

Robert Frost's *North of Boston*:
An Annotated Bibliography of Secondary Sources From 1974 to Present

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**Robert Frost's *North of Boston*:
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Introduction

This bibliography aims for a comprehensive collection of English secondary sources on Robert Frost's *North of Boston* through the period of 1974 to 2008.

Being Frost's centennial year, 1974 spawned an abundance of criticism which led to an important period of reevaluation for Frost's status in the American literary canon. Studies born during this period attempted to establish a summary of Frost criticism up to then, which in turn became lasting touchstones for subsequent Frost criticism. The three volume *Frost: Centennial Essays* (1974-1978) series is the foremost presence in this task, compiling a kaleidoscopic array of criticism by known and to-be known Frost scholars. Frank Lentricchia, came forth with his remarkable contribution of *Robert Frost; Modern Poetics and the Landscape of Self* in 1975. Richard Poirier's highly acclaimed *Robert Frost: The Work of Knowing* was published in 1977 and continues to hold status as one of the best individual studies ever done on Frost. In terms of literary theory, the Freudian and Jungian approaches relatively common until then were met in the late 80's with other, more contemporary theoretical frameworks. John Simons refers to the notion of "mis en abyme" in Derrida's *Signéponge*. James Dawes looks to Sedgwick's gender theories in his

analysis on homosexuality in Frost's works. Marie Boroff's ground breaking study on Frost's "sentence sound" relies on the linguistic findings concerning "sound symbolism." Walter Jost's *Rhetorical Investigation: Studies in Ordinary Language Criticism* is based in the thoughts of Wittgenstein and Stanley Cavell. Studies concerning the influence of William James, and more sparsely, Henri Bergson, remain fairly frequent through the years.

The poems in *North of Boston* favored by critics roughly parallel those of general popularity. "Mending Wall" receives the most academic attention with a total of 37 entries, along with "Home Burial," (23) "The Wood-Pile" (19) "The Death of the Hired Man," (19) and "After-Apple Picking," (18) as runner-up favorites. The bulk of the poems in *North of Boston* foreground "dialogues" between two figures of opposing traits e.g., Warren and Mary in "The Death of the Hired man," Amy and the husband in "Home Burial," the speaker and the neighbor in "Mending Wall." As a result, "dialogue" becomes the flash point of discussion, and from there begins the critics discourse on thematic elements such as matrimonial relationship, human estrangement, resistance towards nature as chaos, and "voice" i.e. "sentence-sound," to name a few of the major topics in consistent dispute. Critics tend to focus on particular poems and topics such as the meaning of the "wall" in "Mending Wall" or Amy's character in "Home Burial." Consequently, readings of *North of Boston* as a whole, and comparative assessments with its "pair book" *A Boy's Will* are sparse. Although some have come our way, the most recent being those by Alex Calder and Stephan Matterson, these topics await a more active assessment. It should also be noted that criticism on Frost are almost completely of American origin. As Philip Gerber points out, Frost is not a popular poet outside of the United States. Further analysis of Gerber's "non-exportable" features of Frost may be vital in discussing Frost's "Americanness" so commonly attributed to his work.

Concerning summarily works, Lentricchia's *Robert Frost: A Bibliography 1913-1974* (1976) stands as the pinnacle. Succeeding Lentricchia is the annotated bibliography by Egmond, spanning between 1974 through 1990. My bibliography here will be both complementary and contrasting to this work. Egmond's bibliography is comprehensive and extremely useful, but lacks quantity of detail in its annotations which consist mainly of short quotations taken directly from the secondary source. In what follows, I have adopted a more extensive style of delineation, attempting to both summarize and identify multiple points of significance in the articles. The descriptions have been left tolerably brief and accessible (I hope) so they may be read with comfortable speed. Few of the annotations are particularly long as they required extensive description judging from their relativity to *North of Boston*. On the contrary, some annotations of book length studies are left relatively short in order to sustain the summarily aspect of the entries. There are no annotated bibliographies for *North of Boston* before this and no comprehensive annotated bibliographies either for secondary sources on Frost's work after Egmond. Thus, this project may be of some benefit for those concerned with Frost criticism in general after 1991. The materials listed here have been gathered through *MLAIB* online, *EBSCO*, *ProQuest*, *Amazon.co.jp.*, *Amazon.com.*, and *Robert Frost: A Reference Guide, 1974-1990* by Peter Van Egmond (1991). A total of 121 items are arranged in chronological order so that the reader may see at a glance the critical history of *North of Boston*. Author and title indexes are given at the end.

It is always astonishing to see poems survive the trial of time when so much more is going for their perishing. Contrary to Gerber's findings, Frost's poems have succeeded in traveling across cultures, leaving unexpected traces in places far from New England thereby proving its qualities stand for something more universal. As Poirier states in *Robert Frost: The Work of Knowing*, Frost's simplicity is deceptive, showing "by casual inflection or hesitation of movement, that the 'obvious' by nature *is* problematic."(xxiii) His inviting use of vernacular language functions as a

cloak for what in truth are inquiries into the unsolvable questions of life. Frost opens the doors, takes our hand, lead us in, and disappears, leaving the reader alone and mapless in his poetic world of human uncertainties. Thus even now, with the mass of Frost criticism in our hands, it seems quite safe to say the reader's voices have yet to fill all the possibilities Frost left for us in his poems. But for all his evasive, mysterious qualities, what he did leave for us to find in his maze of deeply simple poems seems to be something profoundly attractive. His inheritance is cherished, honored, and at times feared for its' characteristic insight into the curious realm of man's nature. Despite the solitude and chaos sounding the depth of his words, his poetry leaves us with a brief clearing away from those evasive, shapeless elements of common human anxiety. And thus it is the untouchable made tangible by Frost that we so eagerly look into, desperate for those rare offerings of tranquility we find nowhere but here, his "momentary stay, against confusion."

List of Abbreviations

NB: *North of Boston* London: David Nutt, 1914.

- **AAP:** “After Apple Picking.”
- **BB:** “Blueberries.”
- **BC:** “The Black Cottage.”
- **GH:** “Good Hours”
- **GM:** “The Generations of Men”
- **DHM:** “The Death of A Hired Man.”
- **HB:** “Home Burial.”
- **HC:** “A Hundred Collars.”
- **MW:** “Mending Wall.”
- **SF:** “The Self-Seeker.”
- **SS:** “A Servant to Servants.”
- **TC** “The Code”
- **TF:** “The Fear.”
- **TM:** “The Mountain.”
- **TP:** “The Pasture.”
- **WP:** “The Wood-Pile.”

BW: *A Boy's Will* London: David Nutt, 1913.

DAI: *Dissertation Abstract International*

FCE: *Frost: Centennial Essays* Ed. Jac L. Tharpe and Peggy W. Prenshaw. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 1974.

FCE III: *Frost: Centennial Essays III* Ed. Tharpe, Jac. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 1978.

RFR: *Robert Frost Review*

Secondary Sources

1974

[1] Allen, Margaret V. “‘The Black Cottage’: Robert Frost and the Jeffersonian Ideal of Equality.”

FCE. 221-29.

Argues the contradictory ideals of the old women and minister embody Frost’s ambivalent attitude towards Jeffersonian ideals of freedom and equality. According to Allen, Frost feared the attractiveness of Jeffersonian “freedom and equality” slogan may allow its abuse by the state, but at the same time supported the Jeffersonian agricultural society. This suggests BC is “Frost’s tribute to the strength of ideal, and an expression of his own uncertainties about it.”

[2] Conder, John J. “‘After Apple-Picking’: Frost’s Troubled Sleep.” *FCE*. 171-81.

Discusses the possible meanings of “sleep” in AAP. Insists Frost’s ingenious method of association dismantles and refuses fixed meanings, allowing for a multitudes of interpretations on this subject. Conder concludes the speaker will not know the meaning of his “sleep” until he has actually experienced it.

[3] Crowley, J. Donald. “Hawthorne and Frost: The Making of a Poem.” *FCE*. 288-309.

Examines the influence of Hawthorne on WP, and Frost’s poetry at large. Insists the specific source for WP is in Hawthorne’s *American Notebook*, where the motif of wood pile and frozen swamp showing strong resemblance. On a larger scale, Frost inherits the uniquely American sense of “homelessness” through Hawthorne. Hawthorne sought to resolve this

“homelessness” by making a “real home” in his fiction yet remained untrusting to the actual validity of this act. Frost, on the other hand, “savored these conflicts between the imagination and the real ” because Hawthorne had already paved the way for the “real” American poetry.

[4] Miller, Lewis H., Jr. “The Poet as Swinger: Fact and Fancy in Robert Frost.” *Criticism* 16.1 (1974): 58-72.

