



## A Semiotic Analysis on Robert Frost's Poem Love and a Question Based on Charles Sander Peirce's Triangle Theory

Anita Candra Dewi<sup>1\*</sup>, Andi Asrifan<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Negeri Makassar, <sup>2</sup>Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidenreng Rappang  
**Corresponding Author:** Anita Candra Dewi anitacandradewi@unm.ac.id

---

### ARTICLE INFO

**Keywords:** Poetry, Semiotics, Robert Frost's Poem, Charles Sander Peirce's Triangle Theory

*Received : 03, October*

*Revised : 17, October*

*Accepted: 22, November*

©2023 Dewi, Asrifan: This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Atribusi 4.0 Internasional](#).



### ABSTRACT

This research aims to identify Robert Frost's symbols in "Love and a Question" and disclose their meanings using Peirce's triangle theory. This study uses descriptive and qualitative methods to examine Robert Frost's Love and a Question's symbols. Interpreting poem symbols is the focus of this research. This library research uses books and scientific materials to ensure objectivity. Finally, using semiotics and Peirce's triangle, the researcher explains Robert Frost's poem Love and a Question's symbols. The poem Love and a Question's symbolic words' significance through Peirce's triangle theory. The symbolic terms were: green-white stick signified lengthy journey, stranger symbolized uncertainty, rich a curse symbolized precious, and sky symbolized unpredictable future. The poem's represented words all have a life-related significance. The actual meaning of life is building a household as a newlywed couple. Also included is a purpose of life that is no longer defined by wealth because greediness can lead to suffering.

---

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of Study

Humans express themselves through literature. Literature describes human thoughts, feelings, ideas, excitement, and conviction in real words. Hudson (1958) states in an Introduction to Literature that literature expresses life through language. Its real-life content makes it essential. Fiction can be inventive or non-imaginative. The more practical non-imaginative kind employs denotative sentences to communicate its idea, while the imaginative type uses connotative sentences. Essay, critique, biography, autobiography, history, memoir, diary, and letters are non-imaginative. However, imaginative writing includes short stories, novels, poetry, and drama. The scholars will examine poetry in this study.

Poetry comes from the Greek word *poesis*, which means to build, form, make, and create. While poets are those who build things with their mind, look like gods, or love gods. Holy individuals like philosophers, statesmen, teachers, and people who can guess the hidden truth have acute eyes. Poetic works express the poet's thoughts and feelings. Poets write poetry. Poets often maximize language. They raise awareness and evoke emotions through language. Poetry is literary works with various meanings. Sudjiman (1984) in Kamus Istilah Sastra defined poetry as literary works with rhythm, rhyme, lines, and stanza. The most important thing is that poetry is inventive, chosen writing. Poetry differs from everyday language with inventive words.

Poetry often uses connotative meaning and symbolic terms. This makes poetry hard to understand. To understand poetry, one must look beyond the elements to find the symbolism of literature. Poetry often uses methods to convey ideas and generate emotions or physical responses. The gadget is symbolic.

The usage of symbol in poetry allows for various meanings. According to poet Richard Abcarian, symbols in poetry frequently represent something more precise. Poetic symbols are objects or events that suggest more. It is one of the poet's most potent and common tools for conveying a wide range of meanings efficiently and simply. Gold may symbolize wealth or prosperity. Roses can symbolize love or beauty. Light can represent hope, knowledge, or life. Other familiar symbols can indicate different or opposite ideas. Fire and water can represent opposites. Water signifies life—rain, fertility, nourishment, and life. Hurricanes, floods, and tempests can kill. Fire may purify as well as destroy.

Robert Frost was born in San Francisco on March 26, 1874. Isabelle Moodie and William Prescott Frost Jr. are his parents. He read and wrote poetry at high school in Lawrence at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire, in 1892, and subsequently at Harvard University in Boston, but he never graduated. His reputation was established in 1913 with *A Boy's Will* and *North of Boston*, two full-length collections. The most famous American poet in 1920, he published *New Hampshire*, *A Further Range*, *Steeple Bush*, and *In the Clearing*.

One of his renowned poems is "Love and a Question". His poetry collection *A Boys Will* includes this. A homeless guy begged for shelter at the

bridal's house in this poetry. The bridegroom was unsure if he would let him stay because it was his newlywed's night with his wife. Since the author allowed multiple interpretations, this poem had symbolic connotations.

Poems with signified meanings and multiple interpretations demand investigation. Analyses differ by approach. Semiotics is a good way to study poems with various symbolisms. Semiotics comes from the Greek word for sign, *semeion*. According to Sobur (2003), Peirce defined sign as "something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity." It addresses someone and develops an equivalent or more developed sign in their head. Semiotics concerns everything that might be considered as 'signs', according to Eco (1976: 7). Daniel Chandler wrote in *Semiotics for Beginners* that "Semiotics involves not only 'signs' in everyday speech, but anything that 'stands for something else'." Based on the definitions, semiotics is anything that can be a sign and represent something else.

