

**A Stylistic Study of Robert Frost's "For Once, Then, Something" (1923) and "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" (1923)**

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**Abstract:**

This research paper discusses how the grammatical and semantic roles can cohesively be related to the poetic connotations and the thematic analysis in two of Frost's poems. In "For Once, then, Something," stylistic devices are meant to resolve the religious significance of man's journey to death and to foreground man's quest to gain life wisdom. For instance, Short's discussion of the grammatical roles and stylistic devices shows that the style of the first lyric, that is written as an enjambment, echoes the literary technique of stream of consciousness. Similarly, in the second lyric the bond between the grammatical and literary aspects expounds the theme of death wish. Hence, the researcher's stylistic study highlights poetic cohesion between the two lyrics, thus foregrounding Frost's mystical quest in search of the reality behind death. Consequently, the views of many scholars help the researcher to develop her stylistic interpretations.

**Keywords:** Stylistic Devices – Deixis – Grammatical Aspects – Parrallelism – Mystical Quest – Death.

«دراسة أسلوبية في قصيدتي «شيء ما لمرة واحدة»  
و«وقفة بالغابة في مساء ثلجي» للشاعر روبرت فروست»

**المخلص:**

يتناول البحث دراسة أسلوبية وأدبية في قصيدتي "شيء ما لمرة واحدة" و"وقفة بالغابة في مساء مثلج" للشاعر روبرت فروست وذلك في ضوء آراء العديد من الباحثين في علم الأسلوبيات مثل مايكل شورتن وروجر فولر وديدرا برتون. ووظفت الباحثة العديد من المفاهيم الأسلوبية مثل: علم الدلالة والتكافؤ والتوازي والتوالي والاتساق في تحليل النصوص الشعرية، مما ساهم في إيضاح وحدة النص والموضوع في كل من القصيدتين. كما ساهم التحليل الأسلوبي في دعم الروابط المشتركة بين القصيدتين وخلق تجربة شعرية موحدة؛ حيث نجد الشاعر في القصيدة الأولى منغمساً في رحلة تأملية صوفية لإدراك ماهية وحقيقة الموت ونجده في القصيدة الثانية راغباً في الموت والخلاص من التزامات الحياة. ومن خلال هذه الدراسة الأسلوبية يُدرك الباحث أن تحليل الأدوات اللغوية والمعاني يترتب عليه فهم الفكرة الرئيسية للنص وخدمة هذه الفكرة. كما تتضح أهمية الربط بين العوامل اللغوية والأدبية لفهم دلالات ورموز النص الأدبي.

The present study attempts to examine two lyrical poems written by R. Frost namely; "For Once, Then, Something" (1923) and "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" (1923) in the light of the stylistic views of such notable critics as Deirdre Burton, Roger Fowler, H. G. Widdowson, Peter Verdonk, Micheal Short and M.E Simmons R. Cummings. Grammatically, the stylistic analysis is meant to discuss elements of deictics, cohesion and progression, parallelism and equivalence as well as processes types. Lexically, the stylistic overview of the two poems shifts the scope to discuss modalities, deixis, referring words, conjunctions, and selection and combination. With regard to M. Short's discussion of comparative textology, ellipsis and finite verbs are tackled. Thus, the researcher attempts to give a full stylistic analysis of Frost's two poems.

### **Part I:**

"For Once, Then Something" (1923) is a short lyric which was published in a volume of poems entitled *The New Hampshire*. On the surface level of meaning, it narrates a common trivial incident taking place in a rural setting. The speaker who may be a farmer or a rural dweller is ridiculed due to kneeling on the village well on a wrong side. Thus, the light is obstructed and he cannot see "Deeper down in the well than where the water" (Frost 205). He can only see a reflection of his "God-like" image (Frost 205). However, one day he sees "a something white, uncertain" (Frost 205). When a lot of ripples are formed on the surface of the water, his vision is disturbed. Finally, he lives in a state of wondering and perplexity. He does not know what this whiteness can be or signify.

### **The Poem:**

For Once, Then, Something

Others taunt me with having knelt at well-curbs  
Always wrong to the light, so never seeing  
Deeper down in the well than where the water  
Gives me back in a shining surface picture  
Me myself in the summer heaven, godlike,  
Looking out of a wreath of fern and cloud puffs.  
*Once*, when trying with chin against a well-curb,  
I discerned, as I thought, beyond the picture,  
Through the picture, a something white, uncertain,  
Something more of the depths – and then I lost it.  
Water came to rebuke the too clear water.  
One drop fell from a fern, and lo, a ripple  
Shook whatever it was lay there at bottom,  
Blurred it, blotted it out. What was that whiteness?

Truth? A pebble of quartz? For once, then, something.  
(Frost 205)

As a modernist poem, it has a symbolic level of meaning. It stands for man's self-quest, and his search for a knowledge of truth. It shows the non-stop attempts of man to solve the mystery of life and death. Frost believes that man's vision of truth is relative, therefore he can never reach the absolute truth. Consequently, man's vision of truth is always "blurred" and "blotted out" by his ignorance and the limitations of his mind (Frost 205). On the textual level, the tone reflects the antithesis inside Frost's mind and the mixing between suspension, and questioning due to man's self-quest to reach knowledge and truth. The note of resignation is the result of the speaker's or Frost's final acceptance of the limitations of human knowledge.

In *Reading Analyzing and Teaching Literature* (1989) M. Short states that stylistic analysis can be done through specific stylistic approaches. Furthermore, in *Style in Fiction* (1981), Geoffrey Leech and Michael Short divide stylistic analysis into five categories "lexical categories, grammatical categories, figures of speech ... cohesion and context [and] semantic categories" (75). If a text is examined in the light of Short's stylistic approach of teaching the grammar the reader will first concentrate on cohesion of the lyric. It is written as an enjambment or in three sentences without giving any information about "something" or "whiteness" which is the objective correlative (Frost 205). On the grammatical level, it creates a sense of spontaneity, or a free-floating relationship between words and their meanings as in the stream of consciousness technique. On the semantic level, it reflects the non-stop quest of man to reach truth. It also echoes the nature of life which is like an unresolved riddle. Furthermore, it highlights the ongoing circle of life and death. Elements of cohesion appear in the use of the causal conjunction "so" in "always wrong to the light so never seeing" (Frost 205). It reveals that man's lack of knowledge causes his ignorance of the universal truth. Secondly, the use of the pronouns "me" and "me myself" indicates that it is a personal experience (Frost 205). In other words, it is Frost's comment on the human's lack of insight. Locative deictics appear in the repetition "beyond the picture" and "through the picture" (Frost 205). It creates a unity between the two sentences and it also dramatizes his perception. Similarly, the repetition of "something" shows his indecisiveness and perplexity as he does not know what can this "whiteness" stand for (Frost 205). The nominal pattern in "the too clear water," which consists of a definite article "the," an intensifier "too," an adjective "clear" and a noun "water" shows an ironic tone (Frost 205). On the semantic level there is intransitivity as this water blocks or distorts his

vision. The recurrent use of the indefinite articles in "a wreath," "a well-curb," "a something," "a fern," "a ripple," and "a pebble" indicates the indecisiveness and uncertainty of man, and shows the mystery and ambiguity of life and death (Frost 205).

Parallelism and equivalence in "blurred it" and "blotted it" foregrounds the lack of insight and ignorance of truth which man suffers from (Frost 205). The odd nominal structure which consists of two successive nouns in the "summer heaven godlike" is meant to highlight the egocentricity and narcissism which characterize human nature and lead to ignorance of knowledge (Frost 205). "A something white, uncertain" is a phrase which consists of an indefinite article "a," followed by a pronoun "something" and two modifiers, one of them is a colour modifier and the other is a classifying one (Frost 205). It creates an air of mystery and suspense as the reader is eager to know what it will turn out to be. There is a grammatical deviation in the nominal structure "give me back in the shining surface picture" (Frost 205). The complement "picture" is delayed or postponed (Frost 205). It should be "give me back picture in the shining surface" (Frost 205). The foregrounding of a "shining surface" is ironical, as it is meant to show that although this surface is supposed to be clear and visible, it does not help the persona to obtain knowledge or to reach the truth (Frost 205). Although scientists gather a lot of evidence they still cannot explain some natural phenomena like life and death. There is another grammatical deviation in "me myself in the summer heaven godlike" (Frost 205). It is supposed to be "me myself godlike in the summer heaven" (Frost 205). The delay of the modifier "godlike" reveals an implicit irony as the speaker states that although man is a weak creature, he suffers from egocentricity and narcissism which make him imagine himself to be godlike (Frost 205). The foregrounding of "summer heaven" shows that inspite of the glory of heaven and the power of summer as a season man lacks insight and his vision is distorted (Frost 205). Cohesion and progression appear in the parallelism of "I discerned as I thought" (Frost 205). It shows that the discerning or watching starts before the thinking. Ultimately, the thinking results due to the perception or watching. This structure is meant to arouse the reader's curiosity.

