Fire And Ice Essay, Research Paper

Fire and Ice

The poem “Fire and Ice” by Robert Frost, is about how the world will end. The title is the subject of the poem. The title makes one think of fire, you see a bright, smoky, dramatic event. Where as ice is just ice. While the two are same, they are also inherently different. Fire goes through the flashy process of burning, where as ice is just frozen. The theme in the poem is dictated by many literary elements including rhyme, metaphors and with the overall structure of the poem.

The speaker in the poem is observing how people have said how the world was to end, and he commentates on this. The speaker is asking himself how he thinks the world will end, fire or ice, and which would be the better way for Earth to end. He gives reasons why he feels that the Earth will end in a certain way, and also tells what the fire and ice are to represent in society.

There are two negative qualities in the world, and both bring out bad. This is shown in the structure of this poem, which is arranged so that there is a rhyming scheme. The way the poem seems held together by the rhyming is aesthetically pleasing. One thing interesting is that the scheme in lines 6 and 8 differ from the rest of the poem. The words that rhyme are “hate” and “great”, which is an ironic association to make between something considered bad and something which is considered good. Another point about the rhyming is that in the first 4 lines, the word ice (2) does not rhyme with fire and desire. This may have been to show an initial contrast between fire and ice. “From what I’ve tasted of desire” is then continued into line 4 with “I hold with those who favor fire” here the speaker makes a connection between fire and desire. He is trying to use fire as a metaphor for desire. Desire can be a very consuming thing, much like a fire that is out of control devastating everything in its way. The speaker also appears to understand how destructive desire can be, and in turn makes it his first choice for the end of the world.

In this poem, ice is also proving to be a metaphor for hate. “I think I know enough of hate, to say that for destruction ice is also great” lines 6, 7 and 8. Here the speaker makes a connection similar to that used in first half of the poem, although here it’s between ice and hatred. It should be noted that the author is performing the same process with two sets of opposite things, desire and fire, and hatred and ice. Hate is cold in the sense that when one truly hates something, they will do anything to cause harm or eliminate it, no matter what the consequences.

Both the fire and the ice, desire and hate can ultimately end up destroying the

World. The author is trying say that because both of these pairs of opposites can bring

about destructive force, they are essentially the same. Both causes have ended up hurting

people throughout history. It wouldn’t be a big surprise if it were to bring the end of the

World. When the speaker discusses fire and ice, along with desire and hatred, he does it in

the context of the end of the world.

Any emotion taken to the extreme is dangerous, and opposites become the same (destructive) at an extreme state. Robert Frost did an excellent job in getting the message across that both fire and ice can become the same thing with the same consequences if hatred or desire get to far. People must all be careful not to hate or desire something so much that it becomes an obsession, and leads to the end of the world for fire and ice exist in all of us and may come out and destroy at anytime.