The researchers use Charles Sanders Peirce's triangle model of sign in this study. Peirce employs semiotics to disclose symbolical word meanings. Peirce developed a triadic (three-part) model of the sign, 'semiotic', and sign taxonomies. The representation is the sign's form, the interpretant is the sign's meaning, and the object is the sign's reference.

The scholars chose this title because they want to understand Robert Frost's poem "Love and a Question" in its entirety. This investigation can reveal symbolic interpretations in the poetry. A symbol is anything visible that has a deeper meaning. Thus, the academics hope to reveal what the poet wanted to say to readers. This is another famous Robert Frost poem. Frost intended to impart moral principles in "Love and a Question" to his readers. Following poem analysis and explanation. The poem "Love and a Question" helps readers comprehend love, relationships, attitudes, and actions.

According to the definition above, literary works, especially poetry, are sign systems since they employ language to communicate. Semiotics cannot exist without signs or codes, which all contribute to literary meanings. In "A Semiotics Analysis on Robert Frost's poem Love and a Question based on Charles Sander Peirce's Triangle theory," the researchers examined the poem's symbolic words. This study has the following issues: 1)What symbols does Robert Frost utilize in his poem "Love and a Question"? 2) How does Peirce's triangle theory explain those symbols?.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Previous Findings

In this research, the researcher takes three previous studies. The first is Andri Hermawn, a student from State of Islamic University Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta in 2010 with his thesis entitled "A Semiotic Analysis on Kim Addonizio's Poems Based on C.S. Peirce Theory". His thesis used semiotics of Charles Sander Peirce. It is the same with the researchers that he also uses the poems as his object of the research but the difference is he uses the different poem the poem of Kim Addonizio's poem as her object. The result of his thesis is he found The result of his thesis is he found the symbols that are used in the

poems of which he analyzed using the semiotic approach of C.S. Peirce. He also found the meanings of those symbols from each of the poem which he analyzed. Using the semiotic theory of Peirce, he found the used symbols as well as the meanings of those symbols. The meaning of the used symbols he found were as follows; in Verities the use of symbols is described as sad perspective of the world, the use symbols in First Poem For You is described as to compare between the tattoos and poetry to love in a relationship and the use of symbol in What Do Women Want is described as the power of her sexuality, freedom and equality. The second previous study is written by Fitriana Pertiwi, a student of State Islamic University "Syarif Hidayatullah" Jakarta in 2010 with her thesis untitled "A Semiotic Analysis in Literary Work based on Valentine Poems by Carol Ann Duffy". It is similar to the researchers of this conducted research that she also uses semiotic approach of C.S. Peirce. She also uses poems as the object of her research. But different with the researcher, she uses Carol Ann Duffy's poems. In her research, she found that the poem which she analyzed contain different symbols with different meaning and function in which all of these differences contributed to the revealed meanings of the poems. The other thesis entitled "Syi'ir Tanpa Waton (Kajian Semiotik)" in 2013 which is conducted by Nikken Derek Saputri, she is student of State University of Semarang. She also uses semiotic approach of C.S. Peirce. She also uses poems as the object of her research but different with the researchers, she uses Javanese poem from Guz Nizam in 2007. By reading three previous researches above, the researchers decided to conduct research on "Semiotic Analysis on Robert Frost's Poem Love And A Question Based On Charles Sander Peirce's Triangle Theory". The researchers wants to analyze the meaning of symbolic words in the poem. This thesis uses semiotic approach of Charles Sander Peirce and the theory of Peirce's triangle.

## Some Pertinent Ideas

### *Definition of Poetry*

Poetry is a literary genre. Poetry is different from short stories, novels, and drama. Complexity and density of linguistic use differ. Poetry uses more sophisticated terms than other works. It employs odd language instead of everyday. In Siswantoro (2010: 23), Perrine calls poetry the most condensed form of literature. Poetry has inner and extrinsic aspects. Intrinsic elements include theme, character, place, rhythm. Extrinsic components include socioeconomic, political, cultural, and historical contexts where and when poetry was written. This study will describe a symbol-based intrinsic element.

Symbolic words compose poetry. Rhythmic word arrangements constitute a poem. Flowers may represent women, love, or other connotations. In poetry, poets communicate their thoughts and feelings with represented words. Based on that notion, this research will attempt to interpret represented words in Robert Frost's poem "Love and a Question".

### ***Definition of Semiotic***

Semiotics comes from Greek *semeion*, meaning symbol. It was initially employed in the 19th century by Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, who advanced semiotics. Semiology is semiotics. It examines signs and symbols and their meaning. Sign system research examines how words and other signs convey meaning. Umberto Eco defines semiotics as 'semiotics is concerned with everything that might be perceived as a sign' (eco 1976, 7). Semiotics studies how words and symbols produce meaning.

