

Compare by frank o'
hara with essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Compare and contrast 'the day the lady died' by Frank O' Hara with 'Mid-term break' by Seamus Heaney. How do the poets deal with the experience of death and grief in two very different circumstances and culture? In this essay I am going to compare and contrast two poems.

One is 'The Day The Lady Died' by Frank O' Hara and 'Mid - Term Break' by Seamus Heaney. Frank O ' Hara was an American intellectual who wrote poems about understanding living and how to cope when a famous icon has a tragic death. He was used to the fast paced city life of New York. Where as Seamus Heaney was born in Ireland and he was used to the quite country life of the farming family.

He attended St. Columb's College in Derry where he was a border. Heaney went on to win the Nobel Prize for Literature. Both poems deal with the grief of death in two different manners but with two different types of death.

A public death and a personal death. I will be writing about the grief felt by both poets in the face of death and their reaction to the news. I will begin my analysis by exploring 'The day the lady died' by Frank O'Hara. The poems name shows that a memorable occasion has taken place. When you first look at the poems name you think it's about any lady but Billy holidays nickname was the lady.

She was named the lady because she was a cultural icon. She represented jazz, a certain type of sophistication and everything that was exciting about New York. Frank O'Hara talks about Billy Holiday as if he had some kind of link with her by the way he talks about her, like she's a close relative or friend. This poem starts in the everyday busy life of New York. As Frank

O'Hara wakes up normally like every other day he deals with how he felt alienated in the crowded streets of New York. As he says " I don't know the people who will feed me".

This shows how anonymous the people of New York are. O'Hara goes on with his everyday routine and does things that tell us that he is a modern intellectual New Yorker. " Buy an ugly NEW WORLD WRITING to see what the poets of Ghana are doing these days" this shows that he is interested in the world around him and is interested with the literature the 3rd world country's are producing, showing that he is a man of sophisticated tastes. He then goes on to say that something isn't right in his everyday script. Some thing had changed.

Miss Stillwagon (first name Linder I heard once) Doesn't even look up my balance for once in her life". This again shows the anonymity of New York. A complete stranger that every time Frank enters the bank she always makes time to check his bank balance but for this time she's distracted. For once something else was on her mind. It must have been something big to prevent her from checking his balance, but what was this distraction? Frank O'Hara was yet to discover.

This poem is like a journey that leads to the point when he found out the shocking news of Holidays Death. He couldn't believe what he was seeing. He reacted as if he didn't want it to be true. " a NEW YORK POST with her face on it". This shows us how shocked he is to the fact that she ain't no more like time had stopped for him as the busy streets of New York passed him by.

This was major news, as big as 9/11 or the death of Tupac; a world effecting news that wouldn't be forgotten. Like a part of New York had died along with her. As it was the end of an era. Frank had also wrote the name of the news paper in capitals to show how important it was to him.

It was how he found out of the tragic loss. He felt as if he needed time for the huge news to absorb before he understood that she was gone. He now knows why everyone was acting so strangely, even though he wished he didn't. He didn't know what to do and how to express his feelings. The poem describes how it was such a big shock to him. " I am sweating by now and thinking of leaning on the John door in the 5 SPOT".

This shows us that he can't take the news, its such a big blow to him and the people of New York. He talks of how he feels like leaning on the John door in the 5 spot as if she was going to be performing her final act. Or somewhere, where he can just feel close to her. This again refers to him having some kind of connection with her. He then continues saying how she used to perform day in day out for all her fans like it wasn't true. Wishing that he could watch her perform for one last time.

" She whispered a song along the keyboard to Mal Waldron and everyone and i stopped breathing. This is telling us that she was a unique performer. She used to do it in her own style that was the essence of New York. He also tells us the effect she used to leave on her audience. He is also telling us that New York weren't the same that day the anonymity that everyone normally felt wasn't there that day.

They all felt the same feelings and were grieving the death of a legend as a whole rural community rather than individually. In comparison to Frank O'Hara's poem, mid-term break by Seamus Heaney poem is also about experiencing the grief of death, but the difference is that this time its more personal. The death is of a family member his younger brother. This is set in the quite countryside of Ireland. The title mid-term break would give you the ideas of holidays but in this poem it is nothing to do with any vacation.

You can discover with the words Heaney uses that he was bored at school and wanted to go home to enjoy and relax after a long hard, term of study. "Counting bells knelling classes to a close". This tells us that he cant wait till school is over and he can finally go home and meet his family after 6 weeks without seeing them. He was counting the bells till it was time for his departure.

However, the closure has now become one of death. " At two o'clock our neighbours drove me home. This tells us how close and rural the community in comparison to Frank O'Hara's poem we see how alienated he felt but here we see community and togetherness. But Seamus prefers to be left alone to grieve as he is embarrassed by the attention being shown towards him by the neighbours. He arrives home to see his father crying in the porch.

This wasn't the reaction he was expecting from his father, as he was usually the strong one that could keep it together is distraught to the fact his child is gone. But this time it was too personal to keep the emotion bottled up. In the porch I met my father crying - he had always taken funerals in his stride". But now that his own flesh and blood had been taken away from him it was

too much to handle and that his father was in an emotional wreck. In this poem there is a lot of emotion that is expressed in such a way that it is unbearable to read.

Where as in the other poem the emotion is shown as people acting differently, strangely but tears are not shed portraying less feeling to the death. This conveys that the grief of death has taken over and he has been overcome by death. This shows how death can cause much grief and trauma, as well as confusion. But no one expected the death to hit quite so close to home... to the heart. This shows us just how short life is.