On three poems by Frost including WP. Dismisses Robert Langbaum’s accusation that Frost misses Rukin’s criteria for “poetry of the first order” and argues for Frost’s significance. Miller states Frost confronts the chaos of reality with his “dazzling facility for offering us a sustained vibrancy or ‘swing’ between a world of fact and a world of fancy.” Insists the “crucial strand in Frost’s effectiveness as a poet is his swinging manipulation of fictions, his uncanny ability to swing us into a contingent world of fact through careful climbing into a world of dream or fancy.”

[5] Monteiro, George. “Unlinked Myth in Frost’s ‘Mending Wall.’” *Concerning Poetry* 7.2 (1974): 10-11.

Argues Frost deliberately omitted the mythological link towards the Roman worshipped Terminus, the god of boundaries, who reaffirmed borders and provided occasions for predetermined traditional festivities among neighbors. Monteiro concludes, Frost’s decision to avoid direct allusion to this myth distinguish him from modernists such as Eliot and Pound’s who’s use of mythic parallels are more direct.

[6] Perrine, Laurence. “The Sense of Frost’s ‘The Self-Seeker.’” *Concerning Poetry* 7.1 (1974): 5-8.

Explains the central theme in SF as the speaker's adjustment to loss and his rediscovering of meaning in life. Concludes the speaker did his best by choosing love and life over hate and death.

[7] Sanders, David A. "Smokeless Burning: Imagination and Survival in the Poetry of Robert Frost." Diss. Cornell U, 1974.

According to Sanders, Frost attempts to resist nature's assimilation of man towards death by using poetic imagination to comprehend and take control over nature. WP is analysed in chapter 1 under this theme. The speaker-man leaves his mark of "imaginative assertion" on nature via wood-pile, but nature expresses dominance by decaying it. [DAI 35.6 (1974): 3767A- 68A]

[8] Thompson, Susan. "Boundaries of the Self: Poetry by Frost, Roethke, and Berryman, Considered in the Light of the Language of Schizophrenia." Diss. U of Texas, 1974.

Thompson insists the interest in language patterns and ambiguity of self apparent in the unpublished poetry of Alice Hudnall, a schizophrenic woman poet, are similar to and thus useful in analysing patterns in twentieth century poets such as Frost, Roethke and Berryman. According to Thompson, MW deals with the difficulty of managing boundaries while SS depicts the struggle of troubled people with unconventional views of reality. [DAI 35.8 (1975): 5430A-31A.]

[9] Vogel, Nancy. "A Post Mortem on 'The Death of the Hired Man.'" *FCE*. 201-06.

On speech structure and biblical themes. Argues the poem is about conflict between “justice” represented by Warren, and “mercy” by Mary. The “home” here is the eternally lost postlapsarian home of humanity.

1975

[10] Lentricchia, Frank. *Robert Frost; Modern Poetics and the Landscape of Self*. Durnham: Duke UP, 1975.

Explains the dominant theme in NB as the tension of the character balancing on the edge of hysteria. Compares how human existence is viewed in MW and HB.

[11] Marcus, Mordecai. “Motivation of Robert Frost’s Hired Man” *College Literature* 3 (1975): 63-68.

Focuses on the relationship between Warren / Mary and Silas of DHM. Silas’ death is caused by his guilt towards the other characters in the poem and also his suppressed self-reproach towards life.

1976

[12] Cunningham, Donald. “Mending Wall.” *Gone Into It If Not Explained: Essays on the Poems of Robert Frost*. Ed. Greg Kuzma. *Pebble* 14-15 (1976): 65-73.

Cunningham insists the popular identification of the narrator with Frost should be avoided. Both characters should be treated as fictional allowing for an accurate reading of the poem which holds both narrator and neighbor responsible for the failure of communication.

[13] Rooke, Constance. "The Elusive /Allusive Voice: An Interpretation of Frost's 'A Servant to Servants.'" *Cimarron Review* 38 (1976): 13-23.

According to Rooke, the speaker is a psychotic, sexually frustrated, frightened woman married to an unbearably normal man. The speaker's wife is trapped in a "sexual and imaginative prison" of "cunning domestic torture" on account of the husband's conventionality. Also emphasizes the importance of the author's "presence" in the poem.

[14] Scheele, Roy. "The Laborious Dream: Frost's 'After Apple-Picking.'" *Gone Into It If Not Explained: Essays on the Poems of Robert Frost*. Ed. Greg Kuzma. *Pebble* 14-15 (1976): 145-53.

States the speaker's "human" dream differs from the sentient-less woodchuck's, as it is "just some human sleep" retaining the human concerns of the speaker's reality due to his inability to "relinquish his waking concerns."

1977

[15] Poirier, Richard. *Robert Frost: The Work of Knowing*. 1977. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1990.

Comprehensive and concise study of Frost. Discusses NB as a whole and all of its poems. Argues the main concern of Frost is in the "interpretive process" of his poems, pointing out how the intention behind Frost's use of "simple" words is not in being "obvious," but by keeping words simple he is leaving room for a multitude of interpretations aiming to create "an inquisitiveness about what cannot quite be signified." Poems analysed in length are AAP, DHM, TF, HB, MW, SS, and WP.

1978

[16] French, Warren. “‘The Death of the Hired Man’: Modernism and Transcendence.” *FCE III*. 382-401.

Insists Frost is a “precursor” of post-modernism. According to Warren, DHM is the primary example of Frost’s “relationship to the possibilities of pre-modernist and modernist sensibilities” since the “possibilities of post-modernism is most clearly dramatized” in this poem.

[17] Miller, Lewis H., Jr. “William James, Robert Frost, and ‘The Black Cottage.’” *FCE III*. 368-81.

Compares the similarities between Frost and James, stating “the pragmatist’s search for some sort of a home within a homeless world is marked by the same spirit of risk and open endedness which characterizes so many of Frost’s strategies to make himself at home in an alien world” According to Miller, BC is strongly influenced by a lecture delivered by William James’s *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking* (1907). Miller praises this poem as “one of those rare instances in American letters where philosophy and poetry mingle strenuously to form one seamless, artistic whole.”

[18] Replogle, Justin. “Vernacular Poetry: Frost to Frank O’Hara.” *Twentieth Century Literature*. 24.2 (1978): 137-153.

On the importance of intonation, or, the “sound of sense” in Frost’s poetry. Replogle insists intonation is the key to Frost’s poetry, where the poems are crafted so they contain confusion of meaning only vernacular intonation (i.e. “the sound-of-sense of voice”) can clear up.

This quality of contrasts with the “non-vernacular, chant-like intonation of someone crooning lists, repeated patterns of sound” found in the modernist tradition of Pound and Eliot, placing Frost apart from them in a separate group along with Marianne Moore, Auden, and Frank O’Hara. Gives BB as example. Excellent analysis of the function of intonation in Frost.

1979

[19] Arms, George and Nat Henry. “Frost’s ‘Mending Wall.’” *Explicator* 37.3 (1979): 29-32.

Insists the wall implies “Wall Street” in relation to the minor recovery of stock prices during the time Frost wrote this poem. The speaker and neighbor are given roles as well known figures in the world of stock.

[20] Chandralekha, S. “Home Burial.” *Journal of English Studies* 2 (1979): 48-50.

An Indian article. Unavailable as of October 30, 2008.

[21] Cunningham, Donald Bruce. “The Lurking Frost: Poet and Narrator in Six Poems by Robert Frost.” Diss. U of Nebraska, 1979.

Analysis of the relationship between poet and narrator in Frost’s poems including MW and WP. Cunningham argues the narrator of these poems should be seen not only as “observers” and “reporters” in the poem, but also as “participants” who unconsciously creates the poetic world for the reader through his words and perception (although ultimately controlled by the poet). The narrator’s effort to understand his world becomes a metaphor of the poet. [DAI 40.8 (1980): 4594A.]

[22] Marcus, Mordecai. "Psychoanalytic Approaches to 'Mending Wall.'" *Robert Frost: Studies of the Poetry*. [Ed.] Kathryn Gibbs Harris. Boston: Hall, 1979. 179-90.

A critical response to the psychoanalytic reading of MW by Norman Holland. Marcus applies Erik H. Erikson's theory of eight developmental stages in human life to MW.

Following the method of division by Erikson, Marcus adds to and revises Hollands reading.

Includes brief analysis of Frost's AAP, applying Erikson's theory of generativity v.s. stagnation.

[23] Vogt, Victor E. "Narrative and Drama in the Lyric: Robert Frost's Strategic Withdrawal." *Critical Inquiry* 5.3 (1979): 529-51.

Analysis of DHM. Vogt finds in Frost's poetry, a tendency for "strategic withdraw", thematically from the modern world, and formally from the "plot-structured fictions."

Focusing on the formal aspect, Vogt suggests Frost's critical acclaim is due to his "innovative use of narrative and dramatic modes within the bounds of generic forms that are almost exclusively lyrics." Frost was ingenious in that he carried conventional narrative and dramatic modes in to lyrics while withholding from actually writing a play and thus expanding the possibility of the lyric genre.

