further scrutiny, it can be said that it is what significantly brings mistrust and foments paranoia within a person of the other person's negative traits inducing him to lead life in seclusion as much as possible. This welcomes a deep sense of numbness from having severed human contact. From this arises the feeling of the "I" to counteract the numbness not without being rid of the paranoia. Man such as the neighbour attempts to fill his inner void with the uninhibited and unchecked empowerment of the self. From this egoistic drive, eventually and drastically arrives the decline of unity. By the partially nihilistic attitude, on part of the narrator, moral values are not being abandoned but traditional values are being rejected. On other hand, the neighbour's incentive in erecting borders elicits disorder in society based upon following a flawed tradition that decimates moral values. Already by Frost's time even before the WWI, human communication dwindled and it is horrifying to consider the ramifications of the wars and their aftermath upon instigating the divergent human relations as well as human relation diverging from Nature. By the darkening, untrammelled empowerment of the self among men, there are more severe cases of Nature being subordinate to Man and yet, in other cases, there are subtle indications of Nature's independence and liberty granted by Frost in his poetry.

The current modern world is slowly being divested of its resources- the foundation of sustainability and order of the natural and the human world. Each nation has variant limitations to how much they can utilize and satisfy its needs; the demarcation lines decide the limitation in the area of ownership of the resources and set security on protecting its possessions. In favor of the demarcation lines, the German professor Wolfgang Mieder is of the opinion that "people everywhere and at all times have seen the pros and cons of a fence marking property lines and keeping people from infringing on each other's personal space" (Reddy 117). The narrator in Frost's "Mending Wall" certainly does not think so, on the other hand, nor would environmentally conscious people. While Mieder opines that "fences" set territories within the arm of the law, the latter shows implicit awareness of the superficial aspect of the "fences". This view is exemplary in the ecocritical context. "Fences" seem quite minuscule in contrast to walls and harmless in contrast to barbwire. But, when seen in the symbolic context, "fences" achieve a larger apprehension of man's alienation of man from man and indeed, from Nature. The narrator's rational insight prevents him from seeing how "fences" "keep people from infringing on each other's space." A Realist would concentrate on what possessions the neighbour would covertly keep hidden. The narrator of Frost in this poem is such a Realist and his realistic view can be seen as a strong encouragement of the ecocritical issue as a wholly realistic and universal concern. He does not see the worth of keeping "fences" to protect each other's properties when all he and the neighbours have are immobile "apple trees" on one side and "pine trees" on the other side. Nevertheless, Frost's poems seem to have a deep touch of universality by the way the human values need to be constructed in concord with nature. On the other hand, when it comes to international or even national security, "borders" are needed. But, this is applicable when man's interests are placed in the centre of all considerations. Ironically, in this present world, the demarcation lines are futile in

their original incentive. Modern weapons of war engaged to thrust destruction upon the opponent at any time has an active role in the degradation of the physical, natural and human environment of the opponent's area. Even without prevailing weapons, the benign-looking "fences" or "walls" weigh down upon the natural environment to a great extent. The year 2017 oversees the signing of the agreement over the construction of the U.S.-Mexico wall border that has substantial adverse implications upon the ecological system compassing the two countries. Juanita Molina, the executive director of Border Action Network, an organization that advocates for the health and wellness of people who live along the border, has asseverated- "The reality is that border communities are porous by nature" (Donnella 2017). Roger DiRosa, manager of Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge, similarly argues- "Border activities have supplanted environmental protection" (Cohn 2007).

This message to solve the problem in reality is secured with imagery of completely Transcendentalist notion in "Mending Wall". This is echoed in the first four lines of the poem-

"Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it
And spills the upper boulders in the sun,
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast."

Here, Nature appears to support the claim in personified form that humanity has become disintegrated which needs to be reversed. Also, Nature appears to be speaking out against the travesty of human interference in the natural domain where a pasture is situated. Nature via pathetic fallacy shows the poet's use of Transcendentalist portrayal. In studying the relationship between Man and Nature, a statement from a thesis indicates: "He (Frost) used the natural world as a foil to the human world" (Dixon 12).

This line would suggest that nature hinders man's interest but with deeper digging into the meaning of this brings the conclusion that the "natural world" hinders man's self-interests. Such self-interests puts hazard to the natural environment. So, Nature's pernicious side is barely dwelt on in "Mending Wall". Instead, its position magnifies the contradiction between the parasitic Humanity and assertive Nature as here in these lines:

"My apple trees will never get across
And eat the cones under his pines,..."

The word "eat" signifying use of pathetic fallacy sarcastically implies the parasitic nature of humankind. Also from these lines, one can picture Man's rapacious nature inducing their subjugation and destruction of another's property to snatch another's gain for himself. Here, Nature differs from human nature in that that the former by natural means and causality reveals its detrimental side (brewing of storms, hurricanes, earthquakes etc.) whereas the latter in general mostly intends to do the same for survival, but mainly out of callousness.

The main focus in the poem "Mending Wall" is upon the alienation doggedly sustained by the neighbour. This symbolizes the fragmentation of humanity on nihilistic grounds. This same indication of nihilism is found in "Bereft" where intense solitude rules upon the speaker's mind causing him to dissect himself from Nature and Humanity. "Bereft" and "Mending Wall" have been published in two different dates- the former in 1914 in the anthology of *North of Boston* and the latter in 1928 in the anthology of *West-Running Brook*. Despite that, the characteristics of modern humanity are seen in a constant, coherent stream of habit-man's utter need of finding solitude away from the chaos of industrialized society. Nature takes on a darker appeal in "Bereft". Its presence is revealed by the "outside" atmosphere. However, it is perceived through the inner senses, i.e. through the troubled mindset of the highly introverted speaker who sees simple, usual aspects of nature in dark, sombre and personified form.

