

Compare and contrast the way carol ann duffy and bruce dawe

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Compare and contrast the way Carol An Duffy and Bruce Dawe explore the theme of war through the views of each poem's persona.

War photographer by Carol Ann Duffy and Homecoming by Bruce Dawe both share similar themes, in the sense that they both convey the brutality of war. War photographer is about the thoughts and work of the photographer, portraying hopelessness and misery whereas Homecoming deals with mass burials of dead soldiers, reflecting on the loss of life. Both poems share the same themes of war, loss of life, through the development of the views of each persona, but contrast in getting across the ideas. Both poems are largely based upon the frameworks of the construction of a persona, creating personal engagement with the reader, through evocative and connotative language.

While both poems explore themes of war and death, their opening lines are noticeably different; in War photographer, the speaker is seemingly relieved to be alone, whereas in Homecoming the speaker opens as a witness to the sadness that war brings. Both opening lines contribute to the construction of the poem's tone and mood, which builds throughout the remainder of the texts. The speaker in Homecoming opens with ' All day, day after day, they're bring them home,' the tone of the persona is one of mourning. The repetition of the word day containing a long vowel that reflects the sad theme of war in this text. This opening line also reinstates that this is a sad time to not only be a soldier but also a witness. Through the speaker's words, the reader can see there is no happiness in the dead's homecoming, ironically this is also the title; one of supposed happiness. On the other hand,

in War photographer, the poem begins in the tone of relief ' In his darkroom, he is finally alone,' the emphasis of ' finally alone' suggests that the photographer is relieved to be back home. This line uses juxtaposition to sets the scene that the speaker was surrounded by chaos, but he is now alone. The use of connotative language in War photographer with the clear choice of diction ' spools of suffering' a metaphor by Duffy used to capture grief and suffering.

Central to both poems is the construction of a persona, which acts as the framework to create personal engagement with the reader. The persona from War photographer comes across as emotionally detached, his darkroom as a metaphor itself; a dark place which he exists mentally. This is further empathised by the choice of language; ' the only light is red', In War photographer, there several religious references; ' a priest preparing to intone a Mass.' the speaker is analogous to a priest due to the certain spiritual act of development of the photos. To cope with the atrocities of war, the speaker distances himself away from reality, by calling it a job. In the final stanza of this poem, Duffy reminds the reader of the persona that the public sees only a fraction of misery and war in photos. In this stanza, Duffy depicts the speakers' despair; no one understands his passion and perhaps even more so others do not truly care about death and destruction in war. In Homecoming, the persona comes across as a witness to these atrocities of war, through him the reader can see the very little tenderness in the actions and the magnitude of loss and death of those who pack up the dead. The tone of the speaker is one of great sadness at the loss of young lives

emphasised by the last line ' They're bring them home, now, too late, too early.'

In both War photographer and Homecoming, both poets employ evocative imagery and connotative language to give each poems layers of meaning. In War photographer, the lines ' spools of suffering set out in ordered rows' juxtapose ' spools' and ' ordered' suggesting that the persona has to ' order' the photos to make sense of all the suffering he has seen. The lines ' all flesh is grass' is a religious reference referring to the fragility of life, contrasting to this metaphorical Mass for the dead. The connotations of the line ' A hundred agonies in black-and-white from which his editor will pick out five or six' allows to reader to see the magnitude of suffering in these photos but only a few will be chosen for the public. The language and imagery used Homecoming utilize repetition of the participial ' ing' in words to promote the loss of identity of the dead. The dead are only differentiated by their hair ' Curly-heads, Kinky-hairs, crew-cuts, balding non-coms' further emphasising the loss of identity. A hint of alliteration in the simile ' Telegrams tremble like leaves from a wintering tree' Dawe uses this line to alert the reader that those who hold the telegrams tremble in grief, further emphasising the death and destruction that war leads to. The repetitive nature of this poem engages the reader to visualize the senseless destruction and the frailty of life.

In conclusion, both poems explore the themes of war and loss of life primarily through the construction of a speaker in both War photographer and Homecoming. The persona acts as a framework for which each poem is

able to engage the reader. The use of evocative language and connotative language helps develop awareness of each poems themes and ideas. In War photographer, the persona is distanced away from reality to pass each day, whereas the persona in Homecoming can be seen to be saddened by the deaths of so many in war. Both poems open in different ways, one a statement of relief and another a statement of sadness and sorrow, this contributes to the tone and mood that is developed through the remainder of both poems.