[24] Wilson, Douglas L. "The Other Side of the Wall." *Iowa Review* 10 (1979): 65-75.

A reading of MW. The neighbor's experience based "practical wisdom" cannot be understood by the speaker or the "readers of the modern American poetry" since they both do not hold the actual country life "experience" this neighbor has. Wilson claims Frost, as all people are, bound within the limits of his own experience. Living in England while

writing this poem, Frost came upon a “liberating” perspective towards his hated life in Derry farm and New England through his experience of homesickness in British country life. According to Wilson, this “liberating” experience is reflected in MW where the poet’s sympathy is with the wisdom of the neighbor and not with the speaker, who critics and readers with only “urban perspectives” tend to side.

1980

[25] Schulhof, Sandra Alicia Lee. “Robert Frost: A Study of Marriage in His Life and in His Poetry.” Diss. Ball State U, 1980.

A study of the relationship between Frost’s family and his poetry. Emphasizes the influence of marriage on Frost through the discussion of themes such as communication, escape-return, sexism, fear, and love. [DAI 42.4 (1981): 1639A-1640A]

1981

[26] Bieganowski, Ronald. “North of Boston: Human Dimensions to Robert Frost's Spiritual Realm.” *Robert Frost: The Man and the Poet*. Ed. Earl J. Wilcox. Rock Hill: Winthrop Coll, 1981. 83-96.

Argues NB portrays Frost’s religious attitude influenced by William James. According to Bieganowski, Frost depicts the process of shifting from earthly to the spiritual realm in SS, DHM, WP.

[27] Chavkin, Allan. "The Ordering of the Sequence of Meditative Lyrics in Frost's *North of Boston*." *Markham Review* 10 (1981): 67-68.

States MW, AAP and WP are meditative poems placed in strategical order depicting the speaker's meditative development on the theme of human alienation. In MW the speaker's stance towards isolation remains egotistical. In AAP he attempts change through mysticism and dream vision, then confronts man's fundamental isolation in WP.

[28] Monteiro, George. "Goring the Ox: Robert Frost, Robert Francis, and the International Fallacy." *Robert Frost: The Man and the Poet*. Ed. Earl J. Wilcox. Rock Hill: Winthrop Coll., 1981. 31-37.

Depicts Frost's inconsistency on the idea of "hidden intentions" in poems. According to Monteiro, although Frost did not believe in the "the intentional fallacy" of K.W. Wimsatt, Jr., and Monroe C. Beardsley as he strongly disliked his poems being read against his intentions. Contrary to his own opinion, Frost himself read "hidden intentions" in Robert Francis's "Apple Peeler" in relation to his own AAP, taking the poem as an offence towards him though Francis denied the fact.

[29] Oehlschlaeger, Fritz H. "Tragic Vision in Frost's 'Home Burial.'" *Ball State U Forum* 22.3 (1981): 25-29.

Focuses on the relationship of Amy and her husband. Contrary to the popular interpretations of Amy's character in the context of "mental aberration," Oehlschlaeger finds the source of Amy's "inconsolability" in her superb perceptiveness rather than craze or masochism. Oehlschlaeger argues Amy cannot obtain a tranquility because she stands by her view of the

world as being fundamentality indifferent towards man. The failure of marriage occurs because the husband cannot share this view.

[30] Paton, Priscilla M. "Robert Frost: 'The fact is the sweetest dream that labor knows.'" *American Literature* 53.1 (1981): 43-55.

Paton argues that in "Mowing", AAP and "Birches," Frost fuses fact, dreams and actual reality together through metaphor. Frost utilizes metaphor to merge "dreams" and "labor" together in to real existence. Also touches on WP, MW, and DHM.

[31] Sears, John F. "Frost's Figures of Upright Posture." *Robert Frost: The Man and the Poet*. Ed. Earl J. Wilcox. Rock Hill: Winthrop Coll., 1981: 49-59

Argues Frost's protagonists ("figures of upright posture") reconfirm the poet's basic religious, aesthetic, and moral beliefs. Extensive discussion of AAP in Section III. Insists the poem is distanced from divine "order," pointing to the abundance of downward movements towards earth depicted in the poem as evidence.

[32] Sears, John F. "Robert Frost and The Imagist: The Background of Frost's 'Sentence Sounds.'" *New England Quarterly* 54.4 (1981): 467-80.

On "sentence sound" in relation to Frost's poetic career. Sears argues the initial attempt by Imagist poets to include Frost in their doctrine, typical of Amy Lowell and Ezra Pound's reviews of NB, helped Frost discover his theory of "sentence sound" by motivating him to "mark off his own territory, distinct from Imagism." Since Frost's most significant difference from the Imagists was his use of meter and his assertion that "sound" was "as distinct, as tangible, as visual images," it can be assumed that the "way he

formulated and publicized that theory suggests that he was intent on using it to assert his superiority to the Imagist poets.”

[33] Shenk, Robert. “Robert Frost and the Early Puritan Idea of Vocation.” *Christian Scholar's Review* 10.3 (1981): 229-237.

Insists Frost’s understanding of vocation shown in his poems are similar to and thus influenced by early New England Puritan heritage. A brief reading of WP included, suggesting the man who leaves the pile of wood to rot is so preoccupied with the benefits of labor that he leaves tasks half done for new .

1982

[34] Adams, Stephen J. “Black Cottages: Frost, Eliot, and the Fate of Individualism.” *Cithara: Essays in the Judaeo-Christian Tradition* 22.1 (1982): 39-52.

Compares BC and “Gerontion” as poems where “individualism is subjected to the ordeal of history, with differing consequences that suggest two possible ways of receiving the 19th century New England heritage.” Adams argues, although Frost and Eliot are generally regarded as suggesting antitheses, the two share “common ground, including a New England heritage and conservative political and social views.” Drawing on Jeffery Hart’s discovery of “metaphysical desolation” as the binding element of Frost and Eliot, Adams finds the “tradition of New England Individualism stemming chiefly from Emerson” as the mutual source for the two poets. Their ‘metaphysical desolation’ differ as a result of their contrasting stance towards the tradition.

[35] Armand, Barton Levi St. "Frost's Mending Wall" *Explicator* 41.1 (1982): 47-48.

Connects the passage in Thoreau's *Walden* of "pitch pines" taking over an orchard and MW on the basis that Frost was a close reader of *Walden*. Armand insists the wall in the poem is there for the mutual existence of pine and apple trees. Both the speaker and neighbor do not understand this, and thus the writer Frost is the champion here of "knowing."

[36] Greiner, Donald J. "The Indispensable Robert Frost." *Critical Essays On Robert Frost*. Ed. Philip L. Gerber. Boston: Hall, 1982. 220-240.

An attempt to select 12 "indispensable" works from Frost's entire work, both prose and verse. Insists Frost emphasizes Fear, Uncertainty, and "form" meaning control and resistance against the former two, as his central themes. HB and AAP are included in the selection. Simple yet deft readings on Frost's balance of poetic theme and technique.

[37] Michaels, Walter Benn. "Getting Physical." *Raritan* 2.2 (1982): 103-113.

On the relationship of voice, self and dramatic monologue in Frost's poetry. An extensive analysis of William James' influence on Frost, especially *The Principles of Psychology*. Reading of SS included.

[38] Perrine, Laurence. "On Frost's 'The Wood-Pile.'" *Notes On Modern American Literature* 6.1 (1982): Item 1.

Divides poem into 4 sections, pairing them by meaning. Part 1 and part 3 focus on the search and discovery of the "wood-pile" as the symbol of significance man impresses on nature. Part 2 depicts a self-conscious bird contrasting with the self-forgetfulness of the

woodcutter in part 4. Criticizes Richard Poirier and other critics for misattributing the speaker with paranoid and panic terror due to isolation.

1983

- [39] Farrell, Leigh Ann Dawes. "The Archetypal Image: An Interpretation of the Poetry of Theodore Roethke, Arthur Rimbaud, W. B. Yeats, and Robert Frost." Diss. U of Washington, 1983. Explores the archetypal imagery in the titled poets. Includes analysis of MW, focusing on the senex (old man) archetype and Frost's representation of archetypal ambivalence within human nature through him. [DAI 44.11(1984): 3377A]
- [40] Friberg, Ingegerd. "An Interpretation of Robert Frost's Poem 'After Apple-Picking.'" *Moderna Sprak* 77.4 (1983): 325-328. Insists the value of AAP lies in its symbolism of man's path through life. Also touches on the theme of "dream," interpreting them as either nightmare or disillusionment.
- [41] Fang, Ping. "[Not Pity, But Respect: Humanism Glows in The Death of the Hired Man.]" *Foreign Lit. Studies (PRC)* 20. 2 (1983): 6-9. Chinese article on DHM. Unavailable as of October 30, 2008.
- [42] Oehlschlaeger, Fritz. "Robert Frost's 'The Pasture': A Reconsideration." *Concerning Poetry* 16.2 (1983): 1-9. Argues TP is not a simple invitation to an idyllic world as commonly suggested. According to Oehlschlaeger, the poem can be read as Frost's response to the Renaissance, an

“allegorical reflection” of Frost’s poetic imagination. Concludes the calf in the second stanza implies a complex relationship between man and nature in relation to Theocritus.

