

Perhaps by brittain
and a wife in london
by hardy



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' Perhaps' by Brittain and ' A wife in London' by Hardy, both deal with the subject of the loss of a loved one through the destructions of war. Both poems are written from the point of view of a grieving female who has lost her husband, there are however two major differences that could affect how the poem is perceived by the reader and how much impact they will have in conveying the loss of a loved one.

Hardy's ' A wife in London' has been written by a male in the female perspective, this could affect the authenticity of the emotions portrayed, as it could be argued it is extremely difficult for a male to immerse themselves so far into the female mind that they would be able to present such personal, tragic and ultimately feminine emotions faithfully.

' Perhaps' however has been written by a female (Vera Brittain) about her own emotions based upon real life experiences, as the poem was written after the death of her husband, expressing her grief. It is therefore implausible for one to question the realism, representativeness of the female voice expressing the loss of a loved one or even the sheer rawness conveyed throughout the poem. ' A wife in London' is also a fictionally based poem further affecting the impact it may cause upon the reader.

Brittain's ' Perhaps' is very simplistic in its language, predominately using elements and colors of nature to express her grief: " Perhaps someday the sun will rise again' this phrase is extremely powerful as it effectively contrasts joy with sorrow, the use of the words ' sun' and ' shine' create a light atmosphere as they are usually associated with images of happiness and bliss however the intricate juxtaposition of the words in this opening line

cast an effective dark gloom over the poem and express the heart wrenching emotions of sorrow, despair and grief upon which the poem is based.

The opening line of Hardy's 'A wife in London' is a lot less affective: 'She sits in a tawny vapour' the line is more impersonal than Brittain's, boldly emotional first line, it sets the poem's much slower pace and detached tone. Hardy has stepped back and is hesitant to reveal emotions for the reader to clearly perceive, and distances the reader via the use of complex language, heavily using imagery to present the sorrow of losing a loved one.

Perhaps also has a very simple form, it is written in quatrain with a regular AB rhyme scheme and a regular rhythm of ten beats per syllable in the first three lines of each stanza with the last line being six syllables. This makes the poem flow smoothly and softly emphasizing its sombre mood. As well as making it easier for the reader to grasp the concept and subject of the poem hence enables the reader to empathize with Britain's mourning and loss.

Hardy's 'A wife in London' supports a more erratic form and structure.

Written in quintains of a regular ABBAB rhyme scheme and irregular beat, the poem provokes a more urgent tone. The flustering muddle of an individual who has just received news of the death of a loved one is clearly portrayed. The irregular placing of the lines adds to this, conveying the confusion and instability the loss of a loved one often brings. The juxtaposition of the verses in 'A wife in London' provokes pathos in the reader.

The poem's slow and steady start familiarizes the reader with the theme and pace of the poem only to, overwhelm them in the final two verses with a

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shocking turn of events and pace. ' Page-full of his hoped return, and of home-planned jaunts by brake and burn in the summer weather... ' Hardy shocks the reader with this abrupt and unexpected turn of events, and it is this sudden shock along with the bereavement caused by hearing of a joy filled future plan whilst knowing it can never be possible that powerfully communicates the immense sorrow the loss of a loved one can bring.

Perhaps' in contrast is predictable in its pace and the reader can often preconceive where the poem is heading, therefore creating less of a moving impact on the reader. The language used in ' A wife in London' is a lot more complex than that of ' Perhaps'. Hardy's ' A wife in London' contains a vast amount of imagery. The personification of the ' the thame side lanes' brings the poem to life, creating a sense of the reader witnessing the events as they unfold. The scene is set in a clear image and encourages the reader to enter the settings of the poem.

Familliarising them with events Hardy depicts hence making the emotions impact the reader stronger and more personally. Likewise the use of the simile ' Like a waning taper' once again provides the reader with a clear image of the setting enabling them involve themselves with the events of the poem. After the wife learns of the death of her husband the sorrowful mood is maintained the phrase ' the fog hangs thicker' creates a sense of tension and bleakness. Suggesting perhaps that life seems unclear for the wife now that she has lost her husband.

The dark coolers elements such as fog bring with them also adds to the mournful tone and exuberates the pain and grief of losing a loved one.

Britain's use of specialist language in 'perhaps' however is rare and far between. The use of Anaphora throughout the poem promotes a regular and predictable structure, subtracting from the mourning effect of the poem. The repetition of the word 'perhaps' however provides the poem with a hopeful tone and it is this hopeful tone which highlights the bittersweet tragedy of Brittain's situation.

She is optimistic in believing that 'perhaps' one day in the future she will move past her sorrow and grief and learn to appreciate life and live again. However the last stanza: 'But though the kind Time may many joys renew/There is one greatest joy I shall not know /Again, because my heart for loss of you/Was broken, long ago', highlights the tragedy of the poem, although Brittain may be optimistic the truth is she will never move forward, she will forever remain caged by her sorrow, as she can never love again and therefore never move past the love and loss of her husband.

The personification of 'time' represents the power it possesses, time can provide many happy memories however can also in heartbeat snatch them away, this is what has happened in Brittain's situation she has been snatched of future memories by 'Time' and although it may be 'kind' and provide her with alternate happiness it can never compensate for the loss she has experienced. The capitalization of the 'T' in 'Time' also gives a god-like persona.

I would agree that Hardy's poem about a soldier's death is more affective than Brittain's poem about her grief, as it is much more unpredictable and erratic in its structure, juxtaposition and form, therefore conveying a more

urgent effect, as one would experience after having lost a loved one. The further complexity of the language used by Hardy in comparison to Brittain also provides a greater emotional impact. Brittain's ' Perhaps although successful in portraying the subtle pains of losing a loved one is too simplistic and therefore creates a lesser impact on the reader.