3.3 A Shift Away from 'Borders'

Written in two different temperaments, "Mending Wall" and "Bereft" strike as poles opposite to one another. While the narrator in "Mending Wall" remonstrates against utter solitude with a touch of humor, the narrator in "Bereft" is ensconced in solitude in a sombre manner. Moreover, while "Mending Wall" comprises a light sense of pronia⁵ by nature's intervention, "Bereft" by its restless tone and flow of thoughts sharply indicates a deep sense of paranoia. Whatever the case may be, nature's presence is unavoidable. In his thesis *Nature and Human Experience in the Poetry of Robert Frost*, Scholar David C. Dixon makes reference to George Nitchie's observation regarding nature: "Frost describes nature as he perceives it to be at the particular moment of poetic experience" and also his criticism over "Frost's consequent lack of a philosophically consistent concept of nature" (14). Though true, his "lack of a philosophically consistent concept of nature" does not produce a negative impression of Frost's poetry. Rather, it suggests the flexibility in expressing the

nuances of his mood. He externalizes his varied feelings onto Nature making it alive with varied expressions, thereby making Nature at par with Man.

Man is generally the antagonist in Frost's nature poetry such as in "Fire and Ice" and "Out, Out--", but it cannot be denied that Nature too appears somewhat antagonistic. Scholar Dahal in his article "The World of Nature and Human Experience in the Poetry of Robert Frost" (2016) compares Nature to "a sort of friendly antagonist" (102). Nevertheless, the resemblance persists to show that the view of nature is decided by how Man treats nature's correspondence with him. In his thesis *Nature and Human Experience in the Poetry of Robert Frost*, David C. Dixon refers to Elizabeth Jennings' observation in her 1966 book entitled *Frost* that Frost is an "inward poet" while Dixon discusses Frost's means of skepticism through "introspection" (Dixon 9). Although Barry favors the "outside" over the "inside" as mentioned earlier, this particular poem focuses on the inwardness that Dixon suggests. The externalization of his "inward" feelings is portrayed by Man's affinity to nature. So, such personal "inward" feelings suggest how he views nature whether those be amicable or aggressive. He tried to instil a sense of balance in his life and utilize the advantages of solitude interspersed with self-dependence guided to some extent by nature. A YouTube video "Robert Frost- A Documentary" shows an interview with Leisa McClellan a Language Arts teacher at Avon High School in Indiana, USA, where she says that Robert Frost preferred avoiding excess of "human contact" to get his "creative ideas" flowing. An excess of "human contact" may have not helped him establish his sage-like ideas in his revered poems. Understandably, this controlled amount of self-reservation is what characteristically stimulated his creativity. This sprung from the days of his youth which Frost himself speaks of in the 1963 American documentary film ("Robert Frost: A Lover's Quarrel with the World Part 1"). In those early days followed the death of his father, he lived a life of seclusion- a seclusion he found riveting and nourishing considering his place of residence being based on a the pastures. While talking about working in the newspapers, he admits, "Well, I wasn't a good reporter. I was too shy. I never was away from the farm. We never went to church, never went to movies, never went to anything and there was nothing missing." So, one might imagine Frost was apathetic to humans whether neighbours, acquaintances or strangers and, thus, distanced himself from them. But, the point here is that this reclusive and nature-loving trait of Frost led him to explore his inner world without forgetting the outer world as reflected in his poems. This may explain why nature is personified in some of his poems. His surreal vision of Nature shows Nature with its own predilections and ways of sustenance. His inner feelings have been externalized upon Nature, thereby, giving life to nature in a way that does not elevate Nature as a superior entity. Rather, Man and Nature stands equitably on the same level of life on earth unless human dominance over the natural environment persists.

Nature is capable of breaking and scattering "boulders" here and there as in "Mending Wall" as though with a conscience of its own. It can also take the shape of a serpent "in a coil" and stun an introvert with its presence in "Bereft". An environmentally conscious person would acknowledge that Nature's intervention in the latter poem appears to be some form of retaliation against Man's intrusion into the natural environment. But, a different viewpoint can also be taken. Complete solitude offers paranoia. But, one cannot escape from nature, especially most of Frost's narrators cannot. In "Bereft", nature comes in a way knocking hard on Frost's door with a "deeper roar" telling him that there is a world outside his own shell. It appears that nature here latently has recuperative powers towards the paranoid narrator wishing to be excluded from everyone but God. It is the bridge connecting man with the external world. Even, in "Birches", Man must live with that world along with the one he calls his own. Exclusion from that world suggests withdrawal from disillusionment; disillusionment being a prime perception of the time when Realism has penetrated into Western culture. Consequently, his inner festering feelings will deprive him of his hopes and joys. Nature, generally a symbol of Transcendentalism, has a realistic purpose in Frost's poems. The following lines from the poem display immense symbolic significance:

"What would it take my standing there for,
Holding open a restive door,
Looking downhill to a frothy shore?"

