
Childhood Innocence In The Poem's Mid-term Break By Seamus Heaney And Kamikaze By Beatrice Garland

The poems 'Mid-Term Break' by Seamus Heaney and 'Kamikaze' by Beatrice Garland presents innocence as childhood simplicity and uncertainty, highlighting how one small event can overpower young individuals, bringing in a new perspective of the world. In both poems, they show uncertainty through the various situations and a sense of nostalgia through the memories of their childhood. Childhood innocence shows the transition from youth to adulthood through the persona's perception of the death of his young brother in 'Mid-Term Break' and it also displays the lack of knowledge the pilot's daughter had about the compulsory suicide mission in 'Kamikaze.'

Heaney presents childhood innocence in 'Mid-Term Break' through a sense of uncertainty following the death of his four-year-old brother. As "old men [stood] up to shake [his] hand," we understand that he is unable to fully comprehend the situation that he is starting to feel a sense of unequivocal. The use of imagery when the old men were shaking his hand illustrates that he is being treated like an adult, but he doesn't know why. This contrasts with his parents as they were fully aware and able to adapt to the situation, seen as his father "had always taken funerals in his stride." The use of imagery in "stride" highlights the power his father has, which also symbolizes the stereotypical male behaviour; more strong and less emotional. Furthermore, "when [he] came in, and [he] was embarrassed", we can tell that there was a feeling of consternation due to the use of a caesura, suggesting that he has difficulty processing the scenario he is in. The usage of the caesura not only slows down the mood but also creates tension towards the reader, which may infer that this is the end of the innocence of his childhood. Through this, innocence is presented as a feeling of uncertainty, demonstrating how one event can shock and confuse young individuals.

Garland also portrays childhood innocence in 'Kamikaze' through a sense of uncertainty following the father's disrespectful actions. This can be seen in stanza six where the father returned and the "children still chattered and laughed." The use of sensory language creates powerful images which symbolize the natural reaction and love children have when they are around their parents. In the last stanza, "till gradually we too learned" emphasizes that childhood innocence is eventually transitioned to adulthood. The use of the adverb in "gradually" expresses the length of time it would take for children to gain knowledge about different situations, which indicates that the knowledge of children will expand. While the children were still delighted that their father came back, their mother "never spoke" to him again. The use of the intensifier implies that there is no more connection between their relationship and that honour is more important than family. Not only did the shamed mother not speak to him, but "nor did she meet his eyes." The use of imagery as the mother pretends that he's not there suggests that the impertinent father did not obey the rules, therefore gaining a state of shame and disgrace. As the father returned, he is shunned by both the community and his family, instantly portraying that the bond between the pilot and the mother has faded, unlike his daughter who still had a strong relationship with her father. Childhood innocence in 'Kamikaze' is displayed as a sense of uncertainty following the contrasting effect between childhood and adulthood.

Heaney delineates childhood innocence in 'Mid-Term Break' through a sense of nostalgia following the baby brother's actions in the past. As "the baby cooed and laughed and rocked the pram," shown in stanza three, we can interpret that the baby was having a vigorous life due to the use of a polysyndeton. Heaney uses the technique to constantly describe the baby's actions, instantly bringing back in rushing memories to the persona. This shows the innocence the baby has, ignorant about the heartbreaking situation that is about to happen. Moreover, it demonstrates that the baby is oblivious, creating a juxtaposition with the parents as they were in lots of pain after what had happened. In the very last line of the poem, "A four-foot box, a foot for every year" illustrates how tragic the event is as he died at a very young age. A poignant tone of this suggests that the persona is trying to remember each and every one of his baby brother's four years, showing nostalgia and displaying the break of innocence through the trouble of grief. Across the poem, innocence is portrayed as the remembrance of his younger brother, insinuating that individuals must move on from the past.

Garland also exhibits childhood innocence in 'Kamikaze' through a sense of nostalgia following the pilot's memories building in when he was a child. In stanza four, we can understand that the pilot begins to retrospect his past as he "remembered how he and his brothers [wait] on the shore. This infers that he is aware of the situation he is in and it could be his last moments as it is a mandatory mission to take deliberate suicidal crashes in order to respect the Japanese culture. The use of enjambment creates a faster pace and contrasts the hesitation he felt before, whether or not he should start the one-way journey. There is a sense of family connection which contrasts with isolation when the pilot and his brothers were playing with "pearl-grey pebbles" trying to withstand the "turbulent inrush of breakers." Garland uses a double entendre in "inrush" which may describe the waves from the sea as well as the memories of the pilot rushing into him. This expresses that the pilot has regret about putting himself in the situation he is in, thus bringing back memories of his previous years where he had fun. Childhood innocence is expressed in 'Kamikaze' as the pilot reminisces about his past where he was completely ignorant, indicating the difference between childhood and adulthood.

After examining both 'Mid-Term Break' and 'Kamikaze', we can understand that childhood innocence is presented as a perspective that creates new experiences across an individual's life. It is an experience that allows a child to be aware and observant of a different part of the world. Eventually, childhood innocence will be broken, expanding their knowledge, and also maturing responsibly. This proves my thesis that the two poets present innocence as childhood simplicity and uncertainty, highlighting how one event can overpower young individuals.