Semiotics studies anything that 'stands for' something else, not just 'signs' in everyday speech. According to Sobur (2003), Peirce defined sign as "is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity". Semiotics includes words, images, sounds, gestures, and objects as signs.

Semiotics is generally classified into two types. Semiotic communication and meaning are both involved. First is semiotic communication, which discusses sign creation and communication aspects. Second is semiotic signification, which examines literary symbols' meanings. The significance of represented words in Robert Frost's poem "Love and a Question" will be studied.

### ***Definition of Symbol***

A symbol represents something else. Symbols can be words, images, or anything else that represents other ideas. Peirce defined symbol as "a sign which refers to the object that it denotes by virtue of law, usually an association of general ideas, which operates to cause the symbol to be interpreted as referring to that object". From this formulation, we can assume symbol interpretation follows context rules.

Some symbols exist. A symbol might be private, exclusive to one person, original, defined by its setting in a work, or traditional, defined by culture and legacy. Other symbols are public and contextual. Public symbols have many meanings and connotations and are ready-made symbols. Contextual symbols are related to their context.

### **Robert Frost's Poem**

Joseph Hillis Mills (1965) wrote in Poets of Reality: Six Twentieth-century Researchers that poetry "has primarily to do with the expression of feeling and emotion". Readers can sense the poet's emotions through poetry. Poetry's topics come from the poet's feelings. The poet can write about love, nature, death, or religion. Poetry is challenging since it's impacted by the poet's feelings and has a convoluted form.

American poet Robert Frost was admired for his pastoral New England scenes. This American poet led the modern American nature and rural life poets. His love of nature and rural life inspired him to create poems about them. Instead than writing about nature, he wants to explain deep human psychology through nature.

Frost writes poems by first watching nature and then connecting it to human psychology. Frost encourages readers to make clear connections between nature and psychology in his poems. Frost's country life and environment do not describe animals in the backdrop. Frost's major goal in poetry is to analogize nature and find a human psychological match.

Robert Frost's 1923 collection "New Hampshire" includes poetry like "Fire and Ice" and "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening." Frost uses form and line structure to explain the world's doom argument in nine lines and then undermine it with a sardonic quip in "Fire and Ice". His poem "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," another of his most renowned, mixes autobiography with discussion of desire and duty in a classic New England setting.

### Charles Sander Peirce's Triangle Theory

American philosopher, physicist, and logician Charles Sander Peirce's theory of sign is used in the research. Cambridge, US, birthed him in 1839. He was famous for his work on relations logic, but his sign theory made him popular. Peirce's semiotic theory held that a sign "stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity." It addresses someone and develops an equivalent or more developed sign in their head. His definition of a 'sign' was something that replaced someone.

This study would use Peirce's Triangle Theory more specifically. In Semiotic: The Basic, Chandler explained Peirce's triangle model in semiotic. Peirce proposed a semiotic triangle model: 1) Representation (R): the sign's form (not necessarily material, though commonly regarded as such); 2) Interpretant (I): the sign's meaning; and 3) Object (O): the sign's referent.

The triangle theory of Peirce can be explained as follows: 1) The representamen represents something else, 2) The object is what the sign/representation stands for and represents, and 3) The interpretant is something whose meaning the sign allows for, which may result in a new sign. Furthermore, this Peirce's Triangle Theory can be visualized as follows;

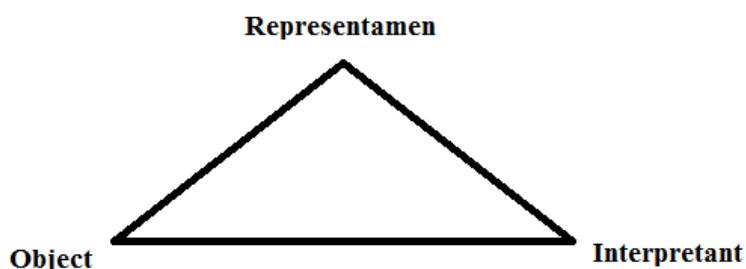


Figure 1.The Process of Linguistic Sign

This is the following example of Peirce's semiotics triangle applied theory the traffic light sign for "stop":

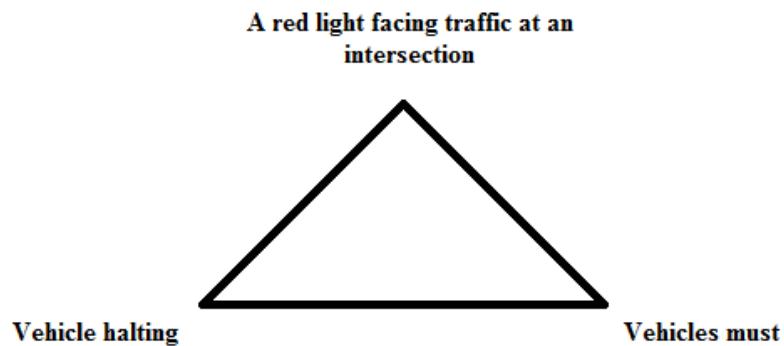


Figure 2. Traffic Light Sign

The example is explained as follows: 1) The representament (R) is a red light at an intersection; 2) The object (O) is a vehicle stopping; and 3) The interpretant (I) is the understanding that red lights mean cars must stop. Signs are divisible by three trichotomies: first, whether the sign in itself is a mere quality, an actual existent, or a general law; second, whether its relation to its object consists in its character, existential relationship to that object, or relation to an interpretant; and third, whether its interpretant represents it as a sign of possibility, fact, or reason.