In "The Language of Poetry: The Application of Literary Stylistic Theory in University Teaching," Peter Verdonk explains Leech's model of stylistic analysis in which "he incorporates three stylistic concepts: cohesion, foregrounding and cohesion of foregrounding" (245). These are the stylistic categories of description. In the analysis of "For Once, Then, Something" in terms of cohesion, the cross-references to the postponed

subject "whiteness" is conveyed by grammatical means (Frost 205). First the speaker refers to it by the pronominal "something," then he concentrates on the use of the pronoun "it," and finally he refers to it using the demonstrative "that" (Frost 205). This reinforces the contextual meaning of the "whiteness" (Frost 205). On the semantic level, this delay of the head noun "whiteness" shows that it is the objective correlative of the speaker (Frost 205). It is the object of his self-quest as he wants to know whether it stands for "truth" or is just "a pebble of quartz" (Frost 205). In other words, Frost points out that man's limited abilities do not qualify him to obtain complete wisdom. The lyric is well organized so as to encourage the reader to think about the nature of this "whiteness" (Frost 205). Furthermore, it ends with three successive and short (wh) questions which are: "What was that whiteness?," "truth?," and "a pebble of quartz?" (Frost 205). These three short questions sum up the human's quest to obtain universal knowledge and complete wisdom. The grammatical pattern in this lyric is the selection of the past tense as in "taunt," "discerned," "thought," "lost," "blotted" and "was" (Frost 205). Apparently, it suits the situation of a story telling but symbolically it shows that man's quest to obtain human knowledge is deeply rooted in history.

In terms of foregrounding, the metaphor in "water came to rebuke" shows that water is given a humanistic touch or personified (Frost 205). According to Leech "Lexical foregroundings are clear illustrations of metaphorical language in which linguistic forms should be given something other than their normal (literal) interpretation" (248). On the symbolic level, the speaker is stating that man is reproaching himself. Although he is a superior creature and has a meditative mind he cannot obtain complete wisdom. The phrase "so never seeing" is an adverbial of result and the internal contradiction between "light" and "never seeing" reveals man's blindness and his inability to obtain complete wisdom or to realize the mysterious nature of life and death (Frost 205). There is an internal deviation in the poem when he concludes with three relatively short (wh) questions following each other without stopping for an answer to encourage the reader to think whether man can one day obtain wisdom or he has to resign himself to his limitations. The three questions are foregrounded as the main aim of the persona is self-quest.

As for cohesion of foregrounding, Leech states that "lexical collocations ... are foregrounded against normal usage that they take on a normality in the context of the poem as a whole and can be regarded as a form of cohesion" (249). In this lyric the only lexical deviation is "water come to rebuke" to state that man is rebuking himself due to his own limitations (Frost 205). Thus, the association of "whiteness" with complete

wisdom and universal truth is conveyed by grammatically cohesive as well as foregrounded patterns that suggest indefiniteness, and unfamiliarity with them (Frost 205).

In the light of Widdowson's essay "Stylistics: an Approach to Stylistic Analysis" published in *The Stylistic Reader* (1996), the use of the pronominal something in "thorough the picture a something white, uncertain" and "something more of the depths," should refer to an inanimate object but in this lyric it is connected with man's quest to obtain wisdom (Frost 205). Thus, the poet severs the intra-textural relations by giving the word "something" deeper dimensions (Frost 205). There is a collocational clash between the noun "light" expressing perception and the negation in "never seeing" (Frost 205). It emphasizes man's blindness and his limited abilities. The parallelism and equivalence in "I discerned as I thought" and "blurred it," "blotted it" creates an organized way of development and a link in the ideas (Frost 205). Although man has a meditative mind, his limited abilities "blotted" his thinking (Frost 205). Therefore, he cannot fully understand the mysterious nature of life and death. Based on the model of Cluysenaar, there are lexical items referring to colours such as: "light," "shining," "white," "whiteness," "blotted" and "depths" (Frost 205). The bright colours "white," "light," "shining" and "whiteness" indicate that although there are clear evidences to explain natural phenomena and the cycle of life and death, man's limited abilities which are symbolized by the dark connotations in "blotted" and "depths" cannot fully understand them or attain wisdom (Frost 205). In this lyric, there is a lexical framework which comprises the four elements: earth, air, water and fire by which the whole universe is formed.

The words "a pebble," "quartz" and "Fern" have connotations to the earth, while the nouns "ripple," "water" and "well" are denotatively connected with water (Frost 205). Furthermore, the noun "cloud" stands for air and the words "shining" and "summer" have connotations with fire (Frost 205). On the symbolic level, Frost states that man cannot understand the mystery of creation which is only known by the Almighty God. There are lexical items which refer to nature as an external force. These nouns are "fern," "cloud," "water," "well," "pebble" and "quartz" (Frost 205). They indicate the persona's personal disintegration. Man cannot unify completely with nature in order to obtain complete wisdom. The use of the run-on lines or the enjambment with phrases in which some of them have a strong syntactic pull echoes the ongoing quest of man to attain wisdom and encourages the reader to participate in this quest. On the surface level of meaning, the choice of the colour "white" and

"whiteness" indicates purification (Frost 205). However, on the symbolic level, it refers to man's ignorance and his inability to interpret life and death or the process of creation. The lexical choice of the noun "depths" of the well has connotations indicating the darkness inside a mother's womb (Frost 205). Symbolically, a babe cannot perceive or realize the process of creation when he is still inside his mother's womb or even when he is still young. On the metaphorical level, it refers to the limited abilities of man. Finally, Peter Verdonk states that "Cluysennar postulates that each work sets up by the way in which its particular elements interact a balance of forces which must be understood as a unique structure" (262). In *Introduction to Systemic Linguistics* (1975), M. Berry points out that:

In English grammar we make choices between different types of process, between different types of participant, between different types of circumstance, between different roles for participants, and circumstances, between different numbers of participants, and circumstances, between different ways of combining processes, participants, and circumstances. These choices are known collectively as the transitivity choices. (150).

In other words, stylistic analysis can be based on the model of processes and participants in the structure of clauses as M. Halliday states. In this lyric we can divide some of the main clauses into a set of processes. For example, there is a reaction process in "others taunt me" and a perception process in "I discerned" (Frost 205). Furthermore, there is a mental process in "I thought," and a series of action processes in: "a ripple shook whatever it was lay there at bottom," "blurred it" and "blotted it" (Frost 205). Finally, there is a reaction process in "the water came to rebuke" (Frost 205). All these processes give us an order of the hardships and sometimes the disagreements which the persona and all men face in their quest to attain knowledge and complete wisdom but to no avail.

The lexical realization of each of the processes in the lyric reveals that the speaker or the persona is the only real actor in this poem who carries on the action. He is the one who "Knelt at well curbs," "discerned" and "thought" (Frost 205). Symbolically, the persona stands for man who undergoes a self-quest to attain knowledge. The other actors in this poem are the water which "came to rebuke," the ripple which "shook whatever it was lay there at bottom," "blurred" and "blotted it" as well as the other people who "taunt" the persona (Frost 205). They are portrayed as actors in a negative sense. Symbolically, they may stand for the obstacles which man faces in his quest to attain knowledge and wisdom.

In terms of processes involved in the sentences, there is the material action intention. It appears in "one drop fell," and "a ripple shook" (Frost

205). On the other hand, there is a mental internalized cognition in "I thought" and "water came to rebuke" (Frost 205). All these types of processes reveal that the attempts made by man to understand the natural phenomena and to obtain wisdom are always incomplete due to his limited abilities and the different obstacles which he faces. Thus, this lyric reveals Frost or the persona's point of view who believes that man's abilities are limited, therefore, he cannot attain complete wisdom or explain some natural phenomena like life and death or the process of creation.