[43] Waddell, William S., Jr. “Robert Frost's ‘Home Burial’: A Drama of Tradition and Memory.”

Perspectives on Contemporary Literature 9 (1983): 76-82.

Claims HB portrays tension between self and society through the difference in attitude towards tradition and memory depicted in the dramatized dialogue of wife and husband. Upon losing their child, the husband gains comfort by surrendering to “a larger, social perspective” through “expression steeped in tradition,” while the wife “seeks to preserve the self by preserving the terrible grief that the self so deeply feels” and detaches from the “continuing life of the community.” The husband survives because he relies on the cultural past of the community, while the wife cannot due to her obsession with personal and thus non traditional memory of grief.

[44] Wordell, Charles B. “Robert Frost from *A Boy's Will* to *North of Boston*.” *Chu-Shikoku Studies*

in American Literature 19 (1983): 1-13.

An account of Frost’s poetic transition from BW to NB. Wordell argues the key is the change in Frost’s “philosophy.” Poems of BW are introversive while those of NB are more extroversive.

1984

[45] Clarke, Peter B. “Frost’s Mending Wall” *Explicator* 43.1 (1984): 48-50.

Defines central problem of poem as the difficulty of finding ultimate wisdom. According to Clark, the neighbor's knowledge of ancient Roman and Hebrew boundary rules and rites is the "ultimate wisdom."

[46] Hindus, Milton. "Epic, 'Action-Poem,' Cartoon: Charles Reznikoff's Testimony: The United States, 1885-1915." *Charles Reznikoff: Man and Poet*. Ed. Milton Hindus. Orono: The National Poetry Foundation, U of Maine, 1984. 309-324

A brief comparison of Frost's DHM to a part of Reznikoff's "Testimony." Attributes DHM with distinctive characters, philosophical depth, and well delivered phrases.

[47] Marcus, Mordecai. "The Best of Robert Frost: Some Problems of Subjectivity." *Journal of Evolutionary Psychology* 5 (1984): 255-62.

A private selection of "Frost's very best poems" including AAP and MW. Insists AAP is popular because "its archetypes of experience" appeal to readers. Places MW as "second-class" in Frost's canon.

[48] Oehlschlaeger, Fritz. "Fences Make Neighbors: Process, Identity, and Ego in Robert Frost's 'Mending Wall.'" *Arizona Quarterly* 40.3 (1984): 242-254.

Contrary to Poirier and Lentricchia's popular pro-speaker view, Oehlschlaeger sides with the neighbor. While the speaker is an embodiment of strong human ego, the neighbor understands the importance of natural facts and restraining human egotism. Oehlschlaeger suggests 'good fences' and 'making of fences' are inseparable attributing both a separating and mending function to the wall. The wall marks the boundary between the speaker and neighbor's land but simultaneously joins as a periodic opportunity for the mutual task of

fixing the wall every spring. The neighbor understands this duality whereas the speaker sees nature “only as a force opposed to man.” The wall acts as a barrier against the speaker’s human ego. The wall must be “periodically rebuilt,” explaining why the poem ends with the neighbor’s repetition of “good fences make good neighbors,” a phrase carrying the wisdom of New England’s history passed down from the neighbor’s father. In both Poirier and Lentricchia’s reading, the “father’s saying” is a symbol of the aged, degenerate past, whereas in this reading the “poem asserts a living, organic relationship between past and present” since it demonstrates the persisting validity of the father’s phrase.

[49] Oehlschlaeger, Fritz H. “The Consecration of Home: Robert Frost’s ‘The Death of the Hired Man.’” *Essays in Literature* 11.1 (1984): 105-112.

On the relationship between Silas and Harold Wilson. Argues Silas’s return is mainly due to his memory of barn work with Harold, his imaginary son, with whom he attempted to “vindicate his own life as a hired man by turning Harold into one,” thereby imitating the identity binding process of authentic family members. Also states the death of Silas saves Warren from isolation and returns him to his relationship with Mary, and the theme of “Home” and “Death” suggest close linkage between HB and DHM.

[50] Perrine, Laurence. “Frost’s ‘The Fear’: Unfinished Sentences, Unanswered Questions.” *College Literature* 15.3 (1984): 199-207.

Disagrees with Amy Lowell on the ending of TF. Lowell states the speaker meets with and is perhaps killed by her former husband. Perrine rebukes this interpretation by initially attempting to prove Lowell’s reading is true, fails, then uses the failure as undermining proof of Lowell’s misinterpretation. Major critical disputed on TF well organized.

[51] Wallace, Patricia. "Separateness and Solitude in Frost." *Kenyon Review* 6.1(1984): 1-12.

Brief readings of MW, WP, HB, DHM included. Discusses how the theme of "separateness" between self / other, individual / community, man / nature are depicted in Frost's poetry. According to Wallace, Frost is skeptic of "false connections" between self and community. He "crumples the easy sense of community" in the modern world but at the same time acknowledges reciprocity and the "power of original response" through the embracing of basic human solitude, i.e. the wall between self and other. A valuable insight into one of Frost's central themes.

1985

[52] Nolley, Kenneth S. "Mending Words: From the Poetry of Robert Frost to the Rhetoric of the Arms Race: A Response in Support of Patrick Henry" *Willamette Journal of the Liberal Arts* 3 (1985-1986): 7-24.

Argues the conflict and failure of language portrayed through the characters in MW, DHM and HB are relevant and beneficial to the present state of humanity as an armed, race.

[53] Wakefield, Richard. *Robert Frost and the Opposing Light of the Hour*. American University Studies Ser. 4. English Language and Literature 16. New York: Peter Lang, 1985.

An investigation of Frost from five themes: the early works, nature, poem-society relationship, speaker-lover relationship, and William James. Analysis of NB in chapter 1 with an extensive reading of MW and WP. Argues the "youth" figure in BW is succeeded into NB who continues his struggle against contraries e.g. isolation and communal world.

1986

[54] Moore, M. Shawn, "Robert Frost's 'The Pasture': Poem and Metapoem." *Virginia English Bulletin* 36.2 (1986): 49-51.

Reading of TP as metalanguage, or, metapoem. Applies Douglas R. Hofstadter's idea of the self-referential "strange loops" to TP, insisting "Frost's use of repetition is the key technique that makes his poem's self-referential."

[55] O'Brien, Timothy D. "Archetypal Encounter In 'Mending Wall.'" *American Notes and Queries* 24. 9-10 (1986): 147-151.

Applies Jung's theory of personal psychology to MW. The neighbor in the poem is the archetypal "shadow" figure of the speaker who's inability to recognize the neighbor / "shadow" as his own "fallibility" results in his ignorance.

1987

[56] Bugeja, Michael J. "Mind and Essence in the Personification of Robert Frost." *Texas Review* 8. 1-2 (1987): 98-106.

Analysis of Frost's poetic technique of personification. According to Bugeja, Frost uses two methods of personification. One relating to the state of mind, and the other, to essence.

Brief analysis of AAP where personification of the wood chuck occurs in the mind of the speaker, ending in disillusionment.

[57] Coulthard, A. R. "Frost's 'Mending Wall.'" *Explicator* 45.2 (1987): 40-42.

Argues the popular "positive readings" of MW are excessively amiable to both the narrator and author. Coulthard points to an element of dramatic irony in the poem exposing "Frost's cold mind posing as a warm heart" which Frost himself is unaware of.

[58] Monteiro, George. "Frost's Hired Hand." *College Literature* 14.2 (1987): 128-135.

A reading of DHM and TC. Relates DHM with an essay titled "The Hired Man" printed in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1894, finding affinities in the portrayal of hired farm hands.

Interprets TC as portraying the special rule ("code") of farm-bred hired man due to their pride in labor skills. The "code" can be violated by certain ways of talking by those who do not know the rule, in this case the town-bred farmer.

[59] Ragle, Thomas B. "A Reading of Robert Frost's The Mountain." Ed. Rudolf Haas.

Amerikanische Lyrik: Perspektiven und Interpretationen. Berlin: Schmidt, 1987. 208-222.

Ragle argues TM "is about man's relationship to Nature, to its otherness, to its elemental, ultimately mysterious forces which make it also and paradoxically the source of life and enlightenment" and particularly for Frost "an early study of the relationship of the pastoral-georgic poet to nature." Insists Frost is more than the "regional poet" of Amy Lowell as he confronts universal elemental facts, and holds both the European classicism of Eliot or Yeats and New England Puritanism. Frost is distinguished "from his English predecessor" by his "preoccupation with the dark side of nature" and his distinct use of symbols unlike those of the symbolists.

