

FROST'S NATURE POETRY AND HIS MOOD OF ALIENATION

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ABSTRACT

Robert Frost has achieved a reputation as a poet of nature. His poems deal with man in relation with the universe. Man is alone and he is always trying to break barriers between himself and his environment, between himself and the universe, between himself and his fellowman. Practically all his poems present the sense of human limitation, which is seen as the basic human predicament. Man feels the sense of alienation because he can not understand the mysteries of this vast universe. It separates man from nature. This paper focuses on his nature of poetry.

Keywords: Nature, universe, birches, human

INTRODUCTION:

A researcher ordinarily tries to seek more meaning in the poetry of a poet than he actually has. This is because, most of us interested in glorifying the poetry of poets. AS a matter of fact, Wordsworth was also not as great a poet of nature as he was supposed to be. His mysticism has been over explained, also over estimated. That nature gives us comfort is only partly true. It can be concluded that when poet talks of nature, they often do not talk of a lion killing other animals, rivers, devouring men and animals, forests full of snakes, the earth containing dead bodies through tombs, volcanic eruptions and the sky responsible for so many mishaps through the exercise of the stars.

Robert Frost has written about nature but it would be erroneous to think of him as a great priest of nature. He has written about nature because Nature is so dominating, so omnipresent that it is impossible to avoid her. Frost has written poems on trees, on birds and on the phenomenon of nature but he has done this like a realist and not like a mystic nor like one who sees nature as a panacea for all human ills. We go to nature no doubt but it is in the same manner as an irreligious person may like to visit a temple or a church but such a temple going can not make him religious. As we must not over estimate Frost's potential as a poet of nature because he never thought that nature is competent enough to overpower our grief through which we have to pass so long as we live on this earth.

To one who has thoroughly studied the poetry of Robert Frost, Nature will strike as a dominant subject in his poetry but he is not a nature poet in the tradition of Wordsworth or Thomas Hardy. The poetry of Frost depicts before us the drama of nature, the drama which is many times as much interesting and bewildering as the drama of man. The nature poems of Frost are seldom without the presence of man which clearly proves that he was not a pure poet of nature. Frost never felt the brotherhood for natural objects which was the great belief of William Wordsworth. William Wordsworth also never tried to attribute a mind to nature.

Robert Frost was undoubtedly impressed by the romantic poets like so many others but the truth is that he is at heart anti romantic. Whereas the romantics tried to bring nature and man together, Frost was of the opinion that the two possess two distinct entities and are hostile to each other. This is why he has never talked of man's comradeship with nature. Not only this, Frost formulated a theory of nature or a definition of man's relationship with nature. Yes, Frost says and says it emphatically that man should live in harmony with nature and he should never antagonize her because Nature is much more mighty than man and it is impossible for him to tame her or to convert her to his own advantages.

How then should we summarize Frost's poetry of nature? In this regard, only this much can be said that Frost was influenced by the might of nature. He found the mysteries of nature very challenging and these mysteries are responsible for making many of us dreaded and Frost also might have felt the same although he has hesitated to reveal this feeling of dread. Frost was a poet, not a philosopher nor a religious preacher nor a seer. As such, nature was one of those many things which gave him subject and material for expression. Frost's nature poetry reveals very truly that Nature is a great order working in its own discipline and as such nature can not be neglected nor without being discussed. But Frost has never said that nature has any concern with the designs of man. She is neither a friend of man nor an enemy: she leads a life of her own because she is more powerful than man, man should try to make an adjustment with nature. The poetry of Robert Frost tells us again and again about the alienation of man only because he did not consider nature to be a companion of man. Nature is self- willed, autocratic and even despotic without knowing it. She is not guided and governed by any force that can take her control. We go to nature for our own interest and in a selfish manner otherwise she does not invite us to visit and enjoy her beauty. All the nature poetry of Robert Frost is an enlightened man's approach toward a force about which nothing conclusive can be said: yes we can say so many things in poetic manner.

Robert Frost has achieved a reputation as a poet of nature. His poems deal with man in relation with the universe. Man is alone and he is always trying to break barriers between himself and his environment, between himself and the universe, between himself and his fellowman. Practically all his poems present the sense of human limitation, which is seen as the basic human predicament. Man feels the sense of alienation because he can not understand the mysteries of this vast universe. It separates man from nature.

Robert Frost chose to be a farmer primarily because he expected farming to provide him with poetic images, metaphor and subject matter. Due to this he could write about nature. But he sometimes acted as if his only interest lay in following Emerson's advice:

“The first care of man setting in the country should be to open the face of the earth to himself by a little knowledge of nature, or a great deal if he can; of birds, plants, rocks, astronomy; in short, the art of taking a walk. This will draw the sting out of Frost, dreariness out of November and March, and the drowsiness out of August.... But the uses of the woods are many and some of them for the scholar high and preemptory. When his task requires the wiping out from memory”.