In *Reading, Analyzing and Teaching Literature* (1989), one of Short's stylistic approaches is the teaching of lexis. The word "once" marks a transition or a shift from the passive situation of just "looking" inside the well into contemplating the significance of the "whiteness" which appears on the surface of the water (Frost 205). In "How Texts Are Made" published in *Linguistic Criticism* (1986), Fowler stresses that modalities are "the degree of assurance which a speaker vouches for a proposition"(571). In this lyric the use of the pronoun "me" with the reflexive "myself" at the same time belongs to the modality as the speaker wants to convince the reader that he is the person who undergoes this self-quest in search of wisdom (Frost 205). The speaker also stresses that egocentricity is part of man's weaknesses, which makes him behave like "godlike" even though he lacks complete wisdom and universal knowledge. Fowler points out that deixis refers to place, time and personal participants. In this lyric, the place is in a rural countryside, particularly in front of a "well" where the persona undergoes a self-quest seeking wisdom and knowledge of the mysterious natural phenomena of the "whiteness" (Frost 205). The persona or the speaker is an individual. This is emphasized by the repetition of the pronoun "I" and the use of "me" and the reflexive "myself" (Frost 205). The addressee is the public or may be the "others" or the other townsmen (Frost 205). The use of the pronoun "I" creates a kind of an individual and a colloquial style (Frost 205). Concerning time, the lyric narrates an incident which happens in the past. Therefore, there is a predominance of the past tense to suit the process of narration.

On discussing the approach of comparative textology in M. Short's *Reading, Analysing and Teaching Literature* (1989), there are finite verbs deleted or existing in strings of nominal groups. In this lyric, this appears in "always wrong to the light" in which there is a deletion of the finite verb (Frost 205). There is a series of nominal groups. In these nominal groups ing-participles or gerunds form noun phrase sequences. Examples are: "so never seeing," "looking out of a wreath," and "when trying with chin"

(Frost 205). The literary function of the ing-forms is to make the duration of action longer. This sequence of noun-phrases also helps the free association of ideas and the creation of visual imagery. The deletion of finite verbs also appears in "a something white," and "something more of the depths" (Frost 205). This is a kind of ellipsis to create a cohesive style. The verblessness belongs to the stream of consciousness technique and creates a free- floating relationship between words and objects.

In "How Texts are Made," (1986) Fowler states that the referring words are nouns, and the predicating ones are verbs. The terms "agent," "object," "complement," "state," and "action" analyze the roles of the participants (54). The propositions in a sentence become complete when the referring words are linked with the predicates. In this lyric, there are a series of referring words which are linked with the predicating ones and form propositions. Examples are: "others" a referring expression, while "taunt" is a predicating one and "me" is an object (Frost 205). "Wrong" is a predicating expression, and "light" is a referring one (Frost 205). "Seeing" is used as a generic verb so it is a predicating expression, while "well" and "water" are referring ones (Frost 205). Similarly, "[g]ives" and "shining" are predicating words and "surface" and "picture" are referring ones (Frost 205). There is a series of referring expressions in "me myself," "summer" "heaven" and "godlike" followed by a predicating expression in "looking out" (Frost 205). Furthermore, there are three referring expressions: "wreath," "fern" and "cloud" with the predicating "looking out" (Frost 205). There is a parallel structure which consists of a referring pronoun "I," predicating expressions "thought" and "discerned," and an object "picture" (Frost 205). This series of referring and predicating expressions reflects the hardships which he faces in his quest for knowledge that are represented by the people who "taunt" him and his "wrong" perception of the well (Frost 205). They also reveal his egocentricity as he regards himself as "godlike" (Frost 205). Finally, they illustrate the moment of illumination when he starts to watch "a wreath of fern and clouds" and when he "thought" and "discerned" (Frost 205).

There are a series of propositions suggesting "something" which is not visible (Frost 205). Examples are the referring expression "something" and the two predicating adjectives "white" and "uncertain" (Frost 205). Furthermore, there is the parallel structure which consists of two predicating expressions "blurred" and "blotted" and a referring one "it" (Frost 205). Symbolically, this invisible "something" stands for man's ignorance, his limited abilities and his inability to explain some natural phenomena (Frost 205). In this lyric, there are a series of speech acts which function symbolically. For example, "others taunt me" and "water came to rebuke" are used for blaming (Frost 205). The first one shows the

obstacles which man faces in his quest for knowledge. The second one reveals an implicit irony that man is blaming himself for his limited abilities. Furthermore, the series of questions "what was that whiteness?," "truth?," and "a pebble of quartz?" are used to express wonder (Frost 205). Man wonders whether he has to resign himself to his limited abilities or one day he may attain complete wisdom and universal knowledge. Concerning modalities, there is a repetition of some words which reflects the degree of assurance such as "something," "blurred" and "blotted," as well as "me myself" (Frost 205). They emphasize that when man approaches knowledge and complete wisdom he faces obstacles which prevent him from attaining them. Furthermore, the lyric ends with its title "For Once, Then, Something" (Frost 205). This stresses that man's quest to obtain wisdom is still on going and will not end. In terms of deixis, the noun "summer" refers to a hypothetical time, as he does not really illustrate whether he is still in the season of summer or not (Frost 205). The words "there" and "beyond" link the destination to the place of utterance (Frost 205). Furthermore, the deictic pronoun "it" points back to the preceding sentences (Frost 205). Sentences are linked together through ellipsis, lexical repetition and lexical variation. Ellipsis appears in "blurred it" and "blotted it out" instead of repeating the subject "a ripple" (Frost 205). Lexical repetitions are "something," "water," "picture," while lexical variation appears in "blurred" and "blotted" (Frost 205). All of them create a cohesive style and a beautiful smooth rhythm.

Cohesion and progression appear in "always wrong to the light so never seeing" and in "a ripple shook whatever it was lay there" (Frost 205). He hides the light so he cannot see the whiteness on the water. Similarly, the ripple shakes the water and hides the whiteness. Cohesion and progression dramatize the obstacles which the persona faces in his self quest. Cohesive ties are created in order to link sentences. For example: "others taunt me" is connected with "gives me," while "gives me" is connected with "me myself" (Frost 205). Furthermore, "me myself" is linked with "I discerned" (Frost 205). Similarly, "something" is connected with "it" and "it was" is linked with "blurred it" (Frost 205). Thus, Frost aims to create a balanced and a whole organized lyric like a unit. Concerning references, the recurrent use of the first person pronoun "I" and the pronouns "me" and "myself," refers to the individual speaker and creates a colloquial tone (Frost 205). On the other hand, the repetition of the pronominal "it" refers to the objective correlative of the speaker which is the "whiteness" or the "something" which appears on the surface of the water (Frost 205). Ellipsis also appears in "truth?" and "a pebble of

quartz?" instead of "was it truth?" and "was it a pebble of quartz?" (Frost 205) Ellipsis makes the style poetic instead of the useless repetition. Concerning conjunctions in the lyric, there are some causal ones such as "as," "then" and "so" (Frost 205). "Then" highlights a transition or a sudden change from the state of knowledge and illumination to the state of ignorance which is marked by "then I lost it" (Frost 205). In the title "then" is used in a reversal way to show that as the speaker or man meditates he can discover "something" which is knowledge or wisdom, even if it is incomplete (Frost 205). The use of "as" highlights that when man meditates and thinks he can acquire new knowledge even if it is limited (Frost 205). The use of "so" symbolically indicates that man's limited abilities prevent him from attaining complete knowledge (Frost 205).

Additive conjunctions are sentences which supply information about a topic. For example, the reader knows that "others taunt" the speaker for being "wrong to the light" (Frost 205). Furthermore, the reader is also informed that the speaker is given a "godlike" "picture" of himself and "beyond the picture" he sees "something white" (Frost 205). Finally, this "whiteness" can be "truth" or "a pebble of quartz" (Frost 205). This additional information is necessary for the development of the topic or the speaker's quest. They sum up the whole idea. The speaker undergoes a self quest to attain knowledge but he fails because of his limited abilities and the obstacles which he faces. Finally, he wonders whether he can attain complete wisdom and rebels against his limited abilities or not. In "Extra Structure, Extra Meaning" (1986), Fowler states that "a speaker may wish to persuade, to inform, to impress, [and] to justify himself" (70). He also states that "another influence on the text's further structuring as discourse is the kind of setting in which it is produced" (70). In this lyric, the speaker wants to inform the reader about his self-quest and how it is a universal experience which is concerned with all human beings. The rural setting influences the lexis in the poem. Therefore, the speaker chooses words like "pebble," "fern," "clouds," "summer," "well," "water," and "ripple" to create an atmosphere of a countryside (Frost 205). Foregrounded elements include parallelism and equivalence as in "I discerned as I thought" as well as "blurred it" and "blotted it" (Frost 205). There is the use of the present tense in the verb "Gives me back" and the repetition of lexical items as "picture," "water" and "something" (Frost 205). They highlight the fact that although man tries to gain complete wisdom his limited abilities prevent him from attaining it.