[60] Simons, John. "Mise en abyme and Tradition in Two New England Poems." *Journal of American Studies* 21.1 (1987): 104-108.

Simons depicts how the specialized notion of "mise en abyme" trope mentioned in Derrida's *Signéponge* as a "device of signing work with the poet's signature" works in MW. Argues the function of these tropes are "specifically determined by their implicit task of 'writing New England.'"

1988

[61] Abel, Darrel. "'Against and With' in Robert Frost's Poetry." *Colby Library Quarterly* 24.4 (1988): 205-211.

A reading of MW as an embodiment of Frost's prizing of "the principle of opposition *per se*" which arouses his "will and creative energy." According to Abel, these traits of Frost come from the ideas of William James and Henri Bergson. The point of the poem is not in opposing the "poetic imagination" of the speaker against the "stolid traditionalism" of the neighbor, but in depicting the contrast between the two, and people in general.

[62] Attebery, Louie W. "Fences, Folklore, and Robert Frost." *Northwest Folklore* 6.2 (1988): 53-57.

A reading of MW from the "folklife" perspective. Argues the fence mending in the poem reflects the tradition of New England farm life where neighbors must come together to fix stone fences therefore creating a ritual of cooperation. The fence in the poem is thus a symbol of mutual labor, a literal interpretation for the phrase "good neighbors make good fences."

[63] Benoit, Raymond. "An American Hierophany: The Wood-Pile in Hawthorne and Frost."

Arizona Quarterly 44.2 (1988): 22-27.

Benoit argues the wood pile found by Miles Coverdale in Hawthorne's *The Blithedale Romance* and the "poet-wanderer" in WP are equivalents as they both represent "a kind of Americanized Stonehenge" or a "Woodhenge" which "hosts dormant mythic interrelationships and interactions of opposites which are dear to the American imagination."

[64] Fleissner, Robert F. "Frost as Ironist: 'After Apple-Picking' and the Preautumnal Fall." *South Carolina Review* 21.1(1988): 50-57.

Considers the Old Testament Christianity and postlapsarian aspects in AAP. Ascribing the "weariness" of the protagonist to Adams suffering, Fleissner insists the subject of the poem is the "irony behind this curse" of Adam, who's penalty was labor i.e. being "doomed to live within, and at the mercy of the senses." Here, the protagonist's final goal is to "attain a cultivated oneness with nature." Also states, as a "more mundane" reading, the poem "represents a symbolic achievement, describing Frost's satisfaction and fatigue at having completed his lyric."

[65] Fleissner, Robert F. "New Line by Robert Frost: His 'Addendum' to 'Mending Wall.'" *English Language Notes* 25.3 (1988): 63-66.

A first printing and brief analysis of an untitled three line verse by Frost written on a postcard to Cyril Clemens (canceled on December 23, 1937) previously neglected by Frost

scholars. Fleissner argues the piece show distinct characteristics of Frost's verse such as his concerns with poetic meter, possibly qualifying as an addendum to MW.

[66] Holland, Norman N. *The Brain of Robert Frost*. New York: Routledge, 1988.

A study of Robert Frost in light of recent (as of 1988) achievements on cognitive and neuroscience, combined with Freud's psychoanalytic perspectives (reader-response plus psychoanalytic approach) Holland attempts to provide a "minimal mode of the brain's engaging literature" through Frost. His emphasis is on the structuring of a model and not on Frost or his work itself. Poems from NB discussed are DHM and MW. Extensive reading of MW included.

[67] Morrissey, L. J. "'Mending Wall' The Structure of Gossip." *English Language Notes* 25.3 (1988): 58-63.

Argues the readers of MW are taken in to exclusive "gossip" with the speaker and the writer. The exclusiveness of the relationship between speaker / writer and the reader acts as a "wall" between the other character in the poem, the neighbor. According to Morrissey, since the primary message of the poem is brotherhood confirmed through dialogue between the speaker and neighbor, the rhetorical "wall" between speaker/reader and neighbor is ironic.

[68] Thompson, Leslie M. "Robert Frost's 'Home Burial': The Ways of Death in American Society." *RE: Artes Liberales* 14.1 (1988): 1-9.

Argues HB reflects Frost's "keen awareness of shifting American attitudes toward death." The "framing device of the window" contrast the views of husband and wife on death and

grief. The husband represents the traditional views on death, burial, and grief while the wife in some ways embodies the newly developed custom of “ritualizing grief into well-defined social forms,” for example the shifting of funerals outside the home into “professional” hands, which parallels the industrialization and professionalism of the 19th to early 20th century. Finds sexual connotations in the husband's lines; the reference to graveyard as bedroom, “let into her grief,” and the “implicit sexuality of her husband’s digging the grave.”

1989

[69] Pritchard, H. William. Introduction. *Poems by Robert Frost: A Boy's Will and North of Boston*. By Robert Frost. New York: Signet-New American Library, 1989.

Publishing history of BW to NB, until Frost's return to America due to WW1. A brief reading of BW concerning his “Sound of Sense” as opposed to the “music of poetry” made by Swinburne and Tennyson. Finds archetype of NB in BW. Compared to BW, Frost emphasizes “speech” in NB.

[70] Van Egmund, Peter and Gou Xi-Quan. “Robert Frost.” *The Major American Poets: An Introduction*. Shanghai, PRC: Shanghai Foreign Languages Education Press, 1989.

Chinese book. Unavailable as of October 30, 2008.

1990

[71] Carroll, Rebecca. “A Reader-Response Reading of Robert Frost's ‘Home Burial.’” *Text and*

Performance Quarterly 10.2 (1990): 143-56.

A reader-response reading of HB focused on Amy. Attempts to further expand the reader-response theory in regards to gender identity in connection to recent studies in sociology. Aims to prove “the impact of identity on interpretation” seen in “previous Frost critics’ studies of other Frost’s husband / wife dialogue poems,” where the “women characters categorically suffer at the hands of male critics.”

[72] Katz, Sandra. “‘The World is Evil’: Personal Experience Dramatized in ‘Home Burial.’” *South Carolina Review* 23 (1990): 122-26.

Contrary to the readings of Frost’s poems by critics such as Seamus Heaney who base there analytical facts on the Lawrence Thompsons biography, Katz, taking HB as an example, argues the male and female characters are not always Elinor and Frost but at time switch or blend voices.

1991

[73] Zapf, Hubert. “Gaps in the Wall: Determinacy and Indeterminacy in Robert Frost’s ‘Mending Wall.’” *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik: A Quarterly of Language, Literature and Culture* 39. 3-4 (1991): 250-253.

Insists the “deautomatization of cultural conventions” occur as result of the readers interaction with MW. The poem depicts failure of communication between the speaker and the neighbor. The pragmatic speaker renders the wall unnecessary where as the neighbor, embodying the authority of cultural conventions, insist on its value. Zapf argues the reader

of this poem retains an objective view of the miscommunication scene, leaving the reader indeterminate and critical towards the determinacy of the closing statement.

1992

[74] Bentley, Louis. "You Think the Talk is All: Robert Frost's Poetic Conversational Power." *RFR* Fall 2 (1992): 52-53.

Compares HB and "West-Running Brook" as contrasting modes of Frost's husband-wife dialogue poems which epitomize Frost's belief in the importance of dialogue. According to Bentley, HB depicts the gap between the couple whereas "West-Running Brook" shows cohesion and recognition.

[75] Borroff, Marie. "Sound Symbolism as Drama in the Poetry of Robert Frost" *PMLA* 107.1 (1992): 131-44.

Borroff argues the introduction of recent findings in sound symbolism theories can help critics verify the function of sound symbolism in poems. Borroff establishes two different modes of "utterance" in Frost; the "chanting voice" and the "speaking voice," each with distinct features of sound which work to create the dramatic effects in the poetry of Frost. Poems of NB appear as secondary examples. An enlightening look into the unsolved structure of sounds in Frost's poetics.

[76] Doreski, William. "Meta-Meditation in Robert Frost's 'The Wood-Pile,' 'After Apple-Picking,' and 'Directive.'" *ARIEL* 23.4 (1992): 35-49.

Analysis of WP and AAP as alternatives modes of meditative language. According to Doreski, Frost attempts to renew conventional poetic language models through secular speech-oriented language in WP and AAP. The traditional modes of language meditation stemming from Dante's allegorical landscape and Wordsworth's romantic estranging of nature, with its religious faith and iconography, are exposed of their limits and over use, deconstructed, and then, turned towards alternative modes of poetic speech.

[77] Feaster, John. "Robert Frost's 'The Code': A Context and a Commentary." *Cresset* 55.7 (1992): 6-10.

