FIRE AND ICE BY ROBERT FROST

TEXT INTERPRETATION

In the first two lines Robert Frost’s “Fire and Ice” (Arp 103), the poet presents two options for the end of the world: one by fire and the other by ice. Many scientists hold the belief that the end of the world will come in two forms, “either the earth would be incinerated, or a permanent ice age would gradually annihilate all life on earth. Initially, Frost wants the reader to contemplate the destructive powers of fire and ice. By changing the tense of the poem, Frost forces the reader to look back at the first two lines and consider a new meaning. The poet goes on to relate fire to the human emotion of desire and ice to hate. Looking back at the third line, the use of “I” shows a personal connection to the emotions of desire and hate. Putting this poem in the context of a relationship, desire and hate are emotions that people often feel. The final line of the poem shows that human emotions of fire (desire) and ice (hate) are equally harmful and can easily bring about the “end” of a relationship. In order to effectively communicate the darker feelings felt in a relationship, the poet uses the following poetic devices: imagery, denotations and connotations, figurative language, musical devices, rhythm and meter, and the structure of the poem.

Through literary devices, Frost reveals what will ultimately bring the world to an end. He provides us with two paths that will end the world which are fire and ice.

The most noticeable literary device used in Frost's "Fire and Ice" is metaphor. The words "fire" and "ice" are compared to ways that Frost believes the world will end. Fire is compared to desire when Frost states in lines three and four:

"From what I've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favor fire."

By comparing fire to desire we get the sense that desire is a sin. Ice is compared to hatred in lines six through eight:

"I think I know enough of hate
To say that for destruction ice
Is also great."

By comparing fire to desire and ice to hate he emphasizes their destruction. Here Frost is pointing out to his readers that we are just as destructive to our world as natural disasters.
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Some say the world will end in fire;
Some say in ice.
From what I've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favor fire.
But if it had to perish twice,
I think I know enough of hate
To say that for destruction ice
Is also great
And would suffice.