The use of selection and combination is very clear. The speaker chooses semantically cognate verbs to suit the setting such as "fell," "lay," "blurred," "blotted" and even "knelt" (Frost 205). The selection is based on equivalence between the setting and the verbs. According to Roman

Jakobson's stylistic approach is based on equivalence and contrast. Therefore, the contrast between "clear" and "blotted" is a kind of equivalence to highlight an implicit irony (Frost 205). Although man gets a lot of information and knowledge still his abilities are limited. Foregrounded sounds form a musical texture. In the lyric, there is a predominance of the "s" sound or the sibilant. It creates an effect of a something that appears stealthly and withdraws quietly. Examples are "once," "something," "so," "seeing," "summer," "surface," "depths," and "truth" (Frost 205). Similarly, the (z) sound creates the same effect. Examples are "curbs," "gives," "always," "depths," "puffs," "was" and "quartz" (Frost 205). The alliterations in "what whiteness," "blotted, blurred," "came, clear," "well, water" and "fern, fell" help to arouse the reader's curiosity and to create an air of suspense and wonder (Frost 205). All these elements foreground the meter and create a cohesive and a melodious rhythm. These musical elements and parallelism and equivalence enhance the regularity of the rhythm. Thus, the syntactic and metrical parallelism is one of the elements of foregrounding. The lexical paradigms "blurred" and "blotted" are near synonyms but the first is neutral and the second has a negative connotation referring to the ignorance of man and his limited abilities (Frost 205). Similarly, the paradigms "taunt" and "rebuke," have a cohesive stylistic relationship. "Taunt" has a negative connotation that is connected with the obstacles which man faces in his self-quest (Frost 205). "Rebuke" which is neutral shows that man is blaming himself for his limited abilities (Frost 205).

The use of the past dynamic verbs such as "knelt," "came," "lost," "fell down," and "shook," facilitates entry into the speaker's consciousness and his reflective thoughts (Frost 205). The vocabulary of extremes of evaluation and sensation belongs to the elements of foregrounding. For example, this appears in "wrong," "shining," "godlike," "more of the depths," "too clear," "blurred" and "blotted" (Frost 205). The adjectives "wrong" and "godlike" reflect the egocentricity of man and his refusal to admit his weaknesses or to face them (Frost 205). The verbs "blurred" and "blotted" as well as the intensifier and the noun in "more of the depths" emphasize man's ignorance (Frost 205). Finally, the adjective "shining" and the intensifier "too" and the adjective "clear" reveal an implicit ironic tone (Frost 205). The speaker attacks man who cannot perceive the truth even if he has clear evidences.

In "Text and Context" (1986), Fowler states that texts are dynamic "as interpersonal communication in contexts" (85). In this lyric, the context of utterance involves a speaker who is presented through the use

of the unidentified "I," "me," "myself" and "others" which may stand for the other townsmen or symbolically the other human beings (Frost 205). The setting which is in front of a well in a countryside is stereotypical and indicates the regularities of the context of utterance. The context of reference in this lyric is man's quest to gain universal knowledge, complete wisdom and to understand some ambiguous natural processes like creation, life and death. In this context of reference, displacement appears in "gives me" (Frost 205). This tense shift to the present stresses man's egocentricity. The lyric begins with the deictic first person pronoun "I," thus showing that the speaker has some passionate views and wants to comment on some philosophical ideas (Frost 205). It also anticipates that the utterance is reflective and is not dramatic. The speaker makes a series of assertions all of them are about his own feelings and judgments. For example, there are "me myself ... godlike," "a something ... uncertain," "blurred it, blotted it" and "too clear water" (Frost 205). Thus, the discourse is that of an individual reflecting on his own motives and decisions. Therefore, the time reference is psychological as the speaker recalls the period of the incident which leads him to contemplate the well. Consequently, "all the specific details suggest a particular scene within which the speaker is commenting on his own actions and the responses of others" (Fowler 92). The crucial difference begins with the present tense action predicate "gives" which is contrasted with the mental state "thought" (Frost 205). They indicate a transformation from the state of ignorance to the state of observation.

The context of reference shifts away to meditate on the "whiteness" which lies on the surface of the water (Frost 205). Thus, "the discourse moves into the contemplative mode of implying an isolated thinker who asks rhetorical questions" (Fowler 93). The lyric contains deictic words such as "beyond," "that," "there" and "where" (Frost 205). All of them are distancing deictics indicting psychological distance. The setting is elaborated by locative phrases and especially by dynamic verbs. The locative adverbs are: "down in the well," "at well," "at bottom," and "beyond the picture" (Frost 205). The indicators of space are the dynamic verbs such as: "Knelt," "gives," "fell," "lost," and "blurred" (Frost 205). The verbs "lost" and "blurred" imply a change of position (Frost 205). The interpersonal features appear in the high density of the personal pronouns "I," "me" and "myself" to emphasize that it is the speaker's self quest and his own experience (Frost 205). Thus, the lyric belongs to the reflective discourse as the speaker withdraws from being physically in front of the well into his own perceptions and reflections which are dramatized by "the whiteness" and his perplexity whether it is "a truth?" or "a pebble of quartz?" (Frost 205).

In *Reading, Analyzing And Teaching Literature* (1989) M. Short's approach of teaching the grammar can involve the use of visual imagery. For example, there are a series of visual images such as: "a something white, uncertain," "one drop fell down from a fern," "a ripple shook whatever it was lay there," "blurred it" and "blotted it" (Frost 205). Symbolically, these images suggest man's attempts to gain wisdom and knowledge and his failure due to his limited abilities. There are other visual images such as "gives me back ... godlike" and "a wreath of fern and cloud puffs" (Frost 205). Symbolically, they indicate man's frailty and egocentricity which prevent him from attaining full understanding of the whole natural phenomena. The speaker's psychological meditations appear in his indecisiveness whether this "whiteness" stands for "truth" or "a pebble of quartz" (Frost 205). His general view of the setting is given by naming the features of the landscape such as: "well," "fern," "ripple," "pebble" and "cloud" (Frost 205). The speaker also uses a single quantitative adjective which is "depths" (Frost 205). Finally, the components in this rural setting are held together by prepositional phrases indicating directions, such as "at bottom," "at well," and "down in the well" (Frost 205). They are accompanied by other types of locative expressions as "where" and "there" (Frost 205). All these elements foreground the setting and highlight the speaker's self quest. There are also a series of deictic verbs indicating a movement such as "Knelt at," "Gives back," and "one drop fell from" (Frost 205). All of them create a sense of cause and effect. He kneels so he sees his own picture. Similarly, the drop has fallen and blotted the vision. In this lyric, the ideological view is the speaker's self-quest in search of knowledge and therefore, he is the only vehicle of this quest. There are some other modal devices as the adjectival versions in "a something white uncertain," "a shining surface," and "the too clear water" (Frost 205).

There are two evaluative expressions which are the adjective "wrong" and the adverb "too" (Frost 205). There are also verbs of knowledge and evaluation such as "thought," "rebuke," "blurred" and "blotted" (Frost 205). These modal devices make an explicit, and sometimes an ironic announcement of the speaker's beliefs and thoughts. The lyric abounds with transitive verbs to emphasize a state of action, an ongoing self-quest and to present a panoramic view of humanity. For example there are "rebuke," "shook," "blurred," "blotted," "taunt," "knelt," "gives me," and "lost" (Frost 205). There are some intransitive verbs such as "never seeing," "trying," "discerned," and "looking out" (Frost 205). They are used to highlight the passive state of man and his limited abilities which

prevent him from acquiring universal knowledge. The use of the deictic expressions of location such as: "beyond," "there," "where," "at" and "down" adds up a comprehensible picture of movements and actions (Frost 205). Thus, the lyric presents the internal and the psychological perspective of the speaker through the use of the first person pronouns "I," "me" and "myself" (Frost 205). This is stressed by the foregrounded modality highlighting his beliefs. The subjective, internal perspective is emphasized by evaluative adjectives such as "shining," "clear" and "wrong" and the adverb "too" (Frost 205). Furthermore, there is a double adjective phrase in "white, uncertain".

There are also many words of *verba sentiendi* denoting feelings, thoughts and perceptions such as: "taunt," "seeing," "looking," "thought," "discerned," "rebuke," "blotted" and "blurred" (Frost 205). All of these devices emphasize the subjective perspective of the persona who undergoes a self-quest for knowledge and wisdom. There are also some phrases and sentences denoting the speaker's judgments and reflections such as "always wrong," "something white," "water came to rebuke the too clear water," "blurred it blotted it," "me myself in the summer heaven godlike" and "gives me back in a shining surface a picture" (Frost 205). The use of the present tense in "gives" is related to the persona reflecting his consciousness that is formed by the past tense of the narrative style (Frost 205). This lyric is also objective and realistic due to the foregrounding of action predicate verbs and the physical description. Examples are: "Knelt at well curbs," "gives me back," "a wreath of fern and cloud puffs," "a ripple shook," and "water came to rebuke" (Frost 205). Thus, the speaker's feelings and responses are also mentioned in narrating his self-quest. In "Meaning and World View" (1986), Fowler agrees with Halliday who believes that "language serves for the expression of content: it has a representational or as I would prefer to call it an ideational function. Language is formed for a specific purpose and in a particular setting" (148). Thus, the rural setting in the lyric is coded in its lexical choices such as "water," "well," "ripple," and "clouds" (Frost 205). Therefore, the perspective of the lyric is on its subject matter.