On the theme of owner v.s. worker relationship in TC. Insists the poem portrays class struggle, illustrating how changes in owner / laborer relationships due to industrialization influenced Frost and his poetry.

1993

[78] Dawes, James R. "Masculinity and Transgression in Robert Frost." *American Literature* 65.2 (1993): 297-312.

Includes readings of MW, TC, and HC in relation to homosexuality and homophobia. Referring to theories of Sedgwick, Dawes argues MW contains "the paradox of certain homosocial relations, in which freedom to interact is contingent upon restriction." The wall is "satisfying" to the male speakers as it "provides an identifiable point of discontinuity in the relation of male homosocial and male heterosexual bonds" showing how "men can only interact when reassured by the constructed alienation of the wall. Making touch impossible, it reduces the threat of sexuality" and thus creating a "positive and clearly desired"

relationship. Consulting Sandra Bem's work on gender identification, Dawes insists the forces which "swell" and "spill" in the poem which attempt to break the wall, signifies the threat of homosexuality in the men, triggering a defensive homophobic response. On TC, Dawes refers to Coppelia Kahn and insists the "working ground" in the poem becomes "a figurative phallic competition for men" where "the male fear of being dominated by men," or "the fear of being feminized" is expressed. HC confronts the figurative and possibly literal fear of male rape. A thorough and enlightening analysis of the masculine dynamics in Frosts works.

[79] Norwood, Kyle. "The Work of Not Knowing: Robert Frost and the Abject." *Southwest Review* 78 (1993): 57-72.

Citing Julia Kristeva's notion of the "abject" and "tireless builders," Norwood argues Frost's poetry is an attempt to avoid facing death and chaos ("the work of not knowing") by building temporary "borders" and creating order through the use of metaphoric language in poems such as MW. The results are ambivalent since avoiding death / chaos leaves "horror" in the process. Also touches on HB and WP as examples of "dramatiz[ation] of symbolic order's confrontation with the abject." In HB the "work of not knowing confronts the agony of knowing." In WP the pile of wood is "a metonymic substitute for the corpse of the man who made it - and by extension for the corpse of all makers [of borders]."

[80] Olson, Ted. "Hearing the Natural Music: A Comparative Linguistic Analysis of Jeffers, Frost, Eliot, and Pound." *Robinson Jeffers Newsletter* 88 (1993): 18-26.

A linguistic analysis of DHM through vocabulary, phonology, orthography, dialect, syntax, stress, and morphology. Olson insists Frost's use of alliteration (e.g. "w") "lend the poem a

unity of design, a sense of cohesiveness from beginning to end.” In terms of syntax, Frost “stresses words as key points in his poem to suggest a character’s psychological condition” as seen in the wife’s reaction towards the return of Silas where the “awkward syntax of her speech and the uncertain stressing of her words reflect the conflict between her own wish to help the hired man and her husband’s persuasion to avoid that responsibility.” Arguments are clear and insightful.

[81] Schiffbauer, Judith P. “Three Poems by Robert Frost: A Jamesian Reading.” *Kentucky Philological Review* 8.5-6 (1993): 46-52.

A reading of BC, DHM and TF in light of William James’ influence on Frost. In BC, the minister searches for permanence and order but is denied by the movement of bees representing the element of flux as fundamental to the world. In DHM, the husband and wife suffer from their difference in perception of reality as a result of the individuality of experience. TF portrays a woman unable to choose one of the three Jamesian “me’s” or a favorable identity, leading her to madness.

1994

[82] Baker, Christopher. “Frost’s ‘After Apple-Picking’ as a Hypnagogic Vision.” *RFR* Fall 4 (1994): 28-32.

Touching on Frost’s knowledge of William James’ psychology, Baker argues the speaker in AAP is experiencing a hypnagogic state. The speaker is hesitating between two choices; cloy but exhaustive labor in reality, or the threatening state of dream. His only alternative

lies in the “long sleep” where lies the possibility of an even bigger threat. The sight through a pane of ice is a metaphor for “second sight” or clairvoyance.

[83] Ingebretsen, Edward. “Robert Frost's ‘The Pasture’ and Wendell Berry's ‘Stay Home’: Figures of Love and the Figure the Poem Makes.” *His ‘Incalculable’ Influence on Others: Essays on Robert Frost in Our Time*. Ed. Earl J. Wilcox. Victoria: U of Victoria P, 1994. 81-88.

Analysis of how Berry’s “Stay Home” echos the themes of Frost’s TP. Ingebretsen argues “love” is Frost’s major “symbolic topography” which is what Berry primarily succeeds. Also suggests Frost moved TP to its present introductory position in NB as a “peace offering” to Elinor, The pasture in the poem is a “figure” of “space” for intimacy between man and woman, and for the “inevitable erotic quality of words.”

[84] Summerlin, Charles Timothy. “The Romantic Absolute in Frost’s ‘Home Burial.’” *RFR* Fall 4 (1994): 53-57.

According to Summerlin, Amy is fundamentally romantic as she seeks transcendence from reality where no conventional ways exist in coping with grief. Summerlin also argues HB echos the Romantic crisis between Lotte and Werther in Goethe’s *Sorrow of Young Werther*.

[85] Vandenberg, Peter. “Prosody as Meaning in ‘To the Thawing Wind’ and ‘Home Burial.’” *RFR* Fall 4 (1994): 17-22.

Examines the relationship between poetic prosody and theme in HB. According to Vandenberg, Frost encases contrasting elements of iambic pentameter and the rhythm of natural speech in a poem, thus creating formal tension matching the thematic tension between husband and wife.

1995

[86] Cawthon, W. U. and Tom Fitzpatrick. "Frost's 'A Servant to Servants.'" *Explicator* 53.3 (1995): 163-66.

Contrary to popular readings of the "farm wife" as "servant," Cawthon and Fitzpatrick insist the "servant" is the bride of the father. The bride is used as a sex "servant" to stop the "shouts" of the sexually aroused mad uncle.

[87] Logan, William. "The Other Other Frost." *New Criterion* 13.10 (1995): 21-34.

Attempts to shed light on the significance of Frost beyond Randall Jarrell's "The Other Frost" and the popularized poems "anthologized into the thick crust of our memories." Includes brief readings of TC and HC.

1996

[88] Brodsky, Joseph. "On Grief and Reason." *Homage to Robert Frost*. Joseph Brodsky, Seamus Heaney, and Derek Walcott. New York: Farrar, 1996. 5-56.

Argues HB is a "dark pastoral" in the line of vigilian poets with additional influence from Wordsworth and Browning. According to Brodsky, HB portrays the tragedy of successful communication which "violates the interlocuter's mental imperative." Uses the metaphor of Pygmalion and Galatea to describe the husband and wife relationship in HB where the husband attempts to "explicate" the "grief" of his wife with "reason." Brodsky describes

Frost's "sentence sound" as an idea pointing to how the "sound, the tonality, of human locution is as semantic as actual words." Disagrees with Freudian readings.

[89] Jeffreys, Mark. "Irony without Condescension: Sterling A. Brown's Nod to Robert Frost."

Literary Influence and African-American Writers. Ed. Tracy Mishkin. New York: Garland, 1996. 211-29.

Discusses Frost's influence on the poetry of Sterling A. Brown. Frost discovered "self-conscious irony" in the "rural and the little educated" which Brown sought to "rediscover" in Negro dialect. Compares Frost's TC and Brown's "Uncle Joe," insisting they are both about a poorman protecting self-respect.

[90] Jost, Walter. "Lessons in the Conversations That We Are: 'Death of The Hired Man.'" *College*

English 58.4 (1996): 397 - 422.

A "rhetorical investigation" of DHM through the theories of Cavell and Wittgenstein.

Reflects upon the "inability of Frost critics" to "distinguish the different rhetorical modes of thinking and speaking" behind the dialogues of DHM. Jost asks; what can the "moral and philosophic value" of the "spiritual drift in the gossip, the rhetorical conversation" that Frost intended his poetry mean to the reader. According to Jost, like other poems in NB, HB "poses a distinctly *philosophic* problem, namely that regarding the grammatical and rhetorical foundations ("premises") involved in defining a world, a home, ourselves" and also intends "to redefine poetic speech at the turn of the century as an apt place to study ordinary speech." From this Jost concludes "the lesson Frost teaches us amounts to nothing by way of universal concepts or precise rules of language-use. We take away no diagrams, notes, answers, nothing other than the exemplarity of our own as well as Frost's practice of

listening and speaking. It is a matter of education in the broadest sense, of *Bildung*.” Jost insists the talk in Frost’s NB, specifically in DHM, is an representative anecdote of Frost’s works as a whole, arguing that Frost’s poems pose act as “rhetorical guides to our losing ourselves amidst the overlooked places and turnings, the topics and tropes” which he calls “Frost’s rhetorical home” or in another words “our own human everyday talk and gossip.” In order to explain the problem of conversational rhetoric, Jost compares Cicero’s ideal of “educational discussion (*sermo*)” and Frost’s “gossip” style conversation. Jost concludes by insisting on our need to undergo a different discipline, practice a new rhetoric” that will have the reader “actively engage” in the “‘debate’ between Warren and Mary in order to cultivate our own thinking and speaking appropriately.”