The first division classifies signs as Qualisigns, Sinsigns, or Legisigns. 1) Qualisign is a sign quality. 2) A sinsign is a real thing or event that is a sign. Only qualities can make it so, hence it need a qualisign or several. 3) Legisigns are laws that sign. The second trichotomy classifies signs as Icons, Indexes, or Symbols. 1) An icon is a sign that represents a thing just by its own characters and owns it whether or not that object exists. Example: cartoon, portrait, etc. 2) An Index sign refers to the thing it signifies by being touched by it. This category includes natural events like smoke and fire, dark clouds and imminent rain, human footprints, and human presence, as well as purposefully controlled meaning. 3) A symbol refers to the object it signifies by virtue of a law, usually an association of general ideas, that interprets the symbol as referring to that object.

The third trichotomy classifies signs as Rhemes, Dicisigns, or Arguments. 1) A rheme represents a qualitative possibility for its interpretant. Or, a rheme is a sign that just represents its object in character. 2) A decent indicator indicates existence to its interpretant. Or a sign that represents its object's existence. 3) An argument is a lawful sign for its interpreter. Or, is a sign that represents its item as a sign. We also discuss Peirce's Triangle and three types of signs: icon, index, and symbol. Peirce identified three types of indicators (239-240).

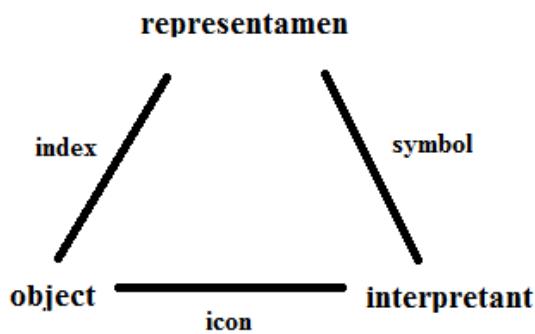


Figure 3. Three Types of Indicators

First is the icon, which closely resembles the object enough to be recognized as the “real thing”. This applies to sketching, pictures, and videos. The triangle's object-meaning relationship is more crucial than the referent. Index signs are second. Here, the referent is the object's consequence, and meaning is unimportant. Smoke indicates a fire regardless of who is there to perceive it. Rain on your window falls under this group also. Whether you wake up or not, the rain is still pouring and sending a signal across your room: the tapping sound on your window. The third is symbol. The referent and its meaning (representation) are what matter for symbols like words, corporation logos, national flags, and unpleasant hand signals when you steal someone's parking place. The representation and meaning matter, but the object connection is social. Consider what would happen if national flags were bouncing balls instead of flags. If you could convince people that a certain color of bouncy ball represents their nation, national holidays could involve masses of people bouncing rubber balls. It makes sense like waving a flag.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

In this research, the researchers observes the meaning of the used symbols in Robert Frost's Love and a Question by using descriptive and qualitative research. According to Burns and Grove define descriptive research as a research that is designed to describe and provide a picture of a situation as what it is.

By using this kind of research, the researchers would like to describe the used symbols in the poem Love and a Question by Robert Frost. This descriptive technique is also intended to make the readers get better understanding through the clearer description of the meanings of the symbolized words used in this poem. This research focuses on the interpretation of symbols that are used in the poem. And for this research as library research, it uses books and the other scientific writings to support the objectivity of this research. Finally, to describe the meanings of the used symbols in Robert Frost's poem Love and a Question, the researcher uses semiotic approach and the theory of Peirce's triangle.

### **Source of Data**

There are two types of data source in this research: 1) The primary data for this research is taken from Robert Frost's poem Love and a Question published by David Nutt in 1913. The researchers took the data that are in the forms of chosen words that is symbolized in the poem. 2) The secondary data were all data that is supporting the main data. It involves the historical background of the author, books, articles, journals and the and the other sources taken from internet that support the primary data. The data consist of the statements from literary experts and related references to support the analysis of symbols of the poem.

### **Procedure of Data Collection**

Most of the material comes from Robert Frost's poem Love and a Question. Researchers perform some tasks to gather data. Data collection begins with attentive reading of main and secondary data. After a brief interpretation, the researchers noted key findings. From the notes, researchers chose poem terms as represented words to find significance for each. The researcher chose data collecting to find meaning as the key data in the second stage of reading with deeper interpretation. The researcher collected primary data-related documents as secondary data for analysis.

