

# The barn and mid-term break – seamus heaney essay sample



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There are two poems to compare between in this essay, both written by the same poet who is Seamus Heaney. Both of them express two of the strongest feelings in the universe that are fear and misery. The first poem is 'The Barn' which expresses a child's fear of what is going around him. The second is 'Mid-term Break' which conveys sorrow caused by loss of a loved one. There are lots of similarities and differences between both of them. First both poems are very emotional and both try to convey strong feelings but they are not happy and cheerful they are more like scared and sad.

Mid-term Break is very sad it expresses the loss of a very dear person, a younger brother. The Barn is not sad but it expresses fear and shows a wide imagination. A similarity that is easy to spot is the structure and layout both are written in three or four line stanzas. This makes them look neat, also the shift in mood or tone is very little so the poems would have been either written as one big stanza or as lots of short one. Writing it in a long stanza makes it boring and makes it seem longer than it is but by spreading it out it is easier and more fun to read.

Also some paragraphs flow into each other like "clogging up your lungs // and scuttled fast" One of the main differences is what the poem is describing, Mid-term Break is mainly describing feelings of other people but we know very little about the poet's own feelings. The Barn describes the location and setting and it tells us a lot about the barn he is in. It also tells us quiet a lot about the poet's feelings like "I lay face-down to shun the fear above". Both are written in an autobiographical style this is shown by words like "I" and "my".

Also they are expressed from a young child's perspective yet a long time after these incidents happened. Using an autobiographical style in writing makes it more personal and makes the reader feel as if he knew the poet. This allows the reader to easily and quickly understand the poet's feelings and quickly reach the points he is trying to make. In Mid-term break the poet did something very good which makes the poem's ending excellent. He used one final line all by itself, this one line has as much feelings as the whole poem because it is very expressive.

This line is " A four foot box, a foot for every year" shows how truly how sad the poem is. This line is written alone to emphasize on it and to make sure that all the readers get the point he is trying to make by this statement. On the other hand The Barn's ending has nothing special it could have flowed on to more but it leaves the reader in suspense by saying " the two lugged-sacks moved in like great blind rats" this makes the reader wonder what would happen next.

So actually it leaves the reader with a kind of a mystery to deal with and a question which is looking for an answer a question like what will happen next? One of Seamus Heaney's strengths is his ability to create vivid images in your mind using words. Using similes, metaphors and personification these words make you imagine the scene and what is going around. He uses the three kinds in both poems and uses them quite often.

In " The Barn" he says " The roof gulfed in" gulfed is an action so how could the roof have gulfed? ell it is personification, he made the roof (object) a person by implying that it has gulfed the use of this method makes the poem

easier to understand, and makes the images Heaney is trying to draw clearer to see. He uses a metaphor to join up the image and add the final touches, he uses “ poppy” to describe the colour of the bruise. This draws a sad depressing image in your brain, this shows the suffering the boy (Heaney’s brother) had went through.

Poppies also have quiet a distinguished red colour so by using them he implies it was specially bad. In the barn there are lots of words used to describe the surroundings such as “ fierce, unblinking”, “ farmyard implements, harness, plough socks. ” And “ the floor was mouse grey” all this helps draw the image of the place the boy is in and the choice of words made is very good and the order these words are put in also makes it better. The use of such language means that the reader can easily imagine the point Heaney is trying to make.

Both poems don’t have a real rhyme scheme, “ The barn” has a steady scheme but only in the first stanza after that the scheme weakens until there is actually no scheme. Words like “ ivory and armoury” and “ sacks and socks” all rhyme together the rhyme scheme is very obvious in the first stanza but then there is no scheme or a very weak scheme. Although the words are very close to each other they don’t sound the same. This might be because the words might be said in a different way in an Irish accent, this could make the words sound similar and even rhyme.

In “ Mid-Term Break” there is no rhyme scheme at all the words don’t even sound similar. Rhyming line make poems seem quiet cheerful and happy but this is not the feeling Heaney wanted us to feel. I think this is why he didn’t

use any rhyming lines to make it sadder. Both poems have very good endings yet each poem's ending has a different purpose, in Mid term Break the ending reveals information which wasn't known before while on the other hand in " the Barn" the ending is intriguing and doesn't tell you what happens next.

The last line of Mid-term break is a very good line " a four foot box, a foot for every year" it is written alone to emphasize on it and its meaning. It is a truly good way to end such a great poem, it reveals a very sad fact which wasn't mentioned before. " the Barn" has a more mysterious ending, it leaves some thoughts for your own imagination it gives you a chance to think of what could happen next.