

# Limbo and island man essay



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There are lots of different methods used in the poems “ Limbo” and “ Island Man” which make these poems so amazing. I have collected together a few of them in order to understand the meaning in depth of the poems. The most obvious similarity of this poem is that they are both about the Caribbean and they are both based around thoughts people are having at a certain time of day. Limbo is about a man doing the limbo dance to get his body into shape. Island man is about a Caribbean man in London waking up, dreaming about still being in the Caribbean, where he really wants to be.

The poem Limbo is quite a deep poem, it describing in detail two things... the action of the dance “ limbo” and the history of the black slaves in the Caribbean.

On the other hand, Island man is an easy, simple poem only describing the thoughts of an “ Island Man”. Both poets say the poem from somebody’s viewpoint. Brathwaite writes the poem’s viewpoint as the man, doing the limbo dance himself. It’s very personal and has all the details in of everything he’s thinking and doing at each stage of the dance.

Nichols writes “ Island Man” from the main persons viewpoint but in this poem, it doesn’t describe everything, she just writes what he’s thinking as he wakes up each morning. In each poem, the Caribbean is described as different things... in Limbo the Caribbean is described as a place where slaves were used.

In the actual poem, Brathwaite uses the anger of the slave and blames it all on to the Caribbean. He also writes about the dumb African gods and how the music is saving him. In Island Man, the Caribbean is described as a

heaven, a place of tropical paradise and the perfect place to live!! The two states of mind are different. In Limbo he is concentrating on two things, one, the actual dance but two, that it reminds him of the past, of the slavery and of the history of his tradition. In “ Island Man”, it is also concentrating on two things, i.

e. the Caribbean morning and the London morning and how different they are. Both poems have a lack of punctuation. “ Island Man” is because he is confused and doesn’t really know what he’s doing or where he is. (In Chaim’s words, “ his brains messed up”). “ Limbo” has a lack of punctuation as he has a lack of control over his life and he doesn’t really know what’s going to be with the rest of his life.

Repetition is used in both poems. Repetition is used to emphasis that point a bit more and can add a bit of rhythm to the poem. An example of this in “ Limbo” is “ Up, Up, Up.” The point that this is emphasising is that he’s almost finished his limbo dance and the pressure is just lifting off him and he feels like he’s achieved something. It’s amazing how all of this can be explained in just one word repeated a few times. Nichols also uses the same technique when she says “ groggily groggily.

” She is trying to emphasis with a bit of onomatopoeia, how hard it is to wake up in the morning and what he’s thinkingIn Limbo only, there are a variety of short and long lines used. This method can be used for different things. The line “ Long Dark Deck..

.” is written as a long line to show just how long the deck actually is. The short lines for example “ down, down, down” is showing how much he wants

to get this dance over with and how much he wants to be able to finish it.

Both poets use rhyme in their poems.

They use rhyme to add a tune into the poem and to make it flow better. An example of this is in Limbo when it says “ Limbo Like Me... Limbo like me” or when it says in Island Man, “ Breaking and wombing”.

Only in “ Island Man” are links used. It has a lot of links in it comparing a dreary, rainy London morning to a bright, sunny Caribbean morning. A lot of words and sentences are used to combine them both together. For example, when it says in the beginning of the poems it says “ SUN” which can obviously be compared with “ North Circular” seeing as the sun is circular or when it says “ Sound” which the actual word sounds like “ sand” which is written in the second half.