### **Technique of Data Analysis**

Three steps comprise data analysis. Classifying data comes first after data collection. Intensive poem reading was the initial classifying phase. For easy analysis of signified words in the poem, the researchers read intensely and frequently. In the second step, the researcher exhibited classified data and used semiotic theory to answer research questions. The scholars studied the poem's symbolic words and chose them for interpretation. This step involves interpreting symbols in the poem to uncover the author's moral meaning. The researcher concluded and wrote the results in systemic writing.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Explication and Symbol Analysis of Poem Love and a Question By Robert Frost**

#### **LOVE AND A QUESTION**

By Robert Frost

A Stranger came to the door at eve,  
And he spoke the bridegroom fair.  
He bore a green-white stick in his hand,  
And, for all burden, care.  
He asked with the eyes more than the lips  
For a shelter for the night,  
And he turned and looked at the road afar  
Without a window light.

The bridegroom came forth into the porch  
With, 'Let us look at the sky,  
And question what of the night to be,  
Stranger, you and I.'  
The woodbine leaves littered the yard,  
The woodbine berries were blue,  
Autumn, yes, winter was in the wind;  
'Stranger, I wish I knew.'

Within, the bride in the dusk alone  
Bent over the open fire,  
Her face rose-red with the glowing coal  
And the thought of the heart's desire.  
The bridegroom looked at the weary road,  
Yet saw but her within,  
And wished her heart in a case of gold  
And pinned with a silver pin.

The bridegroom thought it little to give  
A dole of bread, a purse,  
A heartfelt prayer for the poor of God,  
Or for the rich a curse;  
But whether or not a man was asked  
To mar the love of two  
By harboring woe in the bridal house,  
The bridegroom wished he knew.

Love and a Question was one of poems written by Robert Frost in his book *A Boy's Will* which was published in 1913. Frost was an American poet who was born in San Francisco on March 26, 1874. This poem consists of four stanzas in which every stanza consists of eight lines. Frost began his poem with a stranger who approached a house. The house is a bridal's house. He came with his green-white stick begging for a place to stay one night. However, the bridegroom who came to see that poor stranger started being confused whether he would let the stranger to stay one night in their house or not.

At the end of the poem, Frost pictured the poem with the groom who finally decided to give bread of money to the stranger since he does not want to disturb his newlywed's night with his lovely wife. However, the groom is still remained confused and afraid whether or not his decision to not to let the stranger stay might be wrong.

As the media to communicate the ideas and feelings to audiences, this poem analyzed based on four goals for communicating: to inform, to entertain, to persuade and to query. Robert Frost used some symbols within this poem to deliver the reader moral message through this poem. Some of the symbols in this poem are Green-White-Stick, A Stranger and The Rich a Curse and sky. Each of those symbols in this poem must have its own significance.

Those symbols are considered to represent the Robert Frost's view of a new life as bridegroom or spouse. It is not as easy as someone might predict that the life of a spouse is just simple as it is. There must be happiness which often take turns to sorrow and about obstacles that should be faced through together as people who just come into a life of newlywed. The symbols of Green-White-Stick, A Stranger and The Rich a Curse and sky are manifestations of what Frost wanted to convey in his poem until the readers can clearly conclude and understand what Frost truly means. The researchers tried to interpret the used symbols in the poem "Love and a Question" by using triangle theory of semiotic proposed by Charles Sander Peirce. The purpose of the theory is to know the meaning of symbols from this analyzed poem, they are; representament, interpretant and object.

### Explication and Symbol Analysis of "Green-White Stick"

Green White Stick means a stick that is colored in green. In this poem, Green-white stick is as symbol of long journey of life. Frost expressed his picture of a newlywed who is going to face through and live the new life as spouse. For this explanation, it can be described as follows:

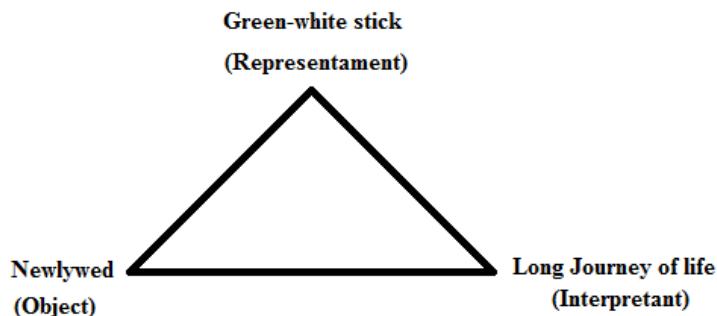


Figure 4. Symbol of Long Journey

### Explanation

The phrase "Green-white stick" stands for a symbol which relates to newlywed as its object. In Frost's poem, the meaning of "Green-white stick" is long journey of life (as interpretant). Frost pictured the coming of the stranger: "He bore a green-white stick in his hand,/ And, for all burden, care" (line 3-4). He tried to carry the attention of the readers into the journey has been traced by the stranger with his green-white stick in which it is not only a usual stick but a symbolic meaning of someone who has walked through long journey and the journey was a journey of life.