It sends a jolt to the human mind- makes him realize his existence. The "looking downhill" direction signifies looking back into the past whilst the "frothy shore" symbolizes the intensity of emotion causing an emotional 'flood'. Hence, there denotes the flooding back of memories. Memories are what sums up the experience and life's journey of a man. Nature's workings have prodded the state of his mind to discern his identity in the real world in allegiance with Nature. Resonating to this, Dixon refers to John F. Lynen's conclusion in Lynen's *The Pastoral Art of Robert Frost* regarding Frost's nature that it is "really an image of the whole world of circumstances within which man finds himself. It represents what one might call 'the human situation'" (Dixon 1975: 19). Upon primary reflection of the term "the human situation", it suggests to us as the condition in which he realizes his juncture in the universe and also his prime role. Humans, thus, remain the focal point in every instance. From this incurs the road to a balanced life in reality. This comes into conflict, however, with Frost's perception that Nature is "basically indifferent and remote" (Dixon 1975: 18). Nature

appears in the form of a tartar⁶ around humankind. Nonetheless, this conflict can be obviated given that, as Dixon concludes, it depends on Man's will of the understanding of his world. Nature does not directly dissolve the problems of Man, rather challenges Man to find the quintessence of his existence with the will to withstand and overcome the pathos of reality- "it (Nature) puts man to the test and thus brings out his true greatness" (19). It should also be taken into account that in some places, Nature provides a shape and order to spur a sense of favorable direction for Man such as in "Mending Wall", "Birches" and "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" while in other places, Nature is not so benevolent such as in "Out, Out-", "Tree at my Window" and "Design". This is due to the aforementioned fact that Frost shows the "lack of a philosophically consistent concept of nature" (Dixon 14) as observed by George Nitchie.

Venturing into Realism including its bitter aspects of the monotony of social and working lives did not always bring consolation while the Western social and economic system altered drastically through industrialization. But, Man can acquire his soulful self when observing the "test" Nature puts him to. On the other hand, this view seems to be abnegated in Frost's "Tree at My Window" by the narrator who refers to nature's affliction as "outer weather" as opposed to man's more poignant and pungent "inner weather". The narrator refuses to see a perfect alignment of Man with Nature as far as emotions are of concern. But, the subtle indication in the poem is the scathing eruption of emotions making it hard for Man to extricate himself from it. His emotional dilemma abates his fortitude and baffles him from seeing reality. Nature with its "vague dream-head" may not have a thinking faculty as of the human mind and may speak such as by the mere rustling of leaves- "light tongues talking aloud". But, this saves it from the spiritual ordeal and the agony of the soul. Man has superiority over nature with his emotional capacity deriving his ability to empathize but the whirlwind of emotions in an unstable world curtails that ability. So here, he identifies with the juncture he is in. Nature, on the other hand, is free from the fetters of sentimentalization. Transcendentalism advocates sentimentalization generally. This is to some degree found in "Tree at my Window" where the narrator comes face to face with the fact that his sentimental reflections agonise him. Philosophically and scientifically, when one discerns a problem, he can manifest a solution for it. Dr. Shruti Tripathi construes in his article "An Ecocritical View of the Green Poems of Robert Frost"- "The poet finds solace in the lap of nature and experiences a connection and an odd brotherhood between himself and the tree" (130). In this view, Nature has a way of allowing Man to regain or rejuvenate his senses and self-awareness which can be also found in "Birches" and "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" making it all the more crucial to preserve and enrich the natural environment.

3.4 Man's Unshakeable Affinity to Nature

"Birches" is most likely to be the poem immaculate in reflecting on nature's role in balancing reality with fancy and, hence, Realism with Transcendentalism. Its "inner dome of heaven" "fallen" from the dark trees in a "sunny winter morning" signifies the dichotomy of warmth and coolness- nature's flexible traits that softens the hardened and fortifies the gentle and sensitive bringing a coalesce of balanced emotions. This renders a state of stability in the state of the human mind. In a Youtube video containing John F. Kennedy's speech honouring the national poet Robert Frost on 26th of October in 1963, there is no wonder why former president John F. Kennedy spoke of Frost's "spirit" in his poems that "informs and controls our strength". Nonetheless, the nature imagery in "Birches" is succinctly compact rendered by Frost's astute use of understated and yet vivid, descriptive expressions. This poem de facto reveals a positively ecocentric attitude not only in corroboration of its thermal imagery but of the narrator's standpoint as well. The picturesque "sunny winter morning" seeping into the sylvan figures has natural overtones to it. But, the narrator aspires to insinuate the state of Nature to appease his spiritual needs. It should be noted that the narrators in "Tree at my Window" and "Bereft" does not explicitly thrive with eco-consciousness (until nature persuades them to). But, a prominent form of eco-consciousness transpires within the narrator in "Birches" implying man's companionship with Nature. Upon his imagination, the trees are bestowed with human traits, as though Nature is his equal in the poem "Birches"-

"You may see their trunks arching in the woods
Years afterwards, trailing their leaves on the ground
Like girls on hands and knees that throw their hair
Before them over their heads to dry in the sun."

He envisions the trees listening to the core of his thoughts. He aspires liberty from the dilemma that arrives with one's maturity, and a sense of intrinsic rejuvenation to lighten the load of his troubles. But, this is a time when as an adult, he feels too heavy to become again a "swinger of birches" as he was in childhood. An intriguing Blakean and, therefore, Transcendentalist influence prevails here. The evolutionary cycle of aging from innocence unto adulthood and old age- the concept of innocence, experience and super-innocence with respect to its impact upon nature underpins the poem. A profound part of one's childhood marks his fondness

for nature, of adulthood generally his deteriorating regard for nature and of old age his return of fondness for nature. Although upon original Romantic tradition, the evolutionary cycle of aging applies to man's attachment to the Divine- only in the latter, "fondness" can be substituted with "devotion" to nature. Here, Man's attachment to Nature is deeply embedded within Frost's poem. The trees would be the buttress helping him to "swing" towards "heaven". But, of course, he knows that a utopian landscape will not appease him entirely. What he aspires is an uncanny traverse from earth to heaven and vice versa. Interestingly, while Frost has appealed many as mostly a Realist poet, this wish of the narrator formed by Frost indicates Transcendentalist interests- interests that involve the vital power of imagination to nourish the human soul. Motley of Realism and Transcendentalism again integrates the poem. Furthermore, equally importantly, "Earth's the right place for love"- Earth being the home of emotional tranquillity and practicality, assuages the narrator. This state is, however, earned by the choice he makes. Such a choice is found engraved in the poems "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" and "The Road Not Taken".