This is different compared to the day the lady died as that this is about a close relationship. A younger sibling that he will never see again. Who had a whole life ahead of him to see. This increases the sympathy shown in Heaney's poem. Where as in O'Hara's poem he is referring to the death of a woman who had lived a long life in which she had accomplished much. After seeing the effect that death left on to his father Seamus then tells us the effect of death has on the community, which yet again shows us just how close the community is unlike the first poem.

“ And big Jim Evans saying it was a big blow” here Seamus plays with words say that it was a big blow. He is referring to both physical and mental state of mind. Mentally by saying it was a big blow to lose someone so young and physically because the cause of the death was by a car colliding with his younger brother. In addition, to this he is disturbed by people saying their apologies and people talking about who he is. When he just wants to be alone.

" I was embarrassed by old men standing up to shake my hand and tell me they were " sorry for my trouble," Whispers informed strangers I was the eldest. " people were showing him unwanted attention towards him. As he was the centre of attention and everyone wanted pay their respects. He is embarrassed as everyone is looking at him when he wants to be alone. As well as this " the baby cooed and laughed and rocked the pram" the baby is happy to see him after a long term away at school.

Unaware of what's going on around him the baby laughed and cooed as only a baby could in happiness of Seamus returning. In this poem Seamus is being helped by people trying to help him cope with the stress and grief of death. Where as, in the day the lady died even though all the people of New York are all feeling the same kind of trauma they are dealing with it individually and expressing grief of death in their own way. After seeing one distraught parent Heaney then goes on to explain what the other was going through and how she reacted to the death of her younger child. As my mother held my hand In hers and coughed out angry tearless sighs. " The emotion shown by Heaney's mother is indescribable and can only be felt if you are in the same circumstances as she is.

She was in such an emotional state that she had cried so much that she had ran out of tears but still she tried to force them out. " As my mother held my hand In hers". This shows me that his mother just wants to be close to her son. She has already lost one and doesn't want to lose the other.

This poem shows a lot of emotion and how agitated the parents are by the grief of losing one of their own. In contrast, the day the lady died again Frank

O'Hara deals with the grief caused by death on his own and no one to try and help him throw the pain. Unlike Mid term break where Heaney doesn't only have the support of his family but the community as well which yet again shows how rural the society is and how anonymous New York is. In conclusion Heaney gets to see his younger sibling but not how he expected to see him. After a long term at school when he finally gets to see him but, he doesn't get to see him move or call his name for the last time.

At ten o'clock the ambulance arrived With the corpse, stanced and bandaged by the nurses. " He finally gets to see his brother but he doesn't refer to him as his brother and not even a person but as " the corpse". Heaney cant believe or wont believe that, that's his brother. But to refer to his brother as a corpse is a cold word which shows how deverstated he is to have lost his brother.

" Next morning I went up into the room. Snowdrops And candles soothed the bedside" This is a traditional ceremony that the Irish do when a person has died. The snowdrops and the candles are there to calm the mood but as well as this the snowdrops are a symbol in the poem it is suppose to represent the symbol of life after death. " Paler now, wearing a poppy bruise on the left temple, He lay in the four foot box as in a cot.

No gaudy scars, the bumper knocked him clear. " Wearing a poppy bruise Seamus says this like the bruise is not a part of his brother, like it can be taken off. He links the bruise with a poppy. A flower that is connected with death.

Like the snowdrops the poppy also is a symbol but this flower represents death and the soothing of death. He lay in a four foot box as in a cot, Heaney says this like his brother was sleeping. He now says that it is his brother and doesn't call him a corpse. " No gaudy scars, the bumper knocked him clear. " his brother still looked the same no scars or visible marks, the only thing that was different about him was that he was slightly paler. The last line of this emotionally painful poem is really touching and shows you just how short life is.

" A four foot box, a foot for every year. " the size of the coffin is the size of the life time of Seamus's brother. But Seamus doesn't call it a coffin but instead a box. Like he's sleeping temporarily in the box like he's hibernating and one day will wake up. In this poem Seamus gets to see his brother for the last time unlike in the day the lady died where as frank doesn't get that opportunity. In addition in this poem Seamus explains what his brother looks like after the incident no scars too the face nor was it disfigured.

The structure in both poems was different in many ways. In the day the lady died it is written out almost like a story or a diary, it has no rhymes or anything you would expect to find in a poem. Also key words like the names of articles or names of a important place are written in capital letters. Where as in mid term break it is written in three lines stanzas. There are some rhymes in the poem but not too many. The last two lines form a rhyming couplet and display his brothers life.

In some of the stanzas the lines run on into the next stanza. In my analysing of these two poems I have discovered that they are both very effective

poems in their own way, both dealing with the grief that was caused by death in two completely different ways. I have also discovered that poems don't need to rhyme to show emotion but if they do they show a little more emotion. Both poems have a similar start both gradually building up to the point that you realise a tragic event has taken place. However, a significant difference is that in the day the lady died it tells you at the very end that a dreadful event has taken place. As well as not going in too detail of how he felt and what he was going through was what this poem was lacking.

Where as in mid term break after the first stanza he realises that he has lost his brother and then expresses his feelings. I found Seamus's poem more effective on how much emotion is shown and how he plays with words, Like "big blow, box, corpse". It also shows how embarrassed he is by old men standing up to shake his hand and when he is alone he can be normal and express his feelings. The emotion in this poem can be felt as well as read. The poem also shows mixed emotions like; anger, grief, confusion, trauma .

... which all relate to death.