

CONCLUSION

Frost has won the title fairly,
not by turning his back on
ancient European tradition, nor
by imitating its success, but by
developing it in a way that at
last matches the American climate
and the American language.¹

With his heightened love of commonplace subjects - upland farms, forgotten wood-piles, old houses, stone fences, empty cottages, etc.- Frost recreates the rural image of his country. More importantly, however, he is inspired by certain characteristics of his people, and, with great skill, relates them to the scenes described in the poems. So his works are partly a study of character, and not only the obvious aspects of character. As he says:

... it is easy to write about
certain traits of character: generosity
and heroism, for instance. These
subjects have been written on innumerable
times. However, there are shades of
character which are harder to see, and
when a man notices these, to my way
of thinking, he is a real poet.²

Here the "shades of character" are what Frost has in fact experienced; he describes common scenes and common people - their behaviour, their thoughts, and attitudes

¹Robert Graves, Selected Poems of Robert Frost (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1965), p. ix.

²Lathem, op. cit., p.34.

towards the society in which they live.

Frost has chosen America for his literary background and his poetry reflects the people of its society. Not only do his works reveal the settings of America, but also the ideals of Americans. As George W. Nitchie remarks:

... Frost is important as a kind of American culture hero, as an index of certain persistent American characteristics.³



Of course, America is changing. In fact, all societies change and American society has historically changed, perhaps, much more rapidly than others. So, from the present point of view, what Frost celebrates is the Old America and that "Old America" is certainly undergoing major modifications. In other words, certain characteristics which Frost eulogizes are certainly diminishing in influence and may be even disappearing.

However, to a certain extent, Frost is typically American. As mentioned before, his paternal ancestors had been living in New England for generations. He is a poet who was born on the Western side of the United States of America, and was taken back by his mother to New England after the death of his father in 1885. Actually, he grew

³George W. Nitchie, op. cit., p.220.

up as a New Englander. Thus, Frost is never universally American but merely representative of a culturally important segment of American society. Frost does not speak for later immigrants, for example, the Southern aristocrats, Eastern and Southern Europeans, the Blacks - many of whom have had an increasingly important influence on modern American culture.

Historically, New England is considered as the cultural root of America; more or less the rest of America was influenced by New England. Certainly, resisting change would not be characteristic of the United States of America. So, the Old America which Frost talks about is changing and he seems to regret it. Still, that "America" will remain a root of whatever is to come and Frost will remain as one of its foremost spokesmen.

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