

# MPC English & Study Skills Center

## Comparison: Sample Literary Essay, Two Poems

<p>Identify &amp; introduce each piece and conclude with the thesis--the point you are making about the two pieces.</p>	<p>The Aesthetic Movement, as exemplified by "The Indian to His Love," by W. B. Yeats, seems lifeless and insipid when compared to his "The Hosting of the Sidhe." The images of the two poems are so completely different that they almost demand a different set of rules dealing with their creation. It would be virtually impossible for Yeats to deal effectively with the subject matter of "The Hosting of the Sidhe" in the same manner as "The Indian to His Love" because he is viewing the world from a different perspective for each poem.</p>
<p>Establish a point of comparison for each topic and then describe first one piece and then the other to support the point. In short essays, both parts may be in one paragraph. In longer essays, the topics can be separated into two paragraphs. Use transitional phrases to separate the two parts of a topic (in contrast to, on the other hand, etc.).</p>	<p>There is little relationship between the characters of "The Indian to His Love" and those of "The Hosting of the Sidhe." In the former, Yeats deals exclusively with mortals, idealized perhaps, but nonetheless mortals who must deal with the world as mortals: "Here we will moor our lovely ship/ And wander ever with woven hands," and. "How we alone of mortals are." These characters are not only mortals but are anonymous in that they have no personal identities, and there is no representation of them as individuals. The lovers seem to decorate the scene much as the "peahens" and the "parrot." Yeats does, however, remind the readers of the characters' mortality even while he makes them seem timeless. "How when we die our shades will rove" tells clearly that those mortals may be in a dream, but even this dream is destined to end.</p> <p>In "The Hosting of the Sidhe," in contrast to "The Indian and His Love," Yeats deals with the "faeries" or "little people" of Ireland: "The host is riding from Knocknarea" and "Coailte tossing his burning hair,/ And Niamh calling Away, come away." Here there are no insipid mortals, but beings and animals with names and emotions that are as immortal as they are:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Our cheeks are pale, our hair is unbound Our breasts are heaving, our eyes are a gleam</p> <p>These are descriptive, life-giving images, and Yeats chooses to portray his faeries as closer to reality than the mortals of "The Indian to His Love." Yeats obviously wants the reader to identify with the faeries and to feel their passion rather than just to observe them.</p>
<p>Continue with additional points of comparison--usually at least three</p>	<p>The settings of the two poems, like the characters, are totally different. In "The Indian to His Love," Yeats makes no attempt to</p>

<p>points are needed for a complete essay.</p>	<p>inject realism into his setting:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The island dreams under the dawn And great boughs drop tranquility; The peahens dance on a smooth lawn, A parrot sways upon a tree, Raging at his own image in the enameled sea</p> <p>Clearly, this is a nameless imaginary island surrounded by imaginary seas. Yeats' descriptions are in flowery metaphoric terms, and all combine to lend a dreamlike quality to the poem.</p> <p>In "The Hosting of the Sidhe," on the other hand, there are none of the qualities of setting present in "The Indian to His Love." Yeats tells the reader exactly where in Ireland the action takes place: "The host is riding from Knockarea/ And over the grave of Clooth-na-Bare." Yeats brings his poetry into the countryside of his people; and, even though his subjects are not real, except perhaps within the mind, they seem more rooted in reality than his hapless Indians.</p> <p>Additionally, the depiction of action is different in the two poems. In "The Indian to his Love, " Yeats makes no attempt to suggest action beyond the most static activity: "And wander ever with woven hands,/ Murmuring softly lip to lip." Nothing moves; nothing betrays real life. There are no winds, no storms, and no passions on Yeats' island, only "tranquility." Yeats chooses every word carefully to reinforce this picture in the minds of the readers. He gives no glimpse of the changes he will make in later poems, including "The Hosting of the Sidhe."</p> <p>In "The Hosting of the Sidhe," quite in contrast to "The Indian to His Love," the entire poem suggests action: "The host is riding from Knocknarea" and "Our breasts are heaving, our eyes are a gleam/ Our arms are weaving, our lips are apart." Here is a clear picture of Niamh on his fiery steed, rushing with purpose. Even nature is there in force: "The winds awaken, the leaves whirl round." There is nothing within the poem that even remotely suggests peace and tranquility.</p>
<p>Conclude with a summary that reviews your main points and reiterates the thesis. Don't introduce new ideas into a conclusion.</p>	<p>Both "The Indian to His Love" and "The Hosting of the Sidhe" are, in their own ways, expressing ideals, but ideals that are so different that they have need of a different language, and Yeats meets that need. In "The Indian to His Love," Yeats presents the ideal of dreams: mortals in a make-believe world. He gives a pretty picture in words that is there to see, but it doesn't reach out. His words don't include the reader at all. On the other hand, in "The Hosting of the Sidhe," Yeats presents the ideal of life: immortals in a real world. Yeats wants the reader to feel the life in this poem, not just observe it. The poem reaches out and coaxes: "Away, come away:/ Empty your heart of its mortal dream." The world Yeats sees in each poem is completely different, and by choosing his words carefully and changing his style of writing, he allows readers to see that difference and to feel it.</p>

W. B. Yeats poems

Attach copies of the poems to the essay.

### **The Hosting of the Sidhe**

The host is riding from Knocknarea  
 And over the grave of Clooth-na-Bare;  
 Caoilte tossing his burning hair,  
 And Niamh calling Away, come away:  
 Empty your heart of its mortal dream.  
 The winds awaken, the leaves whirl round,  
 Our cheeks are pale, our hair is unbound,  
 Our breasts are heaving our eyes are agleam,  
 Our arms are waving our lips are apart;  
 And if any gaze on our rushing band,  
 We come between him and the deed of his hand,  
 We come between him and the hope of his heart.  
 The host is rushing 'twixt night and day,  
 And where is there hope or deed as fair?  
 Caoilte tossing his burning hair,  
 And Niamh calling Away, come away.

### **The Indian to His Love**

The island dreams under the dawn  
 And great boughs drop tranquility;  
 The peahens dance on a smooth lawn,  
 A parrot sways upon a tree,  
 Raging at his own image in the enameled sea.

Here we will moor our lonely ship  
 And wander ever with woven hands,  
 Murmuring softly lip to lip,  
 Along the grass, along the sands,  
 Murmuring how far away are the unquiet lands:

How we alone of mortals are  
 Hid under quiet boughs apart,  
 While our love grows an Indian star,  
 A meteor of the burning heart,  
 One with the tide that gleams, the wings that gleam and dart,

The heavy boughs, the burnished dove  
 That moans and sighs a hundred days:  
 How when we die our shades will rove,  
 When eve has hushed the feathered ways,  
 With vapoury footsole by the water's drowsy blaze.