Whilst the poem "Bereft" entertains the unapparent benevolence of nature, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" on the other hand elicits a sinister, ebony and yet a solicitous tone of Nature by Nature's interaction with man. The woods seem to call the narrator to enter it with its "lovely, dark and deep" exterior. It is similar to a man's fascination with daphne flowers with its aromatic fragrance and appealing contour making him indifferent to their poisonous properties, or with sheer, untainted white snowfall that canopies the plants and trees, and carpets the ground lending a look of absolute equanimity that however can also numb the senses and life itself by the steely, cold ice it brings. The latter view persists in Frost's "Stopping by Woods on A Snowy Evening". It arouses the idea of death after which man can finally rest in peace. The Keatsian concept of human sufferings is not explicated here but there is such a hint of this in this poem without even directly versifying upon it. In "the darkest evening of the year" evoking the throes the narrator has waded in, the narrator listens to nature and its omens. The "woods" once entered into its deep threshold induce symbolically the end to life in a cyclic fashion. In the ecocritical point of view, entry into the woods serve the large extent of human interest that relies on the destruction of the woods to accommodate human habitation and satisfy human utilities. The eventual result is the gradual destruction of human life itself while the ecological system is being impaired. This understanding, however, would not have been penetrated had not the "horse"- intervened and elucidated the dark possibilities. This has augmented one of the finest, renowned and reiterated lines of American literature- the narrator's affirmed and reaffirmed conviction:

"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."

In this case, like in "Bereft", to entice Man's cooperation with Man in the external world and his belligerent connection to Nature is abated for a good cause- so that he survives and executes his obligations towards Man and, of course, Nature. Yet, Nature offers sustainability and unsustainability depending on the choice of treatment he makes towards Nature. Otherwise, it would not have been the "horse" to have guided him in the direction towards sustainability. The horse having a heroic role and being an element of nature is not unlike other natural resources to drive civilization forward. It is still utilized in the agrarian plane. The "horse", in the abstract sense, is the propeller of reason upon responding to the pressures of life on earth such as "society, family and fiscal solvency" ("Symbolism in Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening by Robert Frost"). The horse, in the concrete sense, provides the equestrian support in building human civilisation through facilitating transport for years. Hence, the position of the "little horse" in the poem is indispensable while being the sign of optimal progress. In the poem, it can be inferred that Nature is testing the narrator under difficult, tempting situations. It can also be inferred that Frost demonstrates this interdependence of Man upon Nature or at least, some aspect of Nature. Contradictorily though, another angle of the poem illumines the divide between Man and Nature as well as the sense of proprietorship of the former over the latter which are pointed out by author Tambile in his "An Ecocritical Reading of Robert Frost's Select Poems":

"In the mindset of the speaker nature is demarcated by the limits of the ownership 'whose woods these are I think I know'. The notion of separation and ownership is later strengthened when the speaker stops and notices that there is not a 'farmhouse near'." (18)

This not only projects Man's divide from Nature but also from Man as well. The sense of identifying the ownership comes as a warning to the traveller of the red areas he better not cross into. But, generally, the rapacious Man cannot help but encroach into others' territory. It is not that he only intends to plunder and pillage in this poem but with the sprightly curiosity to fathom the unknown or unheard properties the woods might hold. Man's unchecked and unrestrained curiosity urges him to ignore others' predilections and mutual interests. This may signify the corporate greed and oblivion to the awareness disseminated by the agencies

vowing to protect nature from internecine human endeavors. Here, a divide is created- on one side are the corporate bodies and on the other side, the environment protection agencies. The narrator's interest in "Stopping by Woods on A Snowy Evening" indicates a unilateral position- one that cannot be agreed upon by another. Nature allows the narrator to realize the divide between Man and Man other than Man and Nature. First, it drew the attention of the narrator deeply and consequently, he became conscious of the matter of ownership. That is to say, he infers that the woods do not belong to him. There is a certain tone of trepidation as he comes to this inference or better yet, he feels a sense of precaution, being a man of peace and prosperity. Finally, he withdraws from entering the depth of the forest with avarice. Here, in "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening", the narrator can be seen as a Man with the ideal eco-centric attitude. Then, the ultimate truth dawns on him- he will at one point come face to face with nature, rather become wholly and physically intertwined with nature through the "sleep" that will come to him as it does to any other man. It is indeed an eternal "sleep" for the deceased which after burial Nature devours. Furthermore, it cannot be denied that Nature safely harbors the body of the dead unlike man-made plastic rubble which does not hide the deceased from the human eye. Conclusively, Nature's soil tends to hide the unpleasant, haunting sights of the dead and most people are likely to admire the aesthetic appeal of nature. Such evinces the magnitude of Nature affirming life or death. Yet, within its magnitude, even while Man is regent over his environment, he is sometimes lost and powerless as an individual. This essence of desolation is found in "The Road Not Taken".