The lyric is written in a mind-style which is the world view of the speaker's quest. It is constituted by the ideational structure of the poem which involves vocabulary and transitivity. The variation of lexical items indicates a movement from the general to the specific such as "something" which is general as well as "truth" and "a pebble of quartz" which are specific (Frost 205). These specific words indicate the end of the speaker's self-quest. They show that he is still in a state of ignorance and indecisiveness as he is unable to determine the nature of "whiteness" (Frost 205). Overlexicalization appears in the use of synonyms and the

repetition of terms for related concepts. These words are "water," "well-curbs," "white" and "whiteness" as well as "something" (Frost 205). They are even particularized in "a ripple," "one drop," "truth" and "a pebble". Thus, they foreground the speaker's quest for knowledge and wisdom. They also highlight his close perception and contemplation of the "whiteness" on the surface of the "water" which ends in failure (Frost 205). The verbs "taunt" and "rebuke" are near-synonyms to foreground the obstacles which the speaker faces in his self-quest (Frost 205). Predicates convey activity.

In this lyric there are mental processes, states and only one proper action. The proper action is "me with having knelt," while the mental processes are "I discerned" and "I thought" (Frost 205). Furthermore, there are processes which are out of control such as "one drop fell," "a ripple shook whatever it was lay," "blurred it" and "blotted it" (Frost 205). All these types of predicates symbolize man's self-quest for attaining knowledge and complete wisdom and his limited abilities which prevent him from attaining them. They also form transitive propositions of man's meditations and attempts to gain knowledge. This transitivity suggests a panoramic view associated with all humanity. Fowler states that "action predicates may go with strong physical activity and foregrounded mental processes with an introspective mind-style" (157). For example, there are "Knelt at well curbs," "gives me back," "water come," "one drop fell," and "a ripple shook" (Frost 205). All of them summarize the speaker's self-quest in search of knowledge. They also foreground the mental process of understanding reality and the significance of "whiteness" (Frost 205). Noun referents differ in their types. Few of them are used in this lyric such as "one drop fell" which is an object and is not an agent (Frost 205). Furthermore, there is "I discerned as I thought" (Frost 205). The pronoun "I" is beneficiary rather than an agent. These pseudo-agentive structures emphasize the introspective mind style, the speaker's attempts to become wiser and his failure.

The deictic nouns of direction and position are phrases specifying time and place. For example, there are "in the summer," "down in the well," "beyond the picture," and "at bottom" (Frost 205). All of them visualize the speaker's self-quest and the state of "whiteness" which is his objective correlative (Frost 205). All these elements are patterns of transitivity which determine the mind-style. The speaker's mental state is not described, but inferred from his perception of the "well," "whiteness" and the other objects (Frost 205). His survey of the "well" and the "whiteness" is a conscious looking (Frost 205). Therefore, the lyric abounds with action

predicates such as "knelt," "gives," "lost," "fell," "shook," "looking" and "blurred" (Frost 205). In this lyric there are also some verbs denoting purposeful actions such as "discerned," "thought," and "Knelt" (Frost 205). They are accompanied by indicators of consciousness or feelings such as "uncertain," "wrong," and "white" (Frost 205). Furthermore, there is a paradox in "the too clear water" and "blured it, blotted it" (Frost 205). This creates an implicit irony and an attack on man's ignorance and limited abilities. All these elements create the world view embodied in the lyric. State predicates appear in "wrong," "white," "uncertain," "clear," and "godlike" (Frost 205). All of them denote man's ignorance, indecisiveness and egocentricity. Some predicates emphasize the deliberateness of the speaker's actions such as "looking out," "I discerned" and "knelt" (Frost 205). Purposiveness is indicated in the fact that he kneels at the well in order to see his "picture" (Frost 205). The speaker's evaluation of his surroundings appears in a "shining surface," "the summer heaven," and "something white, uncertain" (Frost 205). All of them summarize the main ideas which are the ignorance and egocentricity of man that make him believe in his power. In fact, he lacks wisdom and knowledge, therefore his quest for them always ends with failure. Action predicates dominate the lyric and are accompanied by some locative adverbs such as: "down in the well," "at bottom," and "beyond the picture" (Frost 205). They create an impression of a continuous and a spatial movement. The main agent is the speaker who is accompanied by few other agents which are "a ripple," "water," "a something" and "others" (Frost 205). This creates an internal perspective and dramatizes his self-quest.

In *Reading Analyzing and Teaching Literature* (1989) a lexico-semantic analysis emphasizes that words have symbolic connotations in addition to their denotations. For instance the adjectives "shining" and "clear" connote man's limited abilities which prevent him from perceiving the truth and attaining knowledge (Frost 205). The verbs "rebuke" and "taunt" indicate that man is complaining of his lack of knowledge and of his limited abilities (Frost 205). The nouns "heaven" and the adjective "godlike" connote man's egocentricity and narcissism (Frost 205). The noun "summer" also symbolizes man's wrong belief in his own power and glory (Frost 205). Finally, the verbs "blurred" and "blotted" stand for man's ignorance and frailty (Frost 205). Thus, it is a short, objective and realistic lyric tackling the universal experience of the speaker's self-quest for knowledge.

## Part II:

As a nature poem, R. Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" (1923) differs from the nineteenth – century transcendental poems of Emerson in not seeing a creator in the universe. This meditative

lyric is simplicity itself due to the clarity of the monosyllabic diction, the colloquial rhythm, and the simple story which appears to be an anecdote. The poem has two levels of meanings: surface, and symbolic. On the surface level of meaning, it describes how the poet stops one evening along a country road to contemplate the beauty of the snow fall in the woods wondering why their owner lives in the "village" away from the beautiful sight of these woods (Frost 204). On the symbolic level, it indicates the persona's loneliness, alienation and his desire to "sleep" or to die (Frost 204). The title of the lyric is symbolic summing up its main theme of a death-wish. This is achieved by the lexical connotations of "woods," "snowy" and "evening" (Frost 205). The concrete noun "woods" connotes depth which is a characteristic of the eternal sleep or death (Frost 204). Similarly, the adjective "snowy" connotes the frozen-like state of man's corpse after death (Frost 204). Furthermore, the abstract noun "evening" has connotations related to death that is indicated by its gloomy colour (Frost 204). This dark colour of the "evening" is contrasted with the bright colour of "snowy" which indicates oblivion or a dream-like state as the persona dreams of death (Frost 204). Thus, on the surface level of meaning, the lexical set of "woods," "snowy" and "evening" indicates the beauty of nature (Frost 204). However, on the symbolic level of meaning, they symbolize the persona's attraction to the eternal rest of death (Frost 204). Finally, the nominalization of the verb "stop" in the title: "Stopping" indicates an atmosphere of stasis echoing the silence of death. Grammatically, it prolongs the persona's meditations on death.

**The Poem:**

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

Whose woods these are I think I know.  
His house is in the village, though;  
He will not see me stopping here  
To watch his woods fill up with snow.  
My little horse must think it queer  
To stop without a farmhouse near  
Between the woods and frozen lake  
The darkest evening of the year.  
He gives his harness bells to a shake  
To ask if there is some mistake.  
They only other sound's the sweep  
Of easy wind and downy flake.  
The words 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.  
(Frost 204-205)

In *The Pastoral Art of Robert Frost* (1960), J. Lynen states that the poem “expresses the conflict, which everyone has felt, between the demands of practical life with its obligations to others, and the poignant desire to escape into a land of reverie, where consciousness is dimmed and the senses are made independent of necessity... The wide scope of meaning becomes obvious in the final lines. They state the conflict in the simple, realistic way” (40). The last stanza is distinct from the three previous ones. The conflict which emerges in the last stanza is highlighted by the symbolic juxtaposition or the contrast between the abstract noun “promises” and the concrete noun “woods” and the semi-concrete noun “sleep” (Frost 205). On the symbolic level, the abstract noun “promises” symbolizes the duties and demands of the persona’s ordinary life (Frost 204). They are contrasted with the noun “sleep” which is concretized as it stands for the persona’s concrete desire or “deep” desire for death (Frost 205). Therefore, the last stanza reveals the underlined message of the poem. Man has to suffer, to fulfill his “promises” or commitments in life or work before death (Frost 204). In other words, man has to travel the whole journey of his life until he reaches the end of this journey which is death.

