

Robert express the
simplicity and
eagerness of



**ASSIGN
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Robert Frost - Imagery in his Poetry
My object in living is to unite My
advocation and my vocation
As my two eyes make one in sight. Only where
love and need are one, And the work is play for mortal stakes, Is the deed
ever really done
Frost- "Two Tramps in Mud Time"
For Robert Frost it seemed that the deed of writing and interpreting his poetry never ended. His technique included simple dialect and description, his imagery was physical yet hypothetical, and his method showed his opposing views of the universe. Frost said, "The subject of poetry should be common in books it should happen to everyone but it should have occurred to no one before as material" (Trachea 165). He was known to use anything he could to help the reader understand his writings, and in their own way, learn to interpret them into useful paragons for everyday living.

Frost said that poems were merely a basis for which humans can perform in the face of the confusions of everyday life. "In addition to drawing on familiar subject matter as a means of affording him the kind of originality he sought, Frost placed great emphasis on his choice of simple image-making words and phrases for the same reason" (Trachea 166). He is said to have to think more deeply to call up images in order to convey his ideas. Frost uses simple dialect to express the simplicity and eagerness of the American language (Trachea 92). "So far as Frost is concerned, the very measure of poetic performance is in the degree to which it can domesticate the imagination of disaster" (Trachea 114).

Frost creates an atmosphere of depth, pulling the reader into the story by his use of descriptive adjectives, such as "ancient", Cole 2 "fresh-painted", and "velvety" (Hadas 59). Frost's descriptions help us hear the pounding of rain,

the rustling of the leaves on trees, and feel the harshness of the cold (Trachea 117). A few of his other descriptions are the desolation, silence, and emptiness that he uses to describe the cottage in "Black Cottage." These terms allow the reader to be drawn in wholly to the story, and they enhance the rhetorical drama of what is occurring- the decay of civilization (Hadas 63). Though it seems that Frosts work can easily be interpreted through his diction, it is impossible to correctly interpret anything of his without the use of voice inflection (Trachea 114). "Frosts prose as well as his poetry can be studied for the sound of sense, for the casual qualities of voice and personality he artfully gets into it" (Trachea 87). Frost said that the reader gives words meaning by the way he speaks them, and if a poem is read without the correct use of tone, its meaning is lost all together. Frost was known for his sensitivity to sound: he listened first to the human voice and secondly to the voice of nature and he demonstrated both in his works.

To Frost sounds were "the gold in the ore" just as is stated in one of his poems: "nature's first green is gold/ Her hardest hue to hold" (Trachea 90-2). He said sounds are summoned by the imagination and they must be profound, confident, and forceful in order to achieve the full effect of the poetry. Frost depended on this sound of sense to build his images by use of metaphor and sentence (Trachea 166). There were two reasons Frost insisted on the use of metaphor in his poetry: 1) he said that poets tended to think metaphorically, and 2) they tended to speak in metaphor to convey specific ideas (Potter 164). He did not believe in creating new ideas into peoples minds, rather he created new pictures of old ideas.

He perceived the world with beauty and strongness and to calm the “ emotional response,” he filtered it through the intellect and put it into a metaphor, thus subjecting it to his form of artistry. Frost felt that if he as a poet was able to have these different perceptions of the world, his readers should be able to appreciate them, even if he only hinted at them. He thought as Emerson did: “ the correspondence between objects were what began the process of poetic creation” (Potter 165).

Cole 3 Frost also used the device of sentence structure to demonstrate how the voice should be carried when one read a poem. Frost believed that sentences were not different enough to hold the attention of a reader unless they were dramatic and he proved this statement in his writing. He said that a sentence is merely where words live and breath, and that they are sounds in themselves along which other sounds called words may be strung. “ Frosts conception of the sentence is central to his poetic theory and anticipates both the phonological approach and the emphasis in modern linguistics on the connection between structure and meaning” (Trachea 90-1).

Frost uses two main kinds of imagery in his work: concrete and abstract. His concrete images can be found in “ Mending Wall,” and the “ Black Cottage.” The wall is always interpreted to be a stronghold, while the house is interpreted as empty, inaccessible, and burnt out.

However, both come to represent to the center of lives (Hadas 68). In “ Mending Wall,” Frost keeps the wall the focus of attention and thus suggests that the persons on either side are equal, when in fact they are not. The matter of the wall and the need for fences is argued over before the end of

the poem, for many feel that fences dont make good neighbors, but the making of fences can. Many critics have come to believe that the statement “ good fences make good neighbors” is only neighborly if the speaker reads it correctly (Hadas 55-7). The wall is used to both separate men and bring them together, and it is imperative to see and understand that each of these functions are different yet the same (Potter 49). As one may assume, a house or cottage is usually a stronghold, however, the house in “ Black Cottage” represents desolation-the removal of life, family and love (Hadas 58). Frost begins .

