

Language and allusion analysis of teaching english from an old composition book,c...



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Imagery and Symbolisms in Three Poems Poems breathe life to what seems to be inanimate in a traditional perspective. It gives meaning to words not found within the context of literal understanding. The role of imagery and symbolism greatly affects the voice and mood of the poems, to balance with the theme. In “ The Love Song of J. Alfred Puffrock” by T. S. Eliot, it heavily depends on symbolisms with a vivid description of the settings. The imageries heightened the gloominess that the person feels as he talks to a listener. In the first stanza which states, “ let us go, through certain half-deserted streets/ the muttering retreats/ of restless nights of one-night cheap hotels” (Eliot 4-6), the presence of dark imageries such as “ retreats,” “ restless nights,” and “ cheap hotels” may recall the speaker’s experience that he wants to “ go and make [a] visit” (Eliot 12). At the same time, these could be symbols in a way that it collectively describes the speaker’s past, as full of regrets and wasted opportunity, especially in taking risks for intimate relationships. Using descriptive devices, such as sensory details, further developed the feeling of insecurity the speaker has, saying: “ with a bald spot in the middle of my hair” (Eliot 39). Images and symbolisms go hand in hand; however, they can exist without the presence of the other. Like Eliot’s work, the poem “ Constantly Risking Absurdity” written by Lawrence Ferlinghetti, is built around imageries, symbolisms and few allusions. According to Edward Kent, Ferlinghetti’s poem is the writer’s definition of poets, as he performs “ like an acrobat” (Ferlinghetti 6) every time he writes. It is the poet’s duty to present the unshakable truth to his audience, and if he fails to do this, he would fall to his death just like what a careless acrobat can become (Kent 1244). To give a general view of Ferlinghetti’s poem, it is parallel to the objective correlative principle of symbolisms and imageries.

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The whole text is attached to the main imagery of a circus-like life, while incorporating elements concerning entertainment, the truth, and acrobatic actions such as “ death-defying leaps” (Ferlinghetti 27). The first two poems mentioned are generally attached to symbol and image as one and the same poetic device. Gary Soto’s poem, “ Teaching English from an Old Composition Book” would be different. The images are well-used to uplift the theme of the poem, and do not necessarily have hidden meanings. It basically talks about the struggle of Mexican-American students who do not have the access to the English language, that the teacher cleverly shifts his strategy. This is shown in the second stanza where the speaker decides to have “ a pantomime of sumptuous living” (Soto 23). It tells the importance of language and how it affects a person. The poems are constructed in a way that the poet thought should be, for the development of its message. It would not be logical to say that one poem is better than the other because the poets have different purpose on the giving of images and symbolisms or with the restraint of showing off emotions. All three are based on the importance of images and symbols as either united or separated poetic elements that could affect the poem’s content. Works Cited Eliot, T. S. " The Love Song of J. Alfred Puffrock." *Bartleby. com*. Bartleby. com, n. d. Web. 30 Jun. 2011. . Ferlinghetti, Lawrence. " Constantly Risking Absurdity." *Poetry Foundation*. Poetry Foundation, n. d. Web. 30 Jun. 2011. . Kent, Edward. " Daredevil Poetics: Ferlinghetti's Definition of a Poet." *The English Journal* 59. 6 (1970): 1243-1244. Print. Soto, Gary. " Teaching English from an Old Composition Notebook." *Poetry Foundation*. Poetry Foundation, n. d. Web. 30 Jun. 2011. .