3.5 Mankind's Divergence from Mankind

As in "The Road Not Taken", Man as "one traveller"- an individual force is impelled to take on one destiny. He does not know what lies ahead but hopes for the better assuming the route befitting his aspirations. The road he takes or does not is of personal significance to him. While he does have the curiosity to explore and introspect which way would appease him, time within the human lifespan is indeed limited. For him, there are two different "roads" that "diverge in a yellow wood". He must opt for one on his own and it is by this choice alone and pondering over its consequences in the future, he is left in scruples unless he has the firm belief in the profundity of his choice. In the ecocritical perspective, whichever way he goes, he leaves his marks on the leaves-strewn ground. This applies to all men individually after which nature is in one way or another to make space for mankind and must sacrifice itself to them. Ultimately again, Man overtakes Nature. This is faced in reality as human population becomes prolific leading to decimation of forests and land, and soil degradation among other factors of adversity. Although in general this poem swiftly makes a deep impression on the reader for its inspirational qualities, an ecocritical reading can shift such a perception and elucidate upon the crucial choice Man makes for his own that might cost the wellbeing of nature. The bleak, cicatrized future of the natural world is implicitly and curtly displayed through the lines-
"Yet, knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back."

This notions the speculation that many environmentalists apprehend- that it is almost impossible to reverse the process of global warming. Or even, if it is possible, Man must make enormous sacrifices and sustain immense patience and commitment to allow global warming to recede and disappear in time. Various specialists have drawn their opinions in the internet blog site *Quora* to the question "How long would it take to reverse global warming?" Among them are Scott Strough and Michael Barnard. According to Strough, a researcher in carbon farming as a climate change mitigation strategy, it can take approximately "100-200 years" to remove the abnormally excessive amount of carbon dioxide in the air that has built up "since 1750" with "reasonable cooperation" to the guidelines in stabilizing the ecology. Barnard, a low-carbon innovation strategist, suggests that complete ecological stability can be achieved after another "500 years" with strict compliance to implementing the guidelines

Furthermore, because of human occupation over the natural environment making it the new human environment, rough conflicts have been brewing between the environmentalists and corporate bodies. This underpins the societal ordeal resulting to the sequestration of mankind especially in developed areas having education and awareness for the necessity of the bio-diverse natural environment. According to the abstract of the article "From environmentalism to corporate environmental accountability in the Nigerian petroleum industry: Do green stakeholders matter?" from the International Journal of Energy Sector Management, authors Aminu Hassan and Reza Kouhy relates to the rough conflicts arising from undermining the significance of the important environmental stakeholders and from the weak power of the regulatory environmental stakeholders. Such conflicts have risen to belligerent attacking and destruction of the oil companies' properties and other kinds of turmoil in the Niger Delta (Hassan and Kouhy 2015).

Again, where making choices are of concern, as in "Acquainted with the Night", to stimulate his growth and advances to come closer to fulfilling his ambitions, he is most likely to be able to do so in the midst of urbanity. The 21st century Man's dreams are materialized in the hubbub of the city or *prima facie*. But, the

picture etched through the words of the poet offer a different, abject and yet realistic perspective-

“I have stood still and stopped the sound of feet
When far away an interrupted cry
Came over houses from another street,…”

Were this heard within the bosoms of nature, say, through the calls of birds, it would have been a very natural if not a welcoming phenomena in the silent night. But, in the city with its congregation of men in their separate homes and spaces, “an interrupted cry” comes as a trepid and ghastly call. It identifies with the misery Man faces in the city. Man is encircled by people but, yet, the break of nexus between them and that of between Man and Nature evokes a mortifying experience in the face of reality. To verify the validity of this experience of “loneliness” summoning the “ache of modernity” (the phrase being coined by Thomas Hardy in his late 19th century novel *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*), Dixon adroitly makes a reference to “Charles Frankel’s explanation of the concept of the individual”-

“The concept of the individual, as we have come to know and use it, is the product of a gigantic historical process of social disengagement. In this process... it came to denied that the identity of any man could be fixed, or his rights and responsibilities assigned, simply in terms of his membership in any social group or any congeries of such groups” (Dixon 1975: 24).

On the light of this, in many cases, the sense of abject “loneliness” has stirred a preconception within individuals in the city. This preconception suggests that one cannot wholly understand the other by which each could have fully supported another. So, the narrator in the poem is “unwilling to explain” to the “watchman” of the sadness behind his “eyes”. There is a conflict of emotion prevailing. Each suffers in his or her own way even where the city is filled with people and thus, as everything is left unsaid, there is nothing to work on there. Thus, wallowing in self-pity or simply in dolor like in “Bereft”, the narrator does not find any place in the city that would alleviate the intrinsic distress he lives with having “outwalked the furthest city light”. But, in “Acquainted with the Night”, there is barely any ameliorating spot of nature to help absolve the narrator’s distress. Urbanity sans nature’s spark has encapsulated the living spaces of mankind inducing a horrifying picture of darkness. A partially Transcendentalist image of Nature is rendered in this poem-

“...One luminary clock against the sky

Proclaimed the time was neither wrong nor right...”

along with the realistic view of life which is also mirrored in the poem “Design”. In “Acquainted with the Night”, Nature is absent except where the “rain” trickles down and leaves an atmosphere of gloom but this gloom is nothing compared to the urban atmosphere created by Man while the moon- the “luminary clock” appears incommunicable to Man’s errors. The narrator can examine and judge on his own the state of mankind.

