

Eavan Boland personal response

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



The poetry of Eavan Boland is clear, relatable and realistic. The stanzas in her poems are terse, but she manages to evoke strong feelings in the reader, e. g. the sense of apathy in "The War Horse". Her poems are relatable because she is a contemporary poet and her themes generally involve the suburban culture. Her poetry is realistic because she elaborates and paints evocative pictures of ordinary sights like "the harsh shyness of the Atlantic light" (White Hawthorn in the West of Ireland).

In the following, I will express in more detail of my personal response to the poetry of Eavan Boland. The theme of War and Human suffering is very powerful and appealing to me. In "The War Horse", she shows how people living in suburbia can turn a 'blind eye' to the war and suffering of others. The apathy of the people made the poet angry, she was sarcastic in the lines - "Why should we care/If a rose, a hedge, a crocus is uprooted/Like corpses, remote, crushed, mutilated?" - it shows the nonchalance of the people towards the distant suffering of others.

In emphasis of the theme of war, the poet uses the horse as a metaphor of violence - "[the] iron of his shoes as he stamps death/Like a mint on the innocent coinage of earth". The size, weight and force of the horse causes some damage and destruction, imitating the raw violence that is happening to those distant in Northern Ireland. As the horse leaves, the poet "breathe[s] relief" - this reminds her of her ancestors and she feels ashamed of herself as she is just as apathetic as the people in her neighbourhood, because she is also only observing the horse coming into her neighbourhood.

Her "blood is still with atavism", for a fleeting moment she is reminded of her ancestors whose lives were threatened but they fought back and had

passion for the safety of others but she is ashamed for she " use[d] the subterfuge of curtains" and became just as bad as her neighbours. The theme of war is further emphasized in " Child of Our time". This poem deals with the tragic loss of life caused by war and conflict and it shows how all too often, it is the children who suffer.

The child's " final cry" is one of pain and anguish. " We", the public, the adults, the society should have made possible and supported a safe environment for that murdered child - " We should have known how to instruct" - have failed. The fact that we cannot guarantee safety for our children is all the more frightening. The poet knows that she and others " must learn from you dead" in order to " rebuild" society. Out of the destruction of the child's death by bombing, the poet grasps the possibility of learning and rebuilding.

This one act of violence becomes a symbol for every act of violence in which innocent people are killed. Thus, society is held responsible for the child's death - " Our times have robbed your cradle", but if a " new language" can be found then the child may not have died in vain. So, in my opinion, Boland effectively gets her point across to the readers - the theme of war - and I for one, also believe that most people are apathetic towards war and that a " new language" should be found. (etc.)