[91] LeVay, John. “Frost’s ‘The Black Cottage.’” *Explicator* 54.2 (1996): 91-92.

On the allegorical possibilities of meaning in BC. Insists the cottage is similar to the “ebony box” where the Victorian Americans kept “daguerrotypes,” and also Edmund Walkers “soul’s dark cottage.”

[92] Parfitt, Matthew. “Robert Frost’s ‘Modern Georgics.’” *RFR* Fall 6 (1996): 54 - 70.

Focuses on NB’s relationship with Virgil’s *Georgics*. Parfitt argues Frost belongs more to the *Georgics* tradition rather than the Pastoral. The pastoral theme celebrates an artificial Arcadia in contrast to the city whereas the georgic celebrates labor and earth. According to Parfitt, the georgic elements match Frost’s poetic theme of creating momentary “stays” against nature induced confusion, and the “husbanding” of natural resources against wilderness. Brief analysis of TP, GH, MW and WP. Longer reading of AAP also included.

[93] Sanders, David A. "Looking through the Glass: Frost's 'After Apple-Picking' and Paul's *I Corinthians*." *RFR* Fall 6 (1996): 13-22.

On the biblical allusions to Paul of *I Corinthians* in AAP, for example, the "pane of glass" in AAP as an echo of the glass mentioned by Paul in *I Corinthians* 13, or the "hoary grass" with its multiple biblical sources. Sanders emphasizes the differences between AAP and *I Corinthians*, insisting AAP embraces the imperfect and mortal world whereas Paul separates the mortal and eternal world, finding comfort in the words and presence of god.

1997

[94] Heath, W. G. "The Scholar and the Poet in Robert Frost's 'The Mountain.'" *Gombak Review* 2.2 (1997): 97-107.

According to Heath, TM speaks of the difference between scholar and poet. Using Emerson's method of dividing knowledge into "Understanding" and "Reason", Heath reads the poem as a "kind of parable on poetry as a way of knowing" where the stranger is "Frost's scholar" who pursues knowledge by "conscientious thoroughness" and the farmer "Frost's poet, perhaps even Frost himself" who obtains knowledge "cavalierly...in and out of books" but does not wish to be "tied down to answers, to literal truth."

[95] Kozikowski, Stan. "Frost's 'After Apple Picking' and God's Judgement." *RFR* Fall 7 (1997): 39-43.

Reflecting upon Frost's interest in eschatology, Kozikowski interprets AAP as a "troubled divine vision." He argues the apples represent the saving and falling of men, perceived by god through the narrator as his inevitable future work of Final Judgement. The picking and

selecting of the “fruit” made by man becomes a metaphor of God’s “final labor” of passing judgement upon the “human race,” the “fruit” god himself created. Also states the poem echos Jacob’s dream at Bethel in Genesis 28.

[96] Trachtenberg, Zev. “Good Neighbors Make Good Fences: Frost’s ‘Mending Wall.’” *Philosophy and Literature* 21.1 (1997): 114-22.

A reading of MW as a positive vision of the role “property” can play in sustaining community. The neighbor sees the fence as a marker of domain, whereas the speaker sees the cooperative process of mending as its primary significance. According to Trachtenberg, the poem’s richness lies in this ambivalence, portraying difficult yet hopeful prospect of the role property can play in uniting community.

1998

[97] Griffin, Shaun T. “We Refuse to Let Frost His Fence but Have We Not a Poetry to Keep?” *Clackamas Literary Review*, 2.1 (1998): 35-38.

Taking Frost as an example, Griffin argues for the significance of poetry and the neglect it receives today. Touches briefly on MW, saying the “wall is the thing he cared for, but in so doing his neighbor was cared for as well. ”

1999

[98] Haas, Robert Bernard. “Robert Frost and the Ministry of Fear: The Poetic Response to Science.” Diss. Pennsylvania State U, 1999.

Argues Frost rejected the notion of “place for poetry and religion in a culture that considered science it’s most reliable source of truth” by the nineteenth century poets and “searched for a more credible way to challenge scientific authority so he can both reassert poetry’s cultural value and justify his own religious belief.” Haas sees the conflict between science and religion as central to Frost’s drawing on the thoughts of William James, Henri Berguson, Heisenberg, Eddington and Bohr by which he succeeds in “formulating the most convincing defense of poetry since Sydney.” [DAI 60.7 (2000): 2492-93]

[99] Paton, Priscilla. “Robert Frost and the American Landscape.” *Iowa Review* 29.2 (1999): 83-96.

By comparing the characteristics of “romantic tradition” poets such as Wordsworth to Frost, Paton describes how Frost blurs the boundary between poetic visionary and ordinary man. Connects the social shift from rural to urban centered life in America with Frost’s use of New England landscape and life.

[100] Stambuk, Andrew. “Learning to Hover: Robert Frost, Robert Francis, and the Poetry of Detached Engagement.” *Twentieth Century Literature* 45.4 (1999): 534-52.

On the influence of Frost on Robert Francis. A brief reading of BB included, stating the fruits are metaphors for perseverance and hardiness which are akin to the transcendentalist’s use of natural forms as metaphors, especially Emerson and Thoreau.

[101] Barron, Jonathan N. "A Tale of Two Cottages: Frost and Wordsworth." *Roads Not Taken:*

Rereading Robert Frost. Ed. Earl J. Wilcox and Jonathan N. Barron. Columbia: U of Missouri P, 2000.

An intertextual reading of Frost, comparing BC with Wordsworth's "The Ruined Cottage." According to Barron, Frost emphasizes the skeptical and social aspect of "The Ruined Cottage" by using the poem (and Wordsworth) as a guide to criticize nature idealism and the political / theological associations with patriotism and nationalism during the pre-war period in the 1910's. Also emphasizes the conversational aspect of BC and how "The Ruined Cottage" influenced BC as it's source.

[102] Bethea, David M. "Brodsky, Frost, and the Pygmalion Myth." *Russian, Croatian and Serbian, Czech and Slovak, Polish Literature* 47.3-4 (2000): 289-305.

Considers HB through Brodsky's essays and the relationship between Pygmalion Myth and Brodsky's "Galatea Encore." Insists Brodsky does not admit any biographical relevance between Frost's marriage and HB.

[103] Charney, Maurice. "Robert Frost's Conversational Style." *Connotations* 10.2-3 (2000 - 2001): 147-159.

On predominant modes of "conversationality" in Frost's poem's. Includes analysis of DHM. Argues the poem has "definite syntactical indications," e.g. broken dashes, giving HB it's conversational effect. The exchange between Warren and Mary "illustrates Frost's conversational style at its best" as it imitates the "banalities of actual speech" and also "develops a dramatic context of growing fatality that anticipates the end of the poem."

[104] Jost, Walter. "Rhetorical Investigation of Robert Frost." *Roads Not Taken: Rereading Robert Frost*. Ed. Earl J. Wilcox and Jonathan N. Barron. Columbia: U of Missouri P, 2000.

A prelude to the study of Frost from a rhetorical perspective. Includes brief analysis of DHM. According to Jost, DHM is "at once rhetorical and philosophical" as it reflects upon the nature of "ordinary language" and simultaneously the ideas of "Ordinary" and "Obvious," aiming to free philosophy from the locks of abstraction and expertise.

[105] McNery, Stephen. "'Little Forms': Four Poems and a Developing Theme of Robert Frost." *Critical Review* 40 (2000): 59-74.

A reading of four poems by Frost, including WP and HB. On WP, McNery argues the pile of wood in the poem symbolizes a form of temporary man oriented "order" in the world of chaos i.e. nature. The poem is also about the act of writing, the poem being a form of "order" which provides "a momentary stay against confusion." Here, HB is discussed in the context of order and chaos, the wife symbolizing nature and the husband Frost himself. Here, the husband's understanding of his wife equals Frost's understanding of the universe in general. The husband believes in achieving complete "autonomy" through words, or "talk" (alluding to the poets act of writing) in the midst of chaos, where as the wife embodies chaotic nature itself. McNery argues Frost's poetry is essentially an attempt to bring meaning to chaos through "poetic form," but also acknowledges the temporary nature of this attempt, since "form," like the woodpile or the birch fence, is susceptible to corrosion by nature.

[106] Saltzman, Arthur M. "Futility and Robert Frost." *Midwest Quarterly* 41.3 (2000): 289-301.

Taking WP and MW as examples, Saltzman argues Frost opposes William Bennett's "homiletic imperatives" since he considers poetic meaning "futile" and does not believe in embodiment of moral values in poems.