Instead of excavating and specifying the cause behind it, Frost’s narrator has decided to leave no blotch in the vivid pictures projected in his poems. There is a certain kind of negative capability⁷ present here which is otherwise found in English Romantic poems. This, however, contradicts with the concept arising from the ecocritical angle of Frost’s poems. Eco-consciousness requires searching for facts and certainties that negative capability denies. Nevertheless, what Frost in his moment of “poetic experience” shows is that the darkness of the night is unanswerable. It swallows the invigorating spirit of the narrator and he is left despondent and helpless.

Reality still is so well-woven into Frost’s poetry, particularly “Design” that the American literary critic Lionel Trilling felt impelled to say that Robert Frost is “a terrifying poet... The universe that he conceives is a terrifying universe. Read the poem called Design and see if you are warned by anything in it except the energy with which emptiness is perceived” (Naeem 2010).

The poem echoes the prevalence of the survival of the fittest- nature’s mechanism of subsisting even in the direst conditions, but, this has from the beginning of humanity become the key strategy in inhuman prospects. What is natural and ordinary in the poem “Design” by dint of the food chain connecting the “spider”, “moth” and “heal-all” (all in seemingly innocuous “white” appearance) is, however, not so natural and ordinary when it comes to human consumption and utilization of the natural habitat as well as of human resources. The poem is reflective of the entities parallel to each other- Nature and human nature. In concord to this, William Stafford articulates over this parallelism in his article “The Terror in Robert Frost” by referring to John Lyne’s words-

“In Frost’s poetry, the regional world is kept quite separate from the everyday life of urban society, and nature from the level of human experience; yet the separate contexts, though never allowed to merge, are held

together by contrast between them, which a constant reference from one to the other and an awareness in ironic parallels” (Stafford).

Although the natural world is portrayed comprising “assorted characters of death and blight”, it cannot be denied that humans are of the same elements also. Man is part of this vast system within nature that acts to facilitate all its needs and utilities so that there is peace and order in the system. But, the truth is far from that that peace and order are desired in all circumstances. Human intervention amongst others and in nature is far from being natural. Nature is being threatened and replaced with artificial imposition that threatens human existence itself. Hence, the universe is indeed “terrifying”. So, if this horrid scenario continues to exist throughout the globe, spiritual vigor followed by existential vigor will be attenuated until complete elimination will thrive- this is succinctly depicted in “Fire and Ice” with use of sharp Transcendentalist language. “Fire”, synonymous with burning desire to quench the individual thirst, points out the profligacy prevalent in the misuse of natural resources. This tendency is averred especially by the acts of warfare. Whether there are civil wars or wars on a much larger scale, weapons of mass destruction inflicts past the enemy’s territorial lines which eventually equates to deplorable degradation of the natural resources for the worse of mankind and the environment in the long run. Then, this spurs the irrevocable fact- war incites war.

In this context according to a *Wikipedia* source entitled “Environmental Impact of War”, the Norwegian sociologist and political scientist Nils Gledistch declares-

“Resources are a key source of conflict between nations: ‘after the end of the Cold War in particular, many have suggested that environmental degradation will exacerbate scarcities and become an additional source of armed conflict.’ A nation’s survival depends on resources from the environment”.

On the other hand, “ice” synonymous with numbness, points out man’s oblivion to the threats of climate change. Again, this is also found in reality whereas the United States has backed from the Paris agreement at the COP 21 (the 21st conference of the Conference of the Parties held in Paris) on 1st June 2017 with the conviction that the agreement puts the largest economy in the world at a monetary disadvantage with Trump’s arraignment- “This agreement is less about the climate and more about other countries obtaining a financial advantage over the United States” as found in a recent article entitled “Trump Announces US Withdrawal from Paris Climate Accord”. Moreover, the Trump administration asseverates that climate change is “no longer” “a national security threat” while President Trump earlier referred to climate change as a “hoax perpetrated by the Chinese” (Covucci 2017).

At the same time, even where the COP 21 has been consented to by multiple countries, authors of the paper *Nature Climate Change*, having conducted a broad survey, have come across findings that suggest that conference such as mentioned has not prodded individuals to take personal action, rather left the action to the hands of the government. O’Grady mentioned in a recent article “Media Coverage of Climate Negotiations Greeted with Indifference”, “The authors suggest that overall, the summit seemed to make people more likely to kick back and leave the issues to the government rather than believing that they had the personal responsibility or power to make a difference” (2017). Indeed, individual responsibilities are highly requisite to prevent worsening of the climate change. Yet, individuals have become as cold as “ice” to this regard. Hence, there has been little progress in the onus which a developed country withdraws from much to the agitation of the developing nations.

Nevertheless, even where the intention is to ease human lives and living standards such as in the States by its deliberation in tackling its financial ordeals in lieu of global warming, unity is being precluded. Man carries out scientific ventures in order to surpass his limitations only to be faced with the fact that he cannot surpass his limitations. Yet, his vision is targeted to find something extraordinary. That is an optimistic endeavor vivaciously held. However, on the quest of finding this, he at some point obviates the need for collective benefit. Segregation of mankind is again in purview. This is ominously found in the poem “Neither Out Far nor in Deep”. People “turn their back on the land”- the habitat of mankind where man’s usefulness needs to be fulfilled and these same people “look at the sea all day” which is far outside the zone of human populations. Even though the world has reached the modern era where information about everything on terrestrial grounds seem to have been uncovered, further zest is required upon the speciality of human existence and the robust nature of human communication and networking. This would retrench the conflicts happening in every segment of the globe. While Nature provides the setting of the poem, it illustrates curtly the position of Man in his relation, again, with Nature and the rest of humankind. Yet, sadly, nowadays, people search for a phenomena in their vastly regular and monotonous lives. Even if a phenomenon cannot be always practical, they search for a deep sense of relief. For instance, a temporal relief is perceived by the young labor boy in “Out, Out-” working dexterously albeit exhaustively with his “buzz saw” at a time when a much needed reprieve and rest should have been granted to him long before his task finished and the accidental amputation of his hand transpired. Yet, this hard-earned relief is derived from the concept of unwavering labor in the name of progress of civilization based especially on American cultural and social values of the 20th century. From there arose the unregulated, rising significance of work for survival. This applies to especially the subaltern who worked slavishly while industrialization crept

