

Candidate 3

(DOAN) Seamus Heaney is a poet who uses ~~nature~~ his memories of nature as a child to explore the idea of change. Particularly in the poems 'Death of a Naturalist', 'The Barn' and 'Personal Helicon'. All ^{1st} three poems contain recurring themes, such as: childhood innocence, mortality, growing up and they also are written ~~for~~ for depicting the poetic voice as a young child ~~and then moving on to it becoming an adult speaking~~ and then moving on to it becoming an adult speaking. Hence showing the change from childhood to adulthood.

~~At the beginning of 'DOAN',~~ At the beginning of 'DOAN', Heaney portrays the poetic voice showing a love of nature and his childlike ~~enthusiasm~~ enthusiasm and glee towards ~~something that~~ ~~adults~~ it.

"bubbles gargled delicately, Bluebottles / Wove a strong gauze of sound around the smell" The ~~poetic~~ plosive sounds in "bubbles" and "gargled" seem ~~as almost onomatopoeic and create a sense of~~ and "gargled" "delicately" is almost oxymoronic. This shows a childish curiosity and the poetic voice is not disgusted by this setting before him, he seems intrigued actually which come back to the idea of childish innocence and the fascination and love of something that adults would find repulsive.

In 'The Barn' the reader gets a description of the barn from the poetic voice's point of view and it almost seem cinematic.

"The floor was mouse-grey, smooth, chilly concrete"

"There were no windows, just two narrow shafts"

These lines are just statements of fact to a child (poetic voice) and 'concrete' could

suggest the idea that everything is 'set in stone', that nothing changes which is how a child perceives the world. "Mouse-grey"

could be foreshadowing of the rats and fear to come. "No windows" could make an adult feel trapped and claustrophobic but again to a child is just a statement of fact, which

(1)

in turn suggests a childlike innocence. Just like in "DOAN", "Personal Helicon", again begins just like the previously mentioned poem, begins with a childlike sense of innocence and curiosity. "As a child, they could not keep me from wells." This not only depicts literal wells but also the origins of Heaney's love of poetry, 'Helicon' ~~referring to~~ a body of water in the mountains that supposedly grants poetic talent. This poem seems like a contrasting poem from the other two. Although it has childlike innocence and the poetic voice seems like younger version of Heaney, This poem seems more about self discovery through the use of poetry and wells. In the beginning of all three poems have innocence as a recurring theme. Through the poetic voice, Heaney explores childlike innocence, and how it is lost and a child's unawareness and lack of care about consequences, from a child's experience with nature.

The poems then go on to explore fear. Almost like a change from childhood innocence to becoming more self conscience and realising consequences.

In DOAN there is a sense of emerging fear as the poetic voice transitions from loving nature to finding it repulsive.

"With coudling in the grass the angry frogs/
invaded the flax-dam..."

The frogs are now anthropomorphised to be a threat and the situation now seems claustrophobic and oppressive through the use of sounds.

"Invaded" is also associated with war and armies. However it seems as though the poetic voice could be going through physical changes (i.e puberty) and is now more self conscience conscious and repulsed by his body. and Heaney shows this through nature.

In ~~the~~ The Barn the poetic voice is now becoming more aware of his surrounding and in turn is becoming more afraid.

"And into nights when bats were on the wing"
The Barn has now become the poetic voices (child's) mind and it ~~now~~ is now ~~that when~~ the birth of the child's fear. The repeating of the "W" ~~was~~ in 'When', 'were' and 'Wing' mirrors the sounds of the bats wings and the Barn now fills the child with primal terror.

In 'Personal Helicon' fear emerges through Heaney's fear of rats.

"... a rat slapped across my reflection"

The poetic ^{voice's} reflection is altered ~~momentarily~~ and this ~~could~~ suggest that he is changing physically, growing up. The use of rats ~~and~~ Heaney's fear of them could suggest a fear of growing up. As the poems progress the poetic voices fear begins to emerge. It seems as though the 'child' in the poems is maturing and his fear is becoming more apparent.

In the final ~~seems~~ sections of the poems, seems like the poetic voices face the consequences of actions, face reality, understand adulthood and the inevitability of growing up.

DOAN ends with the poetic voice maturing and now understanding that actions have consequences.

~~The~~ "... The great slime kings / were gathered there for vengeance and I know / That if I dipped my hand the spawn would clutch it"

~~The~~ Heaney elevates the status of the frogs by using 'king' to show that the poetic voice is ~~now~~ now understanding that nothing is black and white, which is how a child views the world and that he ~~has~~ ^{has} come to the realisation that the world does not revolve around him.

"The Barn" ends with a similar realisation.

With the poetic voice having an epiphany.

"I was chaff"

The poetic voice has now matured and comes to the understanding that he is not the Centre of the universe, as a child usually thinks he is.

However 'Personal Helicon' ends differently, with the poetic voice finding himself and understanding himself better.

"I rhyme / to see myself, to set the darkness echoing"

Heaney refers to his poetry as 'rhymes' which seems almost like he is being humble whereas previously he ~~was~~ calls himself narcissistic. This shows ~~that~~ the poetic voice has matured ~~and~~ and that Heaney also writes poetry to see himself with clarity, ~~but~~ but also to see and acknowledge the ~~darkness within him~~ darkness / flaws within him.

~~The~~ DOAN and The Barn end with the poetic voice overcoming his fear, accepting the inevitability of mortality and that actions have consequences. There is a ~~ret~~ real sense of the poetic voice's journey and his maturing ~~through~~ throughout the poems. Showing change of not only the poetic voice physically like in DOAN but also his ~~change~~ change in the way he views the world and his place in it like in The Barn.

However ~~the~~ 'Personal Helicon' concludes with the poetic voice finding himself and acknowledging that poetry should not only depict the poet's good points but also his flaws. ~~As Heaney~~ or as Heaney put it "darkness".

~~Through his poems~~ To conclude, throughout all three poems Heaney explores aspects of change, ~~from~~ beginning with ~~childhood~~ childhood innocence to losing that innocence and ~~finally~~ finally maturing. ~~and~~ The poetic voices in all poems come to understand ~~the~~ the world and their place in it. Heaney does this effectively through the use of his childhood memories when exploring nature.