In this poem "Green-white stick" means as long journey of life. In this poem, Frost told a stranger has approached a newlywed's house then he met with the owner of the house that is bridegroom. Since the stranger came with his green-white stick, the author of this poem wanted to convey to the reader that the green-white stick is something that is strongly related to a journey. It is a journey of life. The stick in a real life is a tool for helping people who is

difficult to walk or for them who is blind, it functions to help them detect the object as well as obstacles in front of the people and also to direct someone to walk. It is slightly similar with the stick that was carried by the stranger. The stick helped out the stranger to walk so that he could approach bridegroom's house for begging a shelter for the night.

In this poem, the bridegroom and his wife just married which means they just began a new life as spouse. The green-white stick is symbolized as the long journey of life that they have to face through. The journey was started from the day they married until the death separated them both. The symbolic meaning of the green-white stick is not only focus on the stick itself but the colors of the stick. The green color of the stick symbolized new life. On the other hand, the color of white of the stick symbolized death. This combination of stick colors definitely symbolized journey of life as in this poem the new life of a newlywed which started from a new life (as spouse) that will end until death. As a newlywed, they would live this life with many things in life, they will face through both of things of happiness and sorrows as well as obstacles of life.

### Explication and Symbol Analysis of "Stranger"

The literal meaning of Stranger is a person with whom one has had no personal acquaintance, but in this poem, stranger is representing life's uncertainty. "A Stranger came to the door at eve,/ And he spoke the bridegroom fair." (Line 1-2) indicates that a stranger here is something that is uncertain about what happen next in the newlywed's life. It is when a stranger met with the bridegroom represents the uncertainty of life which for the newlywed to face through in their future household's life. For this explanation, it can be described as follows:

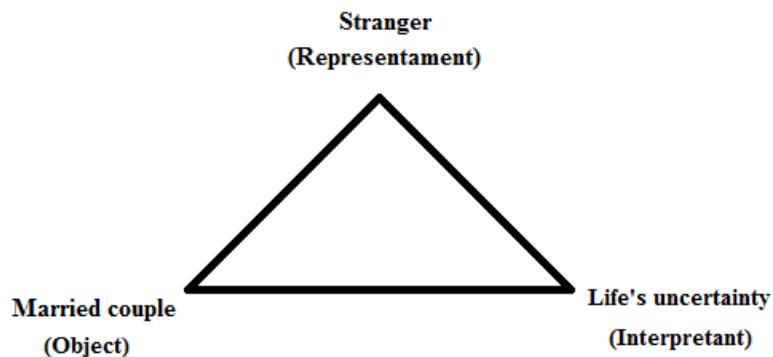


Figure 5. Represents the Uncertainty

### Explanation

The word "Stranger" stands for a symbol which relates to married couple as its object. In Frost's poem, the meaning of the word "Stranger" is life's uncertainty (as interpretant). The first and the second line of this poem indicates that a stranger symbolized something that is remain uncertain about what happen next in the future life of the newlywed.

The word 'stranger' means person with whom one has had no personal acquaintance, but in this poem, the word 'stranger' has a symbolic meaning of

life's uncertainty or unpredictable future. In the poem Love and a Question, it is told that there is a stranger approached a newlywed's house and he met with the owner of the house that is the bridegroom.

The stranger is an old man who is recognized by the stick he carried with him and some loads over his shoulder. The stranger came to the bridegroom's house with the purpose of begging a shelter for one night. He showed a pity expression to beg the shelter to the bridegroom. However, the bridegroom is still considering the request while he paid attention to the condition outside the house without any light to irradiate roads. As what has been explained that a stranger here symbolized such uncertainty of life. Life must be uncertain, no one knows what would happen in the future like the newlywed who don't know what their marriage life would be like.

The bridegroom is someone who just came into a new phase of life that is a new phase as a married couple. To walk on a new phase of life, it is definitely not east as what is imagined. There outside many things that should be considered related to future life that is going to be built in household's life as a married couple.

Stranger here represented a picture of future of a newlywed's life. Joy as well as fear of a newlywed is very clear described when the bridegroom observing the condition of outside his house when met the stranger. He did not know what would his household life would be in which he just married on that day. Would it be ended in happiness or otherwise, ended with sorrowful like the life of a stranger who had nothing even the house to live.