over everywhere. The subaltern includes the boy in "Out, Out-" who falls to the cruelty of human indifference-comparable to the "ice" that will destroy the world as mentioned in "Fire and Ice" or to the ghastly "interrupted cry" at the dead of the night perceived as a normal, aural occurrence. Nevertheless, it should be noted that in the poem "Out, Out-", the boy is surrounded by ameliorating sights of nature-

"...Five mountain ranges one behind the other
Under the sunset far into Vermont."

It appears that nature is apathetic to mankind's sufferings. The fact is that it is so because the inordinate work-infused principles incorporated distracts him from finding inner peace. This presents a disorder in working and living pattern. Frost has stated- "Nothing not built with hands of course is sacred" (Sen 2015: 85). This ushers Frost's belief that human involvement is 'sacred'. Indeed, it ought to be sacred. But, the "buzz saw"- a human invention- that "snarled and rattled" offers a different perspective. In the personified sense, it has deprived the boy of joy and eventually of life. It is the meaning attached to it that has drastically decimated the boy's life expectancy. Child labor offers subsistence, not a child's carefree moments of exuberance. His life is wrought with misery as he cuts down "wood" using the "buzz saw". This indicates the threat to nature alongside the enervating impact upon his childhood. Deductively, Frost gives a curt description of how human involvement has deviated from its 'sacred' root in the midst of ignorance to man's core values. Normally, the phase of adulthood invokes the deviation from the core values. But, given the situation of 1916, that is, during the First World War when the poem "Out, Out-" was published, the human situation was horribly dire. Man's conventions hurt Mankind other than Nature itself- this should caution Man in his activities of the repercussions of his actions as in many cases, Nature's on-goings are obviated from the concerns of people who are more or less bothered over human condition. Even while the surrounding Nature in "Out, Out-" offers pleasing sensations through the visual image of the "mountains" and "sunset" and even by the olfactory image through the "sweet-scented stuff when the breeze drew across" the "sticks" of "wood", the working routine seems harsh. But, this represents the social stigma with Nature existent yet diminishing. One can hardly find a working place bordered by Nature's bounteous beauties. The aesthetic backdrop of Nature alongside the sawing of the wood by a mere child signifies the decimation of nature and human life from a period sooner than anticipated.

IV. MAJOR FINDINGS

The aim of a Realist poet such as that of Robert Frost is to elucidate upon the true picture of humanity and the world. With the rise of Realism came not only the iterative importance of Man but also the acute continuation of Man's use of his rational faculty. Realism tends not to extend its horizon to depicting idealism or Nature's elevation of Man's senses, eventually effacing the conceited face of Nature from Man's sphere. Yet, Frost's Realist poetry focuses on the incredible importance of Nature standing as setting and subject matter. Realism brings admission of the blunt truth- survival of man attained by a drastic change in working and social lifestyle. Man severs his tie to the rest of mankind given the nihilism, paranoia and mistrust growing within himself and human communities following political and social conflicts. It is incredulous how Nature would be given any matter of importance in this respect. But, Frost was not a poet who disregarded the role of Nature entirely.

This world is, practically speaking, hugely influenced by the inter-workings of Nature and most importantly, Man. Against the generalized theory that Frost is not a nature poet, he is one nature poet with an attitude different from that of the general nature poets rendered as the Transcendentalists. Though Frost himself claims he is not a nature poet, he subconsciously is one that a pensive ecocritic may decipher, thus, making Frost partially a Transcendentalist. Of course, his main aim is to help elevate the position of Man by realizing and understanding his mistakes in reality. Ecocritically in Frost's poetry, this essential concept is buttressed by the role Nature plays in assisting Man to find the rational and sometimes spiritual clarity of his position, thereby, transmuting chaos and disorder into order and feasible, zealous pursuits of his aspirations. Again, ecocritically, Frost's narrator's alliance with Nature evokes the making of ideal and responsible individuals who earlier left themselves to oblivion to his obligations to Nature and the human community.

So, in this way, whilst Nature, idealism, imagination and sentimentalization form the potential prospects of Transcendentalism, it is not hard to find them in Frost's poetry considered ironically as Realist poetry. This supports the idea that Transcendentalism and Realism are both two facets included in his poetry mingling together to form Frost's perception of the contemporary world.

It would be an erroneous idea to consider Nature as a completely external factor to Man's ambitions and goals. When considering Frost's poetry, Man has acute semblance to Nature (apart from there being certain differences between them as well). The equivalent position of Man and Nature infuses throbbing life into Nature whilst in reality these days, Nature's vital existence is undermined to a great extent. One may perceive that it

being devoid of human faculty of reasoning or communicating, it is numb and rigid, and only provides scenic allurements.