In *Reading, Analyzing and Teaching Literature* (1989), M. Short’s Stylistic approach of teaching the grammar can be discussed in the lyric which is based on a pattern of symbolic juxtapositions i.e, contrastive imagery and antithetical symbols. First there is a contrast between the sensitive persona who stops to watch the “woods” as they fill up with snow and the insensitive owner who lives in the “village” and ironically does not appreciate the beauty of the woods (Frost 204). Symbolically, the “woods” stand for the beauty of the rural countryside, primitivism and on a larger scale for the persona’s attraction to the silence of death (Frost 204). The “woods” are juxtaposed with “the village” which symbolically stands for the civilized society, thus reminding the persona of his commitments in life or in the farmhouse (Frost 204). The “horse” that is a domesticated agent of the civilized society is personified (Frost 204). Thus, the two personifications of the horse that “gives his harness bells a shake” and “must think it queer / to stop without a farmhouse near” are contrasted with the visual images of the “woods” that “are lovely, dark, and deep” and “the frozen lake” (Frost 204). Symbolically, the horse draws his master from the dreamlike state of oblivion back to life as it reminds him of the commitments which have to be fulfilled before death. However, the two personifications of the “horse” are juxtaposed with the

two visual images of "the woods" and the "lake" symbolizing the persona's attraction to the beauty and the silence of death (Frost 204). The static image of the "village" which represents urbanity is contrasted with the mystical image of the persona who is contemplating the material image of nature (Frost 204). Moreover, the auditory images of the "downy flake" and the "sweep of the easy wind" create a hushed sound connoting the persona's death wish and desire for eternal rest (Frost 204). They are symbolically juxtaposed with the auditory image of the horse that "gives his harness bells a shake" (Frost 204). This auditory image of the horse awakens the persona from his state of oblivion reminding him that his journey of life still does not come to an end. The last stanza is highly symbolic as it is made up of contrastive lines between "the woods" that "are lovely, dark and deep" and the "promises" which the persona have to fulfill (Frost 204). Another contrast is between the beauty of "the woods" and the "miles" which the persona have to undergo before death (Frost 204). These contrastive lines highlight the conflict between the persona's duties in life and his desire for death.

Transitivity can be discussed through the types of processes in the lyric. Existential processes are dominant in the lyric to heighten the symbolic connotations of the persona's death wish. They also create a prevailing atmosphere of immobility which echoes the silence of death. Examples are: "his house is in the village," "if there is some mistake," "other sound's the sweep," "the woods are lovely" and the rhetorical question: "whose woods there are" (Frost 204). They are contrasted with the mental, internalized cognition processes "I think I know" in which the persona is still meditating and thinking if he can get rid of his life commitments and surrender to death or this will be impossible at this time (Frost 204). The mental, internalized cognition process "think" is repeated in association with the horse which is urbanized or domesticated, therefore, it does not agree with the persona in his desire for death (Frost 204). Thus, the first use of the mental, internalized cognition process "I think" is juxtaposed with its second use that is associated with the horse (Frost 204). This is because the "horse" can symbolize the persona's subconscious mind reminding him of his commitments in life (Frost 204). There are few contrastive material processes that can be divided into the extension and the causation types. For instance, in the first stanza, the material process "stopping" is associated with a controlling actor (Frost 204). The persona is an ergative participant as he is the one who chooses to stop and to contemplate the beauty of the woods symbolically indicating the beauty of the external rest or death. It is contrasted with its repeated

use in the second stanza: “to stop” that is associated with the controlled inanimate actor or the “horse” (Frost 204).

In the second stanza, the “horse” is a non-ergative participant as it falls under the control of his master or the persona who forces it to stop in the “woods” and not in the “village” where there is a “farmhouse” (Frost 204). This latter material process is also juxtaposed with the following one, “He gives,” in which the horse turns to be a controlling actor and an ergative participant whereas the persona or the master who now falls under its control becomes a controlled actor and a non-ergative participant (Frost 204). These contrastive material processes imply the conflict between the persona’s desire for death and his commitments in life that prevent him from the eternal rest of death. The horse as a domesticated agent represents the persona’s subconscious mind urging him to continue his life journey because it is not the right time for the persona’s death. The horse and owner of the woods act as controlling actors whereas the persona appears to be a controlled actor as he falls under their power. They drive him to complete his life journey and to suppress his death wish.

In the last stanza, which marks the climax as it states the persona’s conflict, there is an existential process that is contrasted with the repeated material process “to go” and the relational process “have” (Frost 204). Thus, the existential process in “the woods are lovely” indicates that the persona is longing for death and silence (Frost 204). It is contrasted with the relational process: “I have promises” which indicates the persona’s realization that he should continue his life journey and fulfill his duties before death (Frost 204). The previous existential process is also juxtaposed with the repeated material process, “and miles to go,” implying a controlling actor and an ergative participant “I” or the persona who will suffer from many hardships and undergo many situations (i.e “miles” in life) before reaching death (Frost 204). The repetition of the material process “to go” emphasizes the persona’s resolution (Frost 204).

Some intransitive verbs are contrasted with the transitive ones revealing the inner conflict of the persona. For instance, the repeated static verb “sleep” and the verb “stop” are intransitive verbs (Frost 204, 205). Furthermore, the use of the ing-participle or the gerund in “stopping” is known as the process of nominalization or deverbalization (Frost 204). Thus, the dynamic verb “stopping” turns to be a static one indicating stasis (Frost 204). The few intransitive verbs indicate the persona’s state of immobility and oblivion as he internally wishes to die. Similarly, the use of the copula in “his house is in the village,” “there is some mistake,” “other sound’s the sweep” and “the woods are lovely” are examples of mock-transitivity (Frost 204). On the grammatical level, the copula is transitive. However, on the semantic level, it is intransitive as it heightens

the state of stasis or immobility which reveals the symbolic connotation of death. Furthermore, another example of mock-transitivity is the static verb "I have" which is grammatically transitive, but semantically intransitive as it adds to the prevailing atmosphere of immobility and stasis (Frost 204). Thus, both the intransitive and the static verbs emphasize that the persona is longing for eternal rest or death and create a lifeless atmosphere. They are contrasted with the repeated dynamic verb "go" and the dynamic verb "gives," enhancing the persona's resolution and decision to complete his life journey (Frost 204). Furthermore, in the last stanza the static verbs "sleep," "are" and "have" are contrasted with the dynamic verb "go" and the verb "keep" which has turned into a dynamic one indicating the length of the persona's journey and the diversity of the duties that have to be fulfilled (Frost 204-205). This contrast reveals the persona's decision to continue his life journey.

The mental cognate verbs "I think" and "I know" and the verb of active perception "watch" are interrelated together creating an overall image of the persona's meditations and contemplations that reveal his preoccupation with death as his objective correlative (Frost 204). They are contrasted with the negated verb of active perception "see" that is associated with the owner of the woods and the repeated use of the mental cognate verb "think" which is related to "the horse" (Frost 204). Both "the horse" and the owner of "the woods" stand for the urban society or the village where life is full of commitments (Frost 204). They are the two factors that force the persona to continue his life journey and they are contrasted with his desire for eternal rest. Furthermore, the use of the mental cognate verbs "know" and "think" and the repetition of the verb "think" highlight the continuity of the persona's meditations (Frost 204). They are related to the action predicate verb "stop" indicating the persona's initial desire to resign to death (Frost 204). All the pervious verbs are contrasted with the action predicate verb "gives" introducing his final decision which is to continue his life journey (Frost 204). "Stopping by Woods On a Snowy Evening" is written in the present simple tense and in the infinitive form such as "are," "is," "to go" and "to keep" with the exception of the verb "stopping" that is written in the ing-participle or the gerund (Frost 204-205). This dominance of the present simple tense indicates that the persona's experience is factual and genuine as everyone has burdens in life which drive him to think of death but he soon realizes that he must fulfill his commitments in life and continue his life journey. On the grammatical level, the gerund use of the verb "stopping" prolongs the persona's meditations and thinking of death (Frost 204). Modality

reveals the contrastive situation between the persona and the horse as well as the owner of the woods. The modal verb of obligation in “My little horse must think it queer” and that of expectation in “[h]e will not see me stopping here” reflect the unified stance of the owner of the woods and the horse as representing the persona’s subconscious (Frost 204). Both adhere to urbanity or the “village” (Frost 204).