### Explication and Symbol Analysis of "sky"

The word 'sky' means the area above the Earth, in which clouds, the sun, etc. can be seen, but in this poem sky represents unpredictable future life. "The bridegroom came forth into the porch/ With, 'Let us look at the sky,/ And question what of the night to be,/ Stranger, you and I." (Line 9-12). These lines show that the sky whose meaning gives the idea of future life that is an unpredictable thing especially for them who just married and live as a newly married couple. Moreover, in line 12 "Stranger, you and I" which indicates that the bridegroom asked himself about what kind of life he and his spouse would face in the future. For these explanations, it can be described as follows:

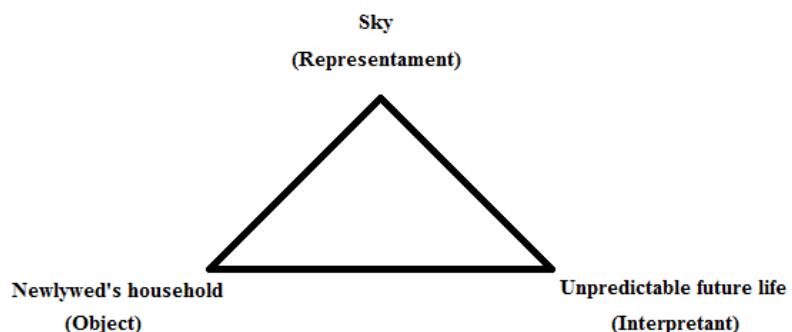


Figure 6. The Word Sky Meaning

### Explanation

The word 'sky' stands for a symbol which relates to newlywed's household as its object. In Frost's poem, the meaning of the word sky is unpredictable future life as interpretant. In this poem, Frost wanted to convey to his readers that sky in his poem symbolized meaning of life that is cannot be guessed what it would be like. It is like the future of a newlywed's household life.

The word sky in this poem symbolized the unpredictable future life. It is said that in this poem told about a newly married couple just start their life as spouse. As a newlywed, means they just started to build their household. They just do not know what will happen in the future especially in their household's life. In line 9 until 12 in this poem: "The bridegroom came forth into the porch/ With, 'Let us look at the sky,/ And question what of the night to be,/ Stranger, you and I". It directs the reader to have deeper understanding of the word sky as one of the symbolized words in this poem. As the bridegroom invited the stranger to look at the sky, there must be a hidden meaning of such action. The bridegroom tried to consider about his future life related his status as a newlywed.

As what we have known that the sky in the real life often changes, there is sometimes sky is bright and clear in the summer or may be cloudy in the rainy season. The action of the bridegroom who looks at the sky perhaps because he is also studying what changes will his household would experience as the sky changes depending on the season change.

### Explication and Symbol Analysis of "The Rich a Curse"

The rich a curse means becoming a rich person is a curse, but in this poem, the rich a curse is representing life's priceless. "A heartfelt prayer for the poor of God,/ Or for the rich a curse" (Line 27-28). In Frost's poem Love and a Question, the rich a curse is described as a situation where wealth is not only a measure for happiness because life is priceless for wealth to be supposed as something that can guarantee happiness in life. The happiness often come just because people have been grateful with what they have in life. For this explanation, it can be described as follows:

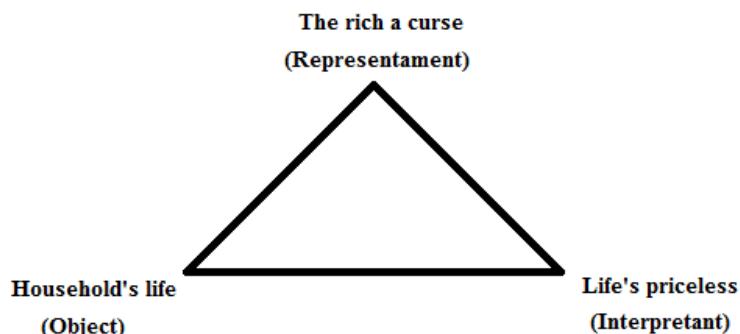


Figure 7. Symbol of the Rich a Curse

### **Explanation**

The phrase of "The rich a curse" stands for a symbol which relates to household's life as its object. In Frost's poem, the meaning of the phrase "The rich a curse" is life's priceless (as interpretant). Through the rich a curse, Frost intended to convey the real meaning of life that life should not be measured by wealth because it is enough to be grateful to reach the happiness.

The rich a curse in its literal meaning is becoming a rich person is a curse, but in this poem, the meaning of the rich a curse is not the same as the literal meaning. Instead, it means life is no longer about how people earn money or becoming a rich person, fully-equipped by wealth but how to become a person who always be grateful with what we have.

In the first line of the poem, "The bridegroom thought it little to give / A dole of bread, a purse, / A heartfelt prayer for the poor of God, Or for the rich a curse." (Line 25-28). Although the bridegroom in this poem did not allow the stranger to stay in his house but he still showed his respect and sympathy by giving him some bread and money to make himself feel better about his decision. Besides, the bridegroom also prayed for the stranger so that he's safe along his back to walk through the road.

In this poem, the rich a curse symbolized the bridegroom who always be grateful towards his life he is in with his wife. The prayer who's given to the stranger means prayer for his marriage life. He hoped his life with his lovely wife is always in tranquility and happiness without the touch of ambition for reaching worldly things such as wealth. Living this life happily without being spoiled by such a wealth is enough for his marriage life. He did not want such copious wealth make him blind of this temporary life. The bridegroom felt enough with his unpretentious life regarding the measurement for living life as happy as much.