The turbulence of emotion does not always apply in case of Nature. So, Nature may seem to be an imperceptive entity- an antagonist just as a Man of temerity can be. But, in fact, it is his view and attitude that blurs or deforms the true perception of Nature. Nature is seen as either a force of benevolence or even malevolence. Hence, this largely depends on how he treats nature's cooperation with him either by dint of visual, tactile and other varied sensations.

Man's errors come into purview given that his experience through adulthood has not brought him the privilege of optimal, intellectual and rational growth in the long run. Eco-consciousness helps prompt him to achieving a state of universal harmony. But, the lachrymose fact in this case is that he does not thrive with Nature but against Nature. This eco-consciousness is a lacking which state authorities, corporate bodies, politicians and even individuals fail to preclude.

What Man fails to see is that he is one major segment of Nature considering that he has the physical and intellectual upper hand over Nature by dint of making choices and decisions since the unregulated advent of science and industrialization. He plans to spread his dominion inducing urbanization jeopardizing ecological stability. This is not to say that urbanization is at all times a dysfunctional process of moving forward to raise living standards. But, ignorance to misbalancing the ecological system is an alarming matter that should worry the whole of humankind. So, the critical appreciation of Frost's poetry in the ecocritical perspective should prompt humanity to think, evaluate and implement a crucially ecocentric attitude in this regard.

V. CONCLUSION

The inevitable forces of nature- the howling wind preceding a fearful storm or hurricane, the steely ice forming a deep crust all over man's territories, the tumultuous strike of lightning on the ground etc.- all have the profound ability to threaten man's existence. Parallel to this situation is the inimical attributes of Man with the upper hand of power that can at any given point tarnish the growth and sustainability of nature with the weapons of industrialization as well as the weapons of human indifference and greed. In some cases, however, more as an effect from a cause than an act of retaliation, Nature's wonders can be prove to be assailants to Man's existence (the cause being humankind's habitual destruction of the natural environment). Global warming or climate change- caused by Man to an unprecedented level induces an instigation of Nature's dark presence. In this case, though man is endowed with his thinking faculty and reasoning intellect, he does not always have control over the preponderate growth of nature. This sense of understanding is well conveyed through Frost's poems like "Mending Wall", "Out, Out-", "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" etc. Sadly, Man continues to strangle the life out of Nature. The understanding that Frost is a Realist-Transcendentalist poet can help reverse this inculcation and malpractice against Nature and, eventually, against the survival of humankind itself. Achieving this, indeed, an ecocritical outlook must be established. The question arises- did Frost take a backward step by inputting Transcendentalist features into his poetry in an era where modern literature denotes Realism in lieu of Transcendentalism? No- in fact, Frost utilizes nature to address human concerns of the body and soul and rationally probes the disparagement every human perceives and will perceive, and comes to a conclusion facing the truth in relation to the entire ecological system. If he exhibited his works as only a Transcendentalist in his time, he would not have been considered with high esteem as he was. If he did not retain any Transcendentalist features in his works, his message through his poems would have been more terrifying and less capable of being accepted by the majority. The conclusion that he is a Realist with partial Transcendentalist traits was not rapt in his time. Now, however, as liberalism has progressed far, it can be said that the synthesis of Realism and Transcendentalism in his works sets Frost as a very unique poet and philosopher. In many cases, it stands that Frost merely represents reality in most of his poems without offering solutions to problems. But, it should be noted that by an ecocritical perspective, the poems can be viewed and perceived differently. This change of perspective opens up the initiative to look at the world differently and treat it in favorable terms in concord to ecological sustenance. After all, all changes begin with a change of perspective and understanding. Furthermore, it should be noted that Frost's poems, Nature is given primary significance. The poems start off with imagery of Nature and ends with imagery of humankind. People are attracted by Nature (even to the littlest extent) no matter how badly industrialization and urbanity has altered the human environs. So, readers are attracted by envisioning the natural setting with which the poems begin and then, man's sense of existence is under introspection within or outside this natural setting. There is, then, a relation between Man and his environment and the natural environment. It is a matter of obligation and understanding of what man decides to do with both the environments. In Transcendentalist poetry, however, Nature's scenery is glorified without man's detrimental environment upon it leading to people thinking they are living in wonderland at a point of self-deception. This is what makes Robert Frost's poetry so subtle with its combination of Realism and Transcendentalism. One cannot find problems to solutions by simply romanticising. Frost's poetry aims at reaching balance between the concrete and the abstract; the realistic and the imaginary;

and the temporary and the permanent. Humanity has become impatient and, hence, haste in making progress. Ergo, there has been unregulated progress. Frost's succinctness and egregious use of understatements, imagery and sharp insights in portraying this balance should stimulate the eco-consciousness absent in many of the people and also to better the condition and psyche of humanity. It must be understood that Man's fears, joys, reliefs and predicaments (however momentary they be) are in concord to nature's state of existence.

ENDNOTES

- [1]. Epithet describing the concept of Transcendentalism that advocates spiritualism and intuitive perception as opposed to rationalism and scientific thinking.
- [2]. An approach to representing reality based on facts rather than on imagination and intuitive thinking.
- [3]. The study of literature with respect to the environment where the literary works are understood and analyzed by linking literature with nature.
- [4]. Abstract term indicating deviation from traditional and moral values and critically associated with meaninglessness of life.
- [5]. Having the sense that the world is conspiring to help a person; opposite of paranoia.
- [6]. One that sparks immense and formidable fear.
- [7]. Phrase indicating deviation from thorough searching for facts and certainties, and thereby settling for mysterious comprehension of the truth.

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