2001

[107] Calder, Alex. "Robert Frost: *North of Boston*" *A Companion to Twentieth-Century Poetry*. Ed. Neil Roberts. Oxford: Blackwell, 2001: 369-80.

Comprehensive overview of NB. Calder argues the "North" of Boston is synonymous to the "Western," placing Frost as the landscaper of the supposed "northern frontier." The contradictory elements of the poems in NB (especially MW) portray the contradictory act of making and out reaching of "boundaries", which is the driving force of manifest destiny. Poems analyzed in detail are BC, HB, DHM, TF, SS, and WP. Prior studies on each piece are skillfully invoked.

[108] Gerber, Philip. "The (Non)exportable Robert Frost." *RFR* 11 (2001): 9-29.

An account of Frost's reception apart from the United States (mainly India) based on Gerber's academic trips abroad. Describes how the understanding of Frost's poems, with its New England setting and themes, rely heavily on American culture and thus appears alien to foreign readers.

[109] Muldoon, Paul. "The End of the Poem: 'The Mountain' by Robert Frost." *American Poetry Review* 30.1 (2001): 41-46.

Analysis of intertextuality in Frost's poetry. Builds on Marianne Moores analysis of Frost's method of interrelating two poems through common characteristics, in this case the similarity of the "ox" in TM and "Time Out," describing how they complement one another. Suggests the idea of something "missing" is also a theme.

2002

None

2003

[110] Hecht, Anthony. "On Robert Frost's 'The Wood-Pile.'" *Melodies Unheard: Essays on the Mysteries of Poetry*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2003. 154-158.

A reading of WP as meta-poem. Hecht argues; judging from the sparse appraisal for *A Boy's Will*, the abandoned "pile of wood" in WP symbolizes Frost's anxiety towards the reception of poems in NB, which may not be understood during his lifetime but hopefully rediscovered (like the "pile" in the poem) after his death. Thus, the creator (Frost) of the wood pile (poems) should be interpreted as dead. The tedious and precise acts of physical labor in WP and other Frost poems such as AAP are all metaphors of writing poetry.

[111] Jost, Walter. "Ordinary Language Brought to Grief: 'Home Burial'." *Ordinary Language Criticism: Literary Thinking After Cavell After Wittgenstein*. Ed. Kenneth Dauber and Walter Jost. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 2003. 77-114.

Through Wittgenstein's idea that human emotion cannot be guaranteed by the phenomenon associated with it (crying, laughing, etc), and are only tangible through communal, social criteria, Jost describes how Amy opposes this conventional form of grieving and imposes on to others her own stricter criteria. But her criteria is impossible to meet as it requires of others to "feel" another's pain, and occludes the actual variation in form grief takes per person. Moreover, Amy's skepticism leads doubting the existence of "another's humanity" and thus her own. The husband attempts to configure this criteria as something more flexible, adjustable to individual. Criticizes past critics for the preconditioning of, and the theoretically impossible attempt to describe Amy's "grief."

[112] Sanders, David. "Frost's *North of Boston*, Its Language, Its People, and Its Poet." *Journal of Modern Literature* 27.1/2 (2003): 70-8.

Discusses how the culture and lives of people in New England, especially Derry, New Hampshire influenced Frost and NB both linguistically and morally. According to Sanders, Frost desired to remain within the "ordinary people" but looked to fame as a means to have his poetry read widely.

[113] Tebbets, Terrell L. "Transgression and Heterodoxy in 'Mending Wall.'" *Philological Review* 29.1 (2003): 59-71.

According to Tebbets, the speaker embraces postmodern ideas of "transgression" and "heterodoxy" as he "wants to live in diverse worlds peopled by diverse, even opposite, individuals." The seemingly ambivalent, and thus postmodern stance taken towards the wall in the poem shifts towards acceptance of boundaries, confirming to both modern and postmodern sensibilities. The "modernist neighbor" grants the wall value for its separative

function, whereas the speaker places value in its “unifying” function, meaning its need for maintenance which consequently “brings different people together.” The speaker “loves” his neighbor, wishing him to stay “different” from the speaker but keep in communication. Thus the speaker is in need of the wall in two ways. One, to maintain the difference of existence which allows for individuality. Two, the necessity of maintenance through cooperation which provides for their union.

2004

[114] Jost, Walter “Lessons in the Conversation That We Are: Robert Frost’s ‘Death of the Hired Man.’ (Invention)” *Rhetorical Investigations: Studies in Ordinary Language Criticism*. Ed. Walter Jost. Charlottesville : U of Virginia P, 2004. 159-182.

Reprint of 1996, [2] with partial revision.

[115] Jost, Walter “Ordinary Language Brought to Grief: ‘Home Burial’ (Dialogue in Disorder and Doubt.)” *Rhetorical Investigations: Studies in Ordinary Language Criticism*. Ed. Walter Jost. Charlottesville: U of Virginia P, 2004. 159-182.

Reprint of 2003, [2] with partial revision.

[116] MacArthur, Marit J. “Digging Up the Cellar Hole: Old Home Week and ‘The Generations of Men.’” *RFR* 14 (2004): 98-102.

According to MacArthur, GM mocks a governor commenced promotional project in 1899 called “Old Home Week” asking former inhabitants of New Hampshire to “come home” for this newly-established holiday. The aim was to stop the abandonment of farms by

persuading summer vacationers to buy them. The project failed and became a joke (the only thing increased was “poetry-writing”) which Frost refers to in the poem.

[117] Matterson, Stephen. “‘To Make It Mean Me’: Narrative Design in *North of Boston*.”

Rebound: The American Poetry Book. Ed. Michael Hinds and Stephen Matterson. New York: Rodopi, 2004. 45-55.

Contrary to critical trend, Matterson focuses on the comprehensive design of NB rather than the individual poems. Using the analogy of “short-story cycle,” Matterson depicts a “thematic movement in NB, in which there is a descent to solipsism and silence and then a gradual return to community and life-affirming possibility.” By assessing the poems as “integrated,” we are able to see “pair poems” in the book which, when paired off, shed light to meaning otherwise hidden. Brings new and persuasive perspective to the interpretation of NB.

[118] Phelan, James. “Rhetorical Literary Ethics and Lyric Narratives: Robert Frost’s ‘Home Burial.’” *Poetics Today* 25.4 (2004): 627-51.

A reading of HB in the context of “rhetorical literary ethics,” James attempts to “develop further a rhetorical approach to ethics” similar to Booth’s and Nussbaum’s ethical criticism, but seeks to further strengthen the tie between ethics and poetic technique / form, and “be more open to the range of ethical experiences” that literary texts can offer. According to James, the most essential choice Frost makes in this poem is that he does not judge the responses by both husband and wife as either good, bad, or greater in value. This choice is relevant because it shows that “although they do mistreat and misjudge each other, those moments are a result not of their fundamental ethical deficiencies but of the sharp

differences in their responses.” Frost’s “ethical challenge to us” is, then, “to see whether - and perhaps how long - we can stay inside that complexity.”

2005

[119] Davis, Matthew. “The Laconic Response: Spartan and Athenian Mindsets in Robert Frost's ‘Mending Wall.’” *Literary Imagination* 7.3 (2005): 289-305.

Knowing Frost was well taught in classics, Davis argues the neighbor in MW embodies Spartan ideals and the speaker Athenian ideals. The familiar line of MW, “Good fences make good neighbors,” embody Spartan (Laconic) modes of thought: brevity, reliance on ancestral wisdom, and finality stemming from deliberate pride in maintaining a pre-philosophical state of mind. On the other hand, the speaker's act of questioning resembles Socrates in his Platonic dialogues. According to Davis, Frost is closer to the Athenian, philosophic speaker.

2006

[120] Freeman, Margaret H. “The Fall of the Wall between Literary Studies and Linguistics: Cognitive Poetics.” Ed. and introd. Kristiansen, Gitte, et al. *Cognitive Linguistics* Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2006: 403-28.

A cognitive reading of MW. Freeman argues the poem speaks of “the value of opening up the imagination.” The poem is a physical and imaginative story concerned with the human mind, mapping the boundaries found in the reader's own experience on to the narrative.

2007

None

2008

[121] Phillips, Siobhan. "The Daily Living of Robert Frost." *PMLA* 123. 3 (2008): 598-613.

Discusses the "quotidian repetition," or, the "recursive progress" of "ordinary living" as the central theme in Frost's poetics. Brief analysis of HB in comparison to "In the Home Stretch." According to Philips, Amy's grief is "static and perpetual" while the Husband believes grief can be finished and left behind, and both cannot find the alternative that "grief and living could intermingle" in the Freudian concept of mourning as diurnal. Also describes how the recurring periods and mute dashes at the end of lines illustrates the couple's "failure of conversation" synonymous to their "failure of progress."

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