.... to show a regretful side in this poem because it is made known that the last person who lived there was an elderly woman and since her departure, the place has grown over with weeds and the paint has chipped off the walls. He maintains this abandoned or lonely feeling by enticing the reader to view the house, but never be able to touch it (Hadas 58-9).

“ The cottage is presented with theatrical artfulness...the arrangement of words enhances the affect to inaccessibility” (Hadas 58-9). Cole 4 Poems by Frost that include the stars represent universal truths; they are free of distraction and they clearly identify their limitations (Hadas 164). People do not seem to have reached a point of recognizing the universe’s smallness or vastness, so Frost felt it was his duty to achieve it. His dialectal swing is most clearly defined when one has an unhindered view of the sky and Frost demonstrates this in “ The Bear” (Hadas 165-6). Frost deliberately avoids a central entity in his abstract poems because the center is a “ still” point and he is trying to maintain the image of impotent energy and fruitless ratiocination.

Frost's main abstract poem is "The Bear" for it is "a paradigm of the dialectic that governs nearly all the star poems" (Hadas 160). He observes and records his view of the stars on an astoundingly varied scale that ranges from an entomological delicacy to great perspectives of time and space (Hadas 68). "Theoretical scheme is filled in, in a sympathetically fleshly... way by this poem which depicts mankind as a caged and pacing bear, locked up in the universe" (Hadas 159). The bear's compulsive back-and-forth pacing is the act of generalization, but the back-and-forth movement exists in the contrast between the unfretted ramblings of the free bear and the caged bear's restraint. Since space is unadapted by or to human needs, Frost uses it to seem unfathomably foreign, vast and unyielding, ironic to the small scale of what people know and want (Hadas 162).

Frost's work materializes many attitudes, such as opposing or inconsistent, and out of this opposition comes the uncertainty that Frost's audience has become accustomed to. "It is possible to reconcile the two attitudes only on a superficial reading; Frost was never as simple as he made himself to be publicly, and neither was his poetry" (Potter 100). Frost was mostly a front. That is, there can be found in his work the "real" Frost by those who are able to stand the pressures of supposedly uncharted depths (Trachea 113). "Most accurately we can say that Frost tried simultaneously to reach out to others and hide from them. In his writings, too, he tried to put himself forward and remain in the background at the same time." This is demonstrated in "Once by the Pacific" as Frost tries to do two things at once by revealing the light, but not allowing the reader to step into it (Potter 51).

“ The poetic achievement is at the same time a process of denial, of denying oneself the pretentious magnitude of which Frost was habitually wary” (Trachea 116). Frost's style is in one way “ broadest theoretical speculation” and in another, his own view of the world (Trachea 93). He has two main views of the world and those are of a manageable world and a fearsome world. Frost's optimistic view in his poetry demonstrates the normal, the ordinary and the common by use of conservative standard (Potter 99). In “ Birches,” Frost's words represent an easy version of the world- a spiritual place that may seem difficult but there is always something to help one through. Earth is again the place for love and it provides a loose stability on that basis, while aspiration toward heaven offers a more spiritual kind of guidance, a contact with God, which provides a central orientation for the soul” (Potter 87). “ The conflict between the optimistic and the pessimistic conceptions of the world is the source of the basic ambiguity and the tension in Frost's work” (Potter 85). “ In Frost's more pessimistic moods, he both derogates and pities man for the stance he adopts and the failings he suffers in his isolation and vulnerable position in the universe” (Potter 124).

He said that humans at their worst are still victims rather than villains, even though they may bring troubles on themselves. Frost condemns man for his egotism, pride and lack of realism, yet he pities man for his loneliness and the fear he must endure (Potter 126-9). He clearly demonstrates this in “ An Unstamped Letter,” where the figure's loss of color seems to give off the perception that under the mask of color is the real person, as is true in today's society as well. (Potter 177). In many of Frost's poems,

destructiveness and cruelty seem to be intrinsic in the universe as well as in man.

“ Frost sees the universe as controlled but diminished, almost evil in pragmatic terms (Potter 125). He illustrates this in “ Spring Pools.” The poem is used as a “ threat to innocence and purity” because the pools are beautiful for a time, yet the speaker knows they will disappear.

This creates a solemn desolation in the place of supernatural beauty (Potter 88). The reader is somewhat deceived into believing that the pools will be throughout the poem and they are affected by the pools disappearance. Cole 6 “ Few now deny that poetry is always to some extent a projection of the authors psyche, unconscious as well as conscious, although there is much dispute about interpretations” (Potter 49). His use of sound, his descriptions and his viewpoint of the world continue to help readers correctly translate his work. Even in his death Frost comes alive through his poetry and in a way achieves the resolution to the deed he wondered would ever be finished. Frost will stay in the eye of the public not only for his works, but the meaning underlying which causes people to be confident about themselves (Trachea 113).