

Robert frost argumentative essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Robert Frost was born as Robert Lee Frost in San Francisco in 1874. He wrote his first poem as a student and since then there was no looking back for this legendary poet. His first book of poems “ A Boy’s Will” was published in 1913, within two months of his arrival in England.

“ North of Boston” followed next year and both these collections won critical acclaim as well as public sanction. A new star was born in the world of poetry. “ Mountain Interval” was published in 1916. Poems like the ever famous ‘ The Road Not Taken’, the eerie ‘ An Old Man’s Winter Night’, the imaginative ‘ Birches’ and the satirical ‘ Out- Out’, made this volume highly sought after overnight.

Critics ran out of superlatives to describe Frost who wove his magic into simple words often used in day to day conversations and put forward beautiful yet enigmatic and deep characterizations of nature. Robert Frost is often referred to as a nature poet. His love for subtle metaphors, nature similes, floral imageries and personifications only lends more weight to this categorization of Frost. Yet, one needs to be only a little more vigilant while reading his poems to understand that he is not quite a nature poet, at least not in the conventional sense of the word.

His poems are in fact a deep insight into that often deceptive relationship between man and nature. Nature surrounds man but in his haste to acquire more material things, man overlooks the fact often some natural things can incite very deep feelings. Frost’s poems highlight this fact that nature and humans can never be seen out of context with each other and that their relationship, though subtle, is of immense importance. Frost has written

about landscapes, flora and fauna so often that it almost obvious to call him a nature poet. Mountain Interval (1916) is no exception.

Nature imagery is at its best in the poems from this collection cited above. It is therefore easy and convenient to cast Robert Frost into the genre of nature poets. But his nature poetry, when seen in perspective and read with an open mind, point to a much deeper meaning than what meets the eye in the first read. His poems are known for their deceptive simplicity. He no longer remains just a nature poet when we consider that nature is just used as a backdrop in his poems, often to convey much deeper, finer and closer themes.

No doubt, nature plays an important role in his poetry but more often than not, he uses nature to symbolize something related closely to human life. For e. g. in the ever green poem ‘ The Road Not Taken’, the two roads seem to be just a divergence in a yellow forest path.

But deeper reading makes it crystal clear that the divergence in the road is but a metaphor for choices that people have to make in the journey called life. This choice affects the future as the poet says “ And that has made all the difference” at the end of the poem. The childhood that has long since become a thing of past haunts the poet in the poem The Birches. The tree symbolizes all that the poet has left behind but still remains close to his heart and deep in his mind. That Robert Frost is not only a nature poet can also be gauged from the fact that only very few of his poems do not contain human characters.

He is drawn to nature but his work is more about bringing human beings in complete realization of all aspects of nature and making their lives more integrated with nature in all its forms and colors. In *The Road Not Taken*, the central idea is the reminiscence of a man who wonders what he could have been if had made some choices differently. Though the road seems to be the point of discussion, what it represents in the poem is a lot more important. ‘*The Birches*’ again seems to speak about a tree but in actuality there is a lot more to it than a simple romantic description of a tree. It is the attempt to recapture childhood, to go down the memory lane and land up in that era when swinging on trees was the best way to pass time. It just portrays the fact that a mere tree can ignite such passions and memories in man.

It is this relationship between nature and human, this imagery of what simple natural things can represent for man that sets Robert Frost apart from all poets in this vast genre. Maybe because of his farming background, Frost is more aware of nature’s force than its beauty and more so than any other nature poet. His poetry is more matter of fact than romantic and more prosaic than flamboyant. The difference between frost and other nature poets becomes stark and noticeable when he is compared thoroughly to a conventional one such as William Wordsworth. Frost’s manner is casual and anecdotal whereas Wordsworth is didactic. The central theme of poems in Frost’s collection is almost meaningless in its face value.

What is central in the true sense is a deeper meaning that comes to surface with careful reading and a readiness to understand. For e. g. in ‘*Birches*’, the focus is not on the tree itself, but human aspirations, life and death and

human imaginations that the tree seems to stand for. When he says " So was I once.....

back to be" (42-43), he probably refers to his wish to return to the childhood pleasures of free, unrestrained imagination. The upward swing on the tree's branches is the soar of imagination and the subsequent downward movement is the moment of realization of reality. The subtlety of the portrayal makes it so captivating and distinguishes Frost further more from a conventional nature poet. Finally, even though personifications abound in Frost's poetry, they are used differently.

The personifications are never overt, nor do they jump out at the reader suddenly. They are subtle, built carefully, developed properly and nurtured lovingly by frost, so that they often become akin to analogies. Even animal personifications in Frost's work lend a quaint and bizarre nature to his poetry. At first go, such an attempt may look absurd to the reader, but a little patience will be able to draw out much more from the poetry.

For e. g. n ' Departmental', the human society is viewed through the analogy of an ant hive and their reaction to a death among their numbers. In ' Out-Out', there is a satire on the human indifference to the death of a small child. (" And they, since they.....

. affairs. " 33-34). The two poems when read contextually show how effective the ant personification is (even though it may seem absurd in isolation). It would therefore be unjustified to call Frost a nature poet. His poetry points to a much broader theme, a much deeper philosophy and much finer metaphors.

It is practical without being dull; it is enlightening without being educational; it is down to earth and yet alluring; it is philosophical without being hyperbolic. All these qualities make Robert Frost a poet who should be respected and admired for his understanding of human emotions in association with that which defines his existence- nature. Harmony between human and nature was always Frost's dream and his autobiographical implications, especially in ' The Road Not Taken' and ' Birches', make the poems all the more closer to actual human life. Thus Robert Frost is not a nature poet, he is a human poet.