Finally, the rich a curse represents the picture of life that it is exactly by becoming a rich people do not guarantee for a happy life but rather can bring someone's life in a misery because of the greediness over the wealth as like as the picture of stranger in the poem who had nothing but a miserable life without a place to live.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Poetry is a kind of literary works which is the reflection of poet's thought and feelings. It reflects what the poet feels about to the reality through written form of a poem. Poetry can increase humans' sense of awareness and stir emotions through the use of language. It is also kind of literary works whose words are chosen and imaginative. With the imaginative words make poetry different from language and words that are used as everyday language. In poetry, it contains multiple meanings in it. Therefore, in poetry there is possibility for multi interpretation to occur.

In poetry, it is common used connotative meaning and words that are symbolized something else. Therefore, it causes poetry to be difficult to understand. To reveal the meaning of words in poetry, it is not enough by focusing only on the elements but it is also needed to reveal the symbolized

meaning of literature within those words. To analyze the meaning of symbolic words in poetry it is needed to use approach.

One of the suitable approach in analyzing Robert Frost's poem Love and a Question as object of this research is semiotic approach. The semiotic approach that is used here is semiotic approach that is proposed by an American poet, Robert Frost. In Peirce's semiotic, it is include the Triangle theory to know the meaning of symbol in the poem. The theory of Peirce's triangle consists of representament, interpretant and object. The representament is the form which the sign takes. An interpretant is not an interpreter but rather the sense made of the sign. And an object is to which the sign refers.

Through Peirce's triangle theory, the meaning of the symbolic words in the poem Love and a Question. The meaning of the symbolic words are as follows; green-white stick symbolized long journey of life, stranger symbolized life's uncertainty, the rich a curse symbolized life's priceless and sky symbolized unpredictable future life. All the symbolized words in the poem have meaning that is strongly related to the essence of life. The real meaning of life is how to live life as a newly married couple and build the household. It is also included the meaning of life that is no longer measured by wealth because wealth is often related to greediness which sometimes ended with misery life.

## FURTHER STUDY

This research still has limitations so further research on the topic still needs to be done "A Semiotic Analysis on Robert Frost's Poem Love and a Question Based on Charles Sander Peirce's Triangle Theory."

## REFERENCES

Abcarian, R. , and M. Klotz. Literature: The Human Experience. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980.

Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopædia. "Charles Sanders Peirce." (2017). <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Charles-Sanders-Peirce>.

Burns, N, and S.K. Grove. Understanding Nursing Research: Building an Evidence-Based Practice. Elsevier Health Sciences, 2010.

Chandler, D. Semiotics: The Basic. New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2002.

Eco, U. A Theory of Semiotics. Vol. 217: Indiana University Press, 1976.

Gerber, Philip L. "Robert Frost." (2017). <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Robert-Frost>.

GradeSaver. (2017). <http://www.gradesaver.com/the-poetry-of-robert-frost/study-guide/summary>.

Guth, Hans P, and L Gabrielle. "Rico. Discovering Literature: Stories, Poems, Plays." Englewood Cliffs: Blair Press Book, 1997.

Heller, Kai, and Björn Rulik. "Ctenosciara Alexanderkoenigi Sp. N.(Diptera: Sciaridae), an Exotic Invader in Germany?". Biodiversity data journal, no. 4 (2016).

Hermawan, A. "A Semiotic Analysis on Kim Addonizio's Poems Based on C. S. Peirce's Theory." State of Islamic University Syarif Hidayatullah, 2010.

Hudson, W.H. An Introduction to the Study of Literature. London: George G. Harrap and Co. Ltd., 1958.

Kaznu.kz. "Kaznu.Kz."  
[http://pps.kaznu.kz/ru/Main/FileShow/471793/116/124/1641/Карагойшиева\\_Данель\\_Алмасбековна/2016/2](http://pps.kaznu.kz/ru/Main/FileShow/471793/116/124/1641/Карагойшиева_Данель_Алмасбековна/2016/2).

Miller, J.H. Poets of Reality: Six Twentieth-Century Researchers. Harvard University Press, 1965.

Nemerov, H. "Poetry." Encyclopædia Britannica (2017).  
<https://www.britannica.com/art/poetry>.

Panuti, S. "Kamus Istilah Sastra." Jakarta: Gramedia (1984).

Poets.org. "Robert Frost." Academy of American Poets,  
<https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/robert-frost>.

Siswantoro. Metode Penelitian Sastra Analisis Struktur Puisi. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Belajar, 2010.

Sobur, A. Semiotika Komunikasi. Bandung: Remaja Rosda Karya, 2003.

Study.com. "What Is Semiotics? - Definition & Examples."

<http://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-semiotics-definition-examples.html>.

Zainuddun, F. Telaah Sastra. Surakarta: Muhammadiyah University Press, 2000.