The modal adverbs and adjectives as well as the modifiers heighten the persona’s objective correlative which is death or “sleep” (Frost 205). Examples of the negative modal adjectives, adverbs and modifiers that connote death are: “frozen lake,” “downy flake” and the superlative in the “darkest evening” (Frost 204). Moreover, the use of the word tripling in “the woods are lovely, dark and deep” heightens the persona’s eagerness for death (Frost 204). All these modal adjectives and modifiers or modifying adjuncts create an atmosphere of oblivion and stasis connoting death. The previous modifiers and modal adjectives are contrasted with the modal adjective or the modifying adjunct “little horse” (Frost 204). The latter has negative connotations indicating the detachment between the persona and the horse as it disturbs his silence urging him to return to his duties in life. The choice of the modifying adjuncts or the positive modal adjectives “easy wind,” and “downy flake” intensify the persona’s attraction to the calmness of the place or the peacefulness of death (Frost 204).

In the light of M. Short’s stylistic approach of teaching lexis, the tone shifts dramatically from meditation, contemplation and description to admiration and resolution. This technique is known as the tones of voice. The opening line of the lyric “whose woods these are I think I know” is a rhetorical question that introduces the persona’s meditations on the “woods” (Frost 204). He contemplates the “woods” that “fill up” with snow” (Frost 204). Then, the persona shifts the scope of his vision into meditating the psychology of the “horse” who “must think it queer to stop without a farmhouse near” (Frost 204). The tone shifts dramatically into describing the apparent gloomy atmosphere of the place. This appears in “between the woods and frozen lake/ the darkest evening of the year” (Frost 204). The persona indulges in meditations and again his “horse” representing his subconscious mind awakens him from his dream-like state of oblivion and reminds him of his responsibilities (Frost 204). This appears in “he gives his harness bells a shake / to ask if there is some mistake” (Frost 204). However, the persona continues in the dream-like process of contemplating and describing the serenity and the mysterious beauty of the place in spite of its dark or “deep” and gloomy atmosphere (Frost 204). This appears in “the only other sound’s the sweep / of easy wind and downy flake. The woods are lovely, dark and deep” (Frost 204).

In the last stanza, the tone shifts dramatically into pointing out the persona's admiration and deep affinity with the place. This is highlighted in the line "The woods are lovely, dark and deep" (Frost 204). Then, there is a transition in the tone marked by the contrastive conjunction "but" indicating the persona's frustrated resolution that he must complete his life journey (Frost 204). This resolution that settles the persona's inner conflict appears in the last three lines especially in the repetition of the last two lines: "but I have promises to keep / and miles to go before I sleep, / and miles to go before I sleep" (Frost 204-205).

The symbolic choice of the white and the dark or black colours connotes man's death and eternal rest. The following lexical units heighten the persona's choice of the white colours: "snow," "frozen," and "flake" (Frost 204). All of them symbolically connote how man's complexion becomes pale, and how his body becomes "frozen" –after death (Frost 204). In the natural context of the lyric, the collocations of the nouns "snow," "evening," "woods," and "frozen lake" create intra – textual relations between them (Frost 204). As a group, all of them imply the persona's eagerness for death. Furthermore, the concrete noun "horse" is an inanimate noun in the code (Frost 204). However, it acquires animacy in the context of the lyric as it represents the persona's subconscious. Thus, its contextual significance shows that it is a hybrid noun created by the overlap of intra-textual and extra-textual relations. In the last stanza, the concrete noun "woods" is contrasted with the abstract one "promises" implying the main conflict between the persona's death wish and his duties in life (Frost 204).

Furthermore, there is a religious lexical set that is indicted by the white colour of these concrete nouns "snow," "flake" and "frozen" (Frost 204). The persona seeks spiritual salvation that is indicated by his death-wish. The lexical units that create dark or black colours are: "evening," "darkest," "dark," "deep" and even "sleep" (Frost 204-205). They have collocations indicating the darkness and the eternal rest of man's unconscious world after death (Frost 204-205). The repetition of certain lexical items such as 'evening,' "sleep" and "dark" heightens the persona's desire for death (Frost 204-205). Similarly, the lexical repetition of the concrete noun "woods" and its association with the adjectives "dark" and "deep" connote the depth and serenity of man's eternal rest (Frost 204). Thus, the lexical items of the concrete nouns: "snow," 'woods,' "lake," "flake," and "wind" connote not only beauty and serenity of the place but also of death (Frost 204). The latter lexical units are connected with nature and contrasted with the following two concrete

nouns: “village” and “bells” that are related to urbanity (Frost 204). The “village” as a place and the domesticated “horse” that has “bells” around its neck indicate modern and urban life which is full of duties from which the persona is escaping (Frost 204). The use of the adverb of extreme degree “only” functions as an intensifier highlighting the serenity of the place or death (Frost 204). Furthermore, the use of “lovely” which is another adverb indicating extreme degree heightens the person’s death wish (Frost 204).

The use of near deictics “these” and “here” implies that the “woods” which connote death are closely related to the persona’s heart (Frost 204). The use of the locative deictics or the spatio temporal locatives “between” and “in” create a panoramic overview of the place highlighting the persona’s contemplation which associates the place with his desire for death (Frost 204). The use of the definite articles such as “the woods,” “the only other sound,” and “the darkest evening” creates a sense of certainty (Frost 204). The persona is sure that death is the only escape from the duties of life. This dominance of the definite articles is contrasted with the use of the indefinite article “a” in “a farmhouse,” which shows that the horse is uncertain about his own destiny or to which “farmhouse” it will go (Frost 204). This is because it is only concerned with life in the urban society or “village” without thinking about the hardships of this life and its dehumanized status (Frost 204). The lexical sets are foregrounded to produce images. They highlight the dialectical relationship between the material level or the persona’s life in the “village” which is full of duties and the spiritual level or his quest in which he seeks death (Frost 204).

In “The Language of Poetry: The Application of Literary Stylistic Theory in University Teaching” (1989), Peter Verdonk expounds Leech’s model of stylistic analysis in which he incorporates three stylistic concepts: “Cohesion, foregrounding and the cohesion of foregrounding” (245). In “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening,” the phonological relation between the alliteration, the assonance, the rhyme-scheme, the rhythm, the diphthongs and the long vowels, creates cohesive ties highlighting the persona’s death wish and his inner conflict. Moreover, the onomatopoeic representation of “harness bells” is contrasted with the onomatopoeic choice of “the sweep of easy wind” (Frost 204). The latter enhances the persona’s attraction to the solemn nature of death. In *Literary Essays and Reviews of the 1920s and 30s* (1974), Edmund Wilson states that in the lyric “we hear more than the human music of a typical human situation, the insistent whisper of death at the heart of life. For we are all travelers traveling alone through a haunted country. Strange voice lures us away to nature, friendly voices call us back to men” (30). In the first stanza, the alliteration creates unity between the lines, introducing the

persona's meditations and contemplation of the woods with its depth and serenity. Examples are: "his, house" and "his, he, here" as well as the consonance between "his, whose" (Frost 204). Moreover, the repetition of the "w" sound in the alliteration in "watch, woods, with, will" indicates the deep nature of the persona's desire for death (Frost 204). They also create a groaning sound which echoes the gloomy nature of the persona's wish. The repetition of the sibilant or the / s / sound in the alliteration in "see, stopping, snow" compares death to a snake who stealthily crawls to take man's soul (Frost 204). In the second stanza, the alliteration of the / f / sound as in "farmhouse, frozen" and the consonance of the / s / sound in "stop" and "think" create a slow, smooth rhythm echoing the calmness of death and its serenity (Frost 204). Furthermore, the alliteration in "woods, without" creates unity between the lines and intensifies the lulling nature of death which is like a merciful mother (Frost 204). The alliteration in "my, must" indicates the persona's inner conflict as his subconscious mind starts to remind him of the importance of his duties that should be fulfilled (Frost 204).

In the third stanza, the repetition of the / z / sound appears in the use of the consonance such as: "his, gives, balls" "there, is" and "the, other, easy" (Frost 204). The alliteration appears in "He, his, harness" (Frost 204). Both the / z / and the / h / are sharp sounds indicating the anti-climax, as the persona's subconscious mind or the "horse" draws him back to reality reminding him of his life journey that has to be continued (Frost 204). Furthermore, the repetition of the / s / sound appears in the alliteration between "sound, sweep, some" and in the consonance of "harness, mistake, ask" (Frost 204). They create a smooth, regular rhythm echoing the peacefulness of death. The auditory choice of "harness" is contrasted with the that of the "sweep" (Frost 204). The former one indicates the persona's self awareness of his responsibilities, whereas the latter one indicates his dream – like state of oblivion as he dreams of death.