Robert Frost was essentially a poet of nature and nature meant a good deal for him. His use of nature in his poetry is quite different from that of earlier poets, such as Wordsworth. Unlike Wordsworth Robert Frost did not romanticize nature and he noticed the hostile and unpleasant aspect of nature. He was working farmer and no working farmer can be romantic about nature. He was never a nature mystic. Like Wordsworth he wrote often about external nature, the mountains, lakes, woods and fields and also about the animals. Both poets appreciated nature and felt it was important. There was the sensuous pleasure which nature has given to most modern poets. But Robert Frost could always represent the situation which separates nature from man. It can be found in 'The Vantage point. When the poet was tired of trees, he sought mankind and when he had too much of man, he turned to nature again. In earlier poem, nature and man confront each other as in his best poem "Two look at two". The separating line of nature has been presented in "The Vantage Point":

“The sunburned hillside sets my face a glow,
My breathing shakes the bluet like a breeze,
I smell the earth; I smell the bruised plant,
I looked in to the crater of the ant”

Man and nature are separate and fundamentally different. Nature has its own integrity, which can man hardly understand. Robert Frost's view point reveals that man must learn to live in the natural order. It is the only effective way to live in the universe. He must learn how to live a life with difficulties. He must struggle with difficulties and unpleasant situations. Robert Frost has given his conception of nature. He has told about the nature's independence. He has indicated in his several poems that man can not exercise any influence on nature although he can control it to some extent. Robert Frost has also revealed the secrets of the universe. Human being can not understand this vast universe because their understanding is limited by boundaries. Nitchie has observed –

“Man has no memory of heaven or of his choosing life on earth to make his “earthly woe” more bearable.

For Robert Frost, nature is hardly a pleasant as he has said in great many of his poems. It has its own way and concern that which man can not understand. Several poems indicate that man can not exercise any real influence on nature for good or ill, much less control it. It can be found in "Range Finding", the destructive forces of human war have little effect on the bird, the butterfly, and the spider. "In Stopping by wood in a Snowy Evening", the woods are lovely, dark and deep. One may stay there for a long time. Man is most himself when he measures himself against nature's pace and nature keeps barrier before man. By reading Robert Frost's poem it is learnt that there is something like that the bond between man and nature is of a loose nature. For Robert Frost, Nature became a brutal force and so hostile. He treated nature as both menace and comfort. Natural disasters are unavoidable and unpredictable. Emerson said that:

“Nature is the symbol of spirit”

There is almost too much in nature about what particularly and spiritually matters. Robert Frost's poem "Mowing" can be helpful in understanding the specific point. It begins with a statement and followed by question- a scythe whispering to the ground and 'what was it whispered'? The poet's method of arriving at the final answer is that he is constantly rejecting the conclusion. He reaches the conclusion through a series suggestion. 'Mowing is as good as any of Frost's poems. Nature is the scene of the poem. But nature in his poetry is not merely the part of scenery but a medium. It is an instrument which man is educated. Nature is the home of man. In the lap of nature human being feels more secure and it is same time indifferent to him. Robert Frost was much more conscious of the violence and evil in nature. He reacted in a number of different ways to all aspects of external nature. He is uncertain. He gave many interpretations in his views of

nature. He was not a Wordsworthian nature poet. He did not turn to nature to get inspiration like Wordsworth. Nitchie has told us:

“He insisted on the gulf, or some kind of Barrier,
between man and nature: Nature is ‘other’ to man”.

The humans are separated from nature by a wall. Strong human emotion is introduced in all nature poems. The poem “My November Guest” and “Reluctance” portray the pleasure that Robert Frost experienced in communication with nature. Some critics do not regard him as a nature poet. They give him the position of a poet of country life. Robert Frost himself admitted that he is not a nature poet. He has written only two poems without human beings in them. But he began as a nature poet and his interest in nature persisted through out his career in the field of American poetry. His another poem ‘Bereft’ from the volume ‘West Running Brook’ tells that Robert Frost was inspired to write due to his loneliness in absence of Elinor. The speaker in this poem was suffered. Nature’s indifference and hostility is symbolized in the darkening sky and the dead leaves which are swirling round his legs. He can think only of God. Through his poem one feels that neither man can find a proper position in nature, nor he can live outside it. This poem gives an unrelieved sense of isolation and gloom.

It was to the subject of loneliness that he turned later in one of his most famous poems ‘Desert Places’. In desert Places Robert Frost followed the hint from the latter’s statement in order to make a discovery about himself that he can throw up against Emerson’s point of view that there exists an ‘Occult relation between man and the vegetable’. Robert Frost has written many poems. He depicted natural scenery. Now the question arises, has he isolated the nature scene from a human emotion? He wrote about nature but he did not do it without referring to man. His observation of various aspects of nature represents the similarity between these objects and man. When he observes the behavior of a group of ants in ‘Departmental’, he is reminded of departmentalism of red tapism which has dominate the society of man.

Robert Frost emphasizes the power of natural or divine forces, especially its uncontrollable destructiveness. Sometimes through his poems, he makes himself conscious of nature’s treacherousness. He often stresses upon the changes of the condition under which man exists. In ‘Storm Fear’ Robert Frost represents natural forces as a kind of wolf, partly as something cold creeps. To him there is a line of boundary between the two and man seems to stand separated from nature. He always knew the line which separates nature from man.

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