

How effectively does metaphor contribute to Laurie Lee's expression of his feelings about England when returning home from abroad?

One successful use of metaphor within 'Home From Abroad' is the continued image of Kent as a female. Lee's most effective expression of emotion through the extended metaphor can be seen in the phrase 'the pale, domestic kiss of Kent'. The act of kissing is done by people and so therefore Kent has been personified. However, instead of creating a sensual image Lee uses the word 'pale' which is unexciting and lacks passion. This dull and ordinary image seems to suggest that at first Lee is sad to leave behind the exotic countries he has visited. As the metaphor instantly conjures up an image of the dull and ordinary it is effective as the reader can easily tell Lee is underwhelmed upon returning home, although this attitude later changes.

A slightly less successful use of metaphor can be seen in stanza three with the phrase 'drowns Chianti in a dusky stream'. When the meaning is considered it could be seen as effective at conveying Lee's emotions. The 'Chianti' seems to be representative of the cultural experience Lee had abroad. If the 'Chianti' is a symbol of Lee's experience then the fact it is being drowned is suggestive that these memories are now fading upon coming home. The image of memories fading makes Lee's memories of abroad seem less important than the 'landscape' he is now seeing, showing he is in fact happy to return home. However, whilst the metaphor is good at conveying emotion it is slightly flawed making it less effective than the first example looked at. The flaw within the metaphor is that 'Chianti' is a liquid, therefore it cannot be drowned. This means that the metaphor is less effective because the source of the metaphor does not fit with the target domain. If the two elements do not fit together then it is hard for the reader to visualise the image that Lee is trying to create in the reader's mind.

Finally, Lee also uses some metaphors which are ineffective. One of the ineffective metaphors within 'Home From Abroad' can be seen as 'hedges choke with roses fat as cream'. The metaphor here creates an image of suffocation from the word 'choke' suggesting that there are so many roses that the hedge is smothered by them. Whilst Lee creates a visual image for the reader within the metaphor adding to the description of the poem he does not convey emotion, making the metaphor ineffective at providing a sense of Laurie's feelings.

In conclusion, Lee uses some metaphors which are particularly expressive of emotion and convey his feelings well to the reader through the images they create. However, some metaphors merely create imagery in the reader's mind and whilst there is no doubt that these images are beautiful and descriptive they are not effective at conveying emotion to the reader. Another issue with Lee's use of metaphor sometimes it appears contradictory which detracts from the emotion Lee tries to create. However, on the whole Lee uses metaphors well to make clear to the reader his feelings and the same time creates a descriptive poem.