In the fourth stanza, the alliteration between "miles, miles," and "go, go" implies the persona's resolution as he realizes the obligatory nature of his life journey which is still long (Frost 204). They are contrasted with the alliteration between "dark, deep" and "sleep, sleep" (Frost 204-205). They imply the persona's need to be lulled by death as a mother whose warmth and love are "deep" (Frost 204). The choice of the "d" sound implies the length of the death journey and its deep nature. Furthermore, there is a consonance in "woods, promises," through the repetition of the / z / sound (Frost 204). Moreover, there is a contrast between the / z /

sound in the consonance of “miles, miles” and the / f / sound in the consonance of “before, before” (Frost 205). They imply the persona’s resolution to complete his life-journey inspite of its hardships “before” enjoying the peaceful nature of death (Frost 205).

In the first stanza, the assonance between “snow, know” and the repetition of “I” establish a link between the persona’s act of meditation or contemplation and his death wish (Frost 204). They are contrasted with the use of the diphthong “au” in “house” which refers to the urban life that is full of problems and duties (Frost 204). In the second stanza, the repetition of the diphthong “Iö ” in “queer, near, year” implies the situation of the horse or the persona’s subconscious mind that is urging him to return to his normal life (Frost 204). They are contrasted with the use of the long vowel “u:” in “wood” which implies depth and the persona’s attraction to death. In the third stanza, the use of the diphthong “ei” in “shake” and “mistake” is also contrasted with its use in “flake” (Frost 204). They imply the persona’s anti-climax. His subconscious mind alerts him drawing him back to his duties. Furthermore, the diphthong “ei” in “shake” and “mistake” is also contrasted with the diphthong “au” in “downy” (Frost 204). The latter asserts the serenity of death. In the fourth stanza, the repetition of the long vowel “i” in the assonance between “deep” and “sleep” as well as the use of the long vowel “u:” in “woods” stress that the persona is really longing for death (Frost 204, 205). It is contrasted with the use of the long vowel “i” in “keep” as it implies that although the persona wishes to die, his commitments have forced him to complete his life journey (Frost 204). Thus, the use of the monosyllabic words creates a colloquial rhythm because it is a general experience that can be felt by everyone. The use of the regular meter and the rhyme-scheme are effective. The first threes stanzas are written in iambic tetrameter, while the last one rhymes every line with / d /. Thus, the rhyme-scheme is “a a b a, b b c b, c c d c, d d d d”. This is because the last stanza marks the persona’s resolution that he should not surrender to death.

The cross-reference to the persona through the repetition of the first person pronoun “I” in the first and the last stanzas and its variations of the reflexive pronoun “me” and the possessive pronoun “my” create cohesive ties (Frost 204). They also indicate that it is a personal experience undergone by the persona till he reaches his resolution. However, this personal experience is also general and universal as it is a common experience that can be felt by everyone. The use of the first person pronoun “I” that is linked with the persona’s death wish and experience is contrasted with the use of the third person pronoun “he” and its possessive form “his” (Frost 204). The use of the third person pronoun “he” is associated with the owner of the woods and the “horse” creating a unified

stance between them (Frost 204). They like to live in the urbanity and the modernity whereas the persona is attracted to the primitivism of the "woods" that connote death (Frost 204). The lexical repetition of the concrete noun "woods" creates cohesive ties between the beginning and the end of the lyric, foregrounding the persona's objective correlative or death-wish (Frost 204).

Cohesion of foregrounding appears in the use of the pronominal pronoun "it" in "my little horse must think it queer" (Frost 204). Symbolically, the horse or the persona's subconscious mind does not approve of the idea of death. Thus, "it" symbolically foregrounds the persona's objective correlative or his death-wish (Frost 204). Furthermore, in the fourth stanza, the cohesion of foregrounding appears in the repetition of the last two lines and in the grammatical deviation which appears in them. Therefore, the poetic ellipsis in the last two lines "and miles to go before I sleep" foregrounds the persona's resolution to complete his life-journey till the right time for death (Frost 204). The repetition of the additive conjunction "and" enhances the persona's decision (Frost 204). The use of the contrastive conjunction "but" marks the transition from the anti-climax or the persona's inner conflict between his duties and his death wish to his final resolution (Frost 204). Similarly, the repetition of the time conjunction "before" stresses the persona's resolution to fulfill his commitments "before" reaching the stage of death (Frost 205). In the last stanza, the lexical choice of the concrete noun "woods" foregrounds Frost's use of the synecdoche (Frost 204). In other words, the simple act of contemplating the "woods" (i.e the part) stands for his objective correlative or death-wish (i.e the whole) (Frost 204). Therefore, "the woods" are described as "lovely, dark, and deep" because it stands for his death-wish (Frost 204).

In "World Enough, and Time: Deictic Space and the Interpretation of Prose" (1995), Paul Werth discusses deixis. The setting of the lyric is "between the woods and frozen lake" (Frost 204). There is a dramatic mode in the dialogue between the persona and nature which connotes his longing for death. In this dramatic mode, the persona's inner-conflict is developed till reaching a resolution at the end. Deictic information, frame knowledge and inferencing help the reader to infer that the incident or the "stopping by woods" takes place in December as in this month there is a day known for its being the "darkest evening" (Frost 204). The persona and the "horse" are the two agents that frame the action, whereas the owner of the woods is a passive participant as he is only mentioned without having an active-role (Frost 204). The addressee is man in general

as the experience is common. The role of the function – advancing component is active in the lyric as the majority of the entities are modified. Examples are: “little horse,” “frozen lake,” “darkest evening,” “easy wind,” “downy flake,” and “the woods are lovely, dark and deep” (Frost 204). The description of the horse as “little” may infer the psychological detachment between the horse and its master as it urges the persona to give up his death-wish (Frost 204). Thus, the elements of space deictics appear in the lyric. Moreover, there is a sub-world that is created by the process of inference and the persona who indulges in the association of ideas. This sub-world is the persona’s death wish that can be inferred through the following concrete nouns: “woods,” “snow,” and “frozen lake” (Frost 204). The persona contemplates “the darkest evening,” “the woods” and “snow” associating them with the idea of death (Frost 204). This subworld is known as a cognitive space. The negative modifiers enhance the sub-world of the persona’s death wish. Examples are: “dark,” “deep,” “frozen” and “darkest” (Frost 204). In this sub-world, the insertion of the horse that shakes its “bells” leads the reader to expect the end of the lyric which is the continuity of the persona’s normal life (Frost 204).

All the previous elements build up the frame of the lyric. In the first stanza, the deictic viewpoint introduces the setting of the “woods” (Frost 204). Then, in the second and the third stanzas, it includes also the persona’s “horse” (Frost 204). Finally, in the fourth stanza, it shifts to the “promises” and the “miles” which the persona has to encounter before death (Frost 204). The function that is advanced in the lyric is descriptive. Therefore, the objective is metonymic. For instance, the setting which is the “woods” combines metonymic objects that are related to it such as: “the lake,” “snow,” “sweep,” “wind” and “flake” (Frost 204). Furthermore, some metonymic objects are associated with the “horse” such as “farmhouse” and “bells” (Frost 204). They connote elements of the urban society and the clash between the persona’s duties and his death-wish. The influences that are drawn from the metaphorical and the metonymic subworlds of the lyric lead to the resolution in the fourth stanza. Moreover, the use of the phrasal verb “fill up,” which describes the beauty of the natural scenery in the “woods” or the peacefulness of death is contrasted with another one “stop without” (Frost 204). The latter one enhances the clash between the persona’s need for serenity and his subconscious mind that urges him to march and to continue his life journey.

Thus, this stylistic analysis has sought to shed light on the feelings of the persona who yearns for death but gives up his desire to accomplish his commitments in life (i.e. symbolically Frost’s poetic career). The paper

tackles such diverse stylistic devices as parallelism and equivalence, deixis and modalities. References have been adopted in the stylistic analysis. Consequently, the stylistic bond between the literary and grammatical aspects foregrounds the poet's mystical quest for the meaning of death in the two poems. Thematically, in "For Once, Then, Something," the colour symbolism of whiteness refers to the poet's mystic journey to realize the truth of life. In the light of Michael Short's approach to grammar, the researcher relates the floating lexicon to the literary style of the stream of consciousness technique. As an example of the relationship between the stylistic and literary devices, parallelism and equivalence foreground the atmosphere of mystery which drives the researcher to indulge in mystic thoughts. Leech's model of cohesion shows that the delay of the main noun "Whiteness" is meant to point out the motif of man's journey to obtain absolute wisdom (Frost 205). Similarly, in "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," lexis foreshadows literary connotations related to the gloom of death. M. Short's methodology of stylistics and grammar highlights the theme of suffering before man's death. Moreover, the researcher relates her analysis of the stylistic devices like juxtaposition to poetic imagery, thus expounding the thematic connotations of death. As for the element of transitivity, the use of mental, internalized cognition processes is related to the poet's prolonged meditation about his death wish. Hence, the analysis of the different stylistic features develops an interpretive thematic study of two of Frost's poetry.

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