

Candidate 2 evidence

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	Section 2: Critical Essay	
10)		
	<p>A poem which explores loss is 'Death of a Naturalist' by Seamus Heaney. In this poem a boy is described to be enthusiastic and curious about a flax-dam and all the nature thriving, especially tadpoles. However, when they mature, the boy is full of terror to find they have aged. This poem is not just about a boy and his love for nature, it has a deeper meaning of the loss of innocence and childhood through the presentation of the boy's transition from joy to disgust. Heaney conveys this through a number of techniques such as tone, language and symbolism.</p>	
	<p>Firstly, the first stanza explores the curiosity of a young boy and the innocence of childhood. Heaney describes the boy to enjoy the nature ^{in a flax dam} including "spotted butterflies" and "dragon flies" which thrive under the harshness of the sun, shown through the use of personification of "punishing sun." In this flax dam, "bubbles gurgled delicately", the bubbles are a great curiosity for the boy and the use of the word "delicately" symbolises</p>	

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	<p>the fragility of childhood. However "gargled" is a gross word and foreshadows the change to come. The boy is takes most interest in the "swimming tadpoles" which act for ^{as} a symbolism for him as a child. Collecting these curious creatures, the boy takes them to his teacher who describes how they came to exist by using phrases such as "daddy frog" and "mummy frog" which show the enthusiasm of the children as they learn of life and the explanation to fit the children shows how young and innocent they are. Throughout this stanza, there is a childish tone and excitable narrative, bringing together the theme of childhood and the innocence which comes with it. It also signifies how much joy he takes from finding and learning of the tadpoles. This enhances my appreciation for the text poem as a whole because it really helps paint a picture of what it means to be a child and allows me to fondly look back at my childhood when finding something as simple as a tadpole brought so much joy.</p>

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	<p>Furthermore, [★]the first stanza ends with a description of toads as they go from "yellow" to "brown". This obvious change compliments the change to come. There is a significant change in language with many more words being negative such as "rank", "cauldung" and "angry" which is similar to how the boy's demeanour has also darkened. As the boy comes to find that the tadpoles he once cherished have now become "gross bellied" toads, he is horrified. He calls them "slime kings", symbolising both the transition of ageing of the toads and the boy, with "kings" symbolising the boy as an adult. As the toads move they "stop" and "plop". The onomatopoeia makes the frogs seem lively, this is juxtaposed to "obscure threats" as it is clear that the boy thinks they are here to cause him harm.</p> <p>The by the rhythm in this stanza is much slower and with the lack of excitement excitement in his tone, it is clear that not only the toads, but the boy has grown and matured. He has lost his innocence and enjoyment through his clear disgust for the creatures. This enhances my appreciation of the poem as a whole as it</p>

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creates a clear ~~fast~~ feeling of loss, making me become more aware of the moments of my life, looking fondly back to when I was younger as was a different but precious stage of life.

In addition, the first and second stanza contrast greatly against each other - the first happy and childlike, but the second dark and sorrowful. ~~The~~ In the second stanza, Heaney mentions a "Then" and "Before" creating the impression of two separate times. The ~~Before~~ ^{"Before"} being a time of childhood happiness and innocence. The ~~Then~~ ^{"Then"} being a change of maturity and ageing, with it coming experience. There is an obvious change in language as the majority of the words in the first stanza are positive, however 18 of 106 words in the second stanza are negative showing a clear loss of excitement and intrigue. The tone also shifts with the first stanza being childlike and enthusiastic, compared to the second stanza with a dark, negative tone. This creates an idea of an epiphany. The realisation of the terrifying journey of ageing and the reality that our initial excitement and joy for life can, and will

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	<p>inevitably be lost. The boy shows his terror as he describes the toads to be out for "vengeance" showing he believes they are no longer a source of joy but are now dangerous and a threat. The final line of the stanza "I knew / That if I dipped my hand hand the spawn would clutch it." showing how desperately he wants to go back to his childhood but knows that he cannot. This symbolises loss as he has lost that time of his life, a time of childhood and innocence, but now an epiphany has occurred and he understands life and that he has lost his childhood - he is now experienced. It is the loss and ultimate death of childhood, and death of a naturalist. This enhances my appreciation of the text as it has made me reflect on my life and miss the times I had little worries.</p>
	<p>To conclude, this poem looks deeper than a boy enjoying collecting frogspawn and being upset when he finds they have grown. It is about the transition of innocence to experience, and the loss of childhood and this innocence in order to gain maturity and experience which is not always</p>

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	<p>Something that is desired. The loss in this poem is explored by Heaney through his use of language, tone, and symbolism. It has led me to realise that life is fleeting and moves fast, so we must enjoy the moments we have and look back on the times spent and memories made.</p>	
	<p>* the second stanza explores the process of ageing, and the fear and disgust that can come from the realisation of this journey.</p>	