Design By Robert Frost An Examination Of Personification Essay, Research Paper

In the poem Design by Robert Frost, the classic use of the color white, meaning innocence and purity is turned around. Instead of giving this color to wholesome, pure objects he gives them to objects that are the reverse, which are death, darkness and unholy objects.

When I read the poem Design I got the feeling that the author did not feel the same as I do about the color white. The first line talks about a fat white spider. This line contradicts the reputation that spiders have. When I see a spider, fat or skinny, it is usually black. I hate spiders and I would not give them the label as innocent or pure because spiders live in a dirty environment. By giving the spider a white color seems to disguise it. The white color of the spider is a mask that makes people think that it is innocent and pure when it is really not. Traditionally spiders have been associated with dirty and devilish acts. By portreying the spider as white it comes into a whole new perspective, and you begin to think that maybe the spider isn t so bad after all.

In the second part of the first stanza Frost describes a witches brew with all the ingredients being white. Witches have traditionally been ugly people wearing all black, the color that represents darkness and death. By saying that the white spider and the dead moth are like ingredients of a witches brew is actually putting those two objects on a lower level of existence. Ingredients in witch s brew are usually despicable items that are not worthy of any human being.

Frost talks about the spider on a white heal-all holding up a dead white moth. A heal-all is a flower traditionally known for its healing capabilities, but in this poem it is acting as a boxing ring for the spider and the moth. The moth saw a white spider and figured he was of no harm to him. The spider used his innocent mask to deceive the moth and then the moth being gullible, was pounced on by the spider. The deceiving spider then held up the moth for the entire world to see. The moth is also commonly thought of a gross bug, but they are not harmful. The innocent little moth was tricked and it cost its life.

I feel that there is a deeper meaning in Frost s poem. I think he is telling us that any color can have any meaning. He refers to the spider as being snow-dropped which tells the readers that the spider is innocent. The innocence that this spider has is similar to the innocence of a toddler who smacks his younger sibling and runs away and immediately begins to do another activity. The toddler is trying to show that he or she was doing something else and was no way involved with the incident that took place. The toddler is not doing this because he has a guilty conscience but because he is trying to escape punishment. The idea behind the spider being white is that the reader is supposed to look at it and think that that spider couldn t have killed the moth because it looks so innocent, thus the spider not having to suffer any consequences.

A traditional use of white is in a wedding ceremony, while a traditional use of black is at a funeral. Wearing white in a wedding symbolizes that two people are going to start a new pure life together. The use of black at a funeral shows that the mood of the ceremony is very dark and upsetting. The theme of this poem could be like the idea of wearing white to a funeral and black to a wedding. It depicts evil and death with the color white and gives the impression that death is a pleasant thing.

The poem Design describes all kinds of things that represent darkness by using the color white. This poem contradicts our society s meaning of the color white. As I have stated before, white represents the things that are pure in life while black represents the things that are evil and gloomy. When I watch television and I see a powerful mobster he is always wearing black. Right off the bat this tells me that the person behind the clothing is evil and makes no effort to conceal his darkness. If I had only heard of Jimmy Hoffa and I ran into him on the street and he was wearing white, I would get the impression that he was a nice person. The gullibleness that I have would make it very easy for him to take advantage of me. Much like the spider did to the moth.

The second stanza of the poem Design poses all kinds of questions. What brought the kindred spider to that height, Why did the spider end up on the flower? This is a question that is not directly answered in the poem, but it makes the reader think a little bit more about the writing. Maybe there is no logical explanation to the spider s whereabouts. I think that the spider was on that flower simply because he could be. It seems to me that the best explanation for this poem is that the almighty creator does not have to follow any rules in what he does. There is nothing set in stone that states that objects representing evil cannot appear innocent. People need to see for themselves what something is really about and not judge it by its appearance.