

Introduction 1

- Peter Reading's creation "At Marsden Bay" succeeds in making an effective atmosphere of intense loss; though not of a person: of nature itself. Analysing the poem further, the reader can see that this "loss" of everything positive about the earth is actually caused by mankind. The reader's understanding of Reading's work is affected greatly by this deep, raw atmosphere of loss and this deeper understanding combined with Reading's strong effective atmosphere is what I shall explore.

Introduction 2

- At Marsden Bay a poem written by a not well known author or poet, called Peter Reading. This poem creates an atmosphere of loss when the birds are attacked and killed by the 'yobs'.
- In this essay I will explain the poetic techniques used by the writer, show how he respects the birds and creates an atmosphere of loss.

Main Body Example 1

- Reading uses a scientific tone in stanza one. “Magnesium carbonates” this shows he respects the beach. “Rissa trydactyla” is what he calls the birds, this shows he has great respect for them. Reading notes down exactly what the birds say “uk uk uk” to show the scientific tone, and it makes the reader respect the birds.

Example of Main Body 2

- In stanza one Reading uses a scientific tone to show his respect for the beach and the birds. By using the first six lines to describe in detail the formation of the beach, the 'magnesium carbontaes' that were 'silted' here in the 'Permian period' he demonstrates his knowledge of the place, and by teaching this to the reader he invites us to share his obvious passion and respect for the place.
- He does the same with the birds who live there; by calling them by their Latin name 'Rissa trydactlya' (instead of simply seagulls) he shows he looks up to them and encourages us, the reader, to respect them too. By winning our respect for the birds Reading is subtly preparing us for the dramatic 3rd stanza, and the loss described there.

Example Main body 3

- Reading writes about three boys in Stanza two to help create an atmosphere of sadness. He conjures up an image of a stereotypical yob or casual when he continues the scientific tone to describe their appearance: “Army combat jackets” and “Balaclavas” suggest something a terrorist might wear and the mention of ‘army’ and ‘combat’ both words having connotations of violence make us, the reader, wary of the boys. The use of the word ‘slit’, and the use of enjambment (placing it at the end of the line) highlight the possible violent intentions of the boys, it being a graphic word suggesting a knife wound. This creates a sense of menace in the poem and foreshadows the atmosphere of sadness which is to come.
- The boys are further contrasted with the birds when Reading records their speech. Again, like with the birds he writes it phonetically: “Gibbo getofforal gethayafugga”/ and a low “Lookatembastabirdsmon”. The repetition of the word ‘low’ here suggests there is something of a threat in the boys voice and sets up the conflict (and loss) to come.

Example Main Body 4

- Reading writes about three boys in Stanza two to help create an atmosphere of sadness. “Balaclava” this suggests they are up to on good. “Combat” “army” “slit” all have connotations of combat and fighting, this lets us know the boys will like combat and violence. Reading says they are “cross eyed” and “bellow” at each other. This stereotype makes us dislike the boys.

Main Body 5

- In stanza three the writer creates an atmosphere of sadness, he does this by showing us how the boys attack the birds. “biffing an incubating kittewake” shows us they are attacking the defenceless birds and makes us sad. “exuding thick rick embryo goo” makes the noise of a egg breaking and the word ‘rich’ shows this is valuable. This makes me very sad indeed.

Example Main body 6

- In Stanza three the poet skilfully uses Free Indirect Style to contrast our knowledge of the beach and birds with the boys ignorance. A perfect example of this is the line “Gibbo grubs up an magnesium limestone chunk”, here we still see the scientific tone in the words ‘magnesium limestone, but the writer has ‘dropped’ in words from Gibbo’s mind in to the poem (Free Indirect Style), such as ‘grubs’ and ‘chunk’. This clearly shows us the boys ignorance as the ‘magnesium limestone’ to him is simply a ‘chunk’. Reading does this throughout stanza three to show how they boys treat the ‘rizza trydaciya’ we have come to respect and care about as a mere ‘lump’ or a ‘poultry’ a thing to be consumed. This contrast perfectly creates the atmosphere of sadness and loss as the natural world we care for is destroyed by the yobs because they are ignorant towards it.
- We are furthered saddened when we discover they enjoy this destruction, the word ‘joyfully’ is made to stand out through use of enjambment, and then the poet notes they ‘gambol euphoric like drunk chimps...’