

My essay

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In the two poems, *Traveling through the Dark* and *Woodchucks*, the speakers have two different tones and resources of language in the relationship between the human and animals. Both poems are about the deaths of animals, one intentional and the other not. In *Traveling through the Dark*, the speaker did not mean to kill the deer and feels the need to fix what has happened. In *Woodchucks* the speaker wants to rid their backyard of the garden eating woodchucks. These two pieces of literature are on two opposite ends of the spectrum, pacifism and genocide. In the first poem by William Stafford, a person kills a deer while coming around a curve in the road. This person feels very horrible about the mistake and feels like they need to do something about the deer. When the speaker finds out that the dead deer is pregnant they feel even worse about the accident. The car in this poem is personified which makes the reader come to the conclusion that technology is killing nature or the theme of man versus nature. The language is very sympathetic both for the driver and the deer. The author uses the word "group" on line 16 making more than just the driver, deer and baby be there but also the car and all of nature. Following this with "I could hear the wilderness listen" on page 16 also personifies the woods. The second poem, *Woodchucks* by Maxine Kumin, the speaker wants all of the woodchucks eating away their garden to die. The speaker in this poem has no sympathy for destroying nature. You can make a connection from the Nazi concentration camps to the killing of the woodchucks. They try to gas the woodchucks out just like they did during the holocaust to the prisoners in the camps. The tone of this piece has very little sympathy and where it does it goes to the speaker because their garden is being destroyed. The speaker

also believes that " the knockout bomb from the Feed and Grain Exchange was featured as merciful" (Kumin line 2). The connection to the Nazi's and the personification of the car adds to the language of both poems. The use of the gassing connection make the reader of the poem believe that the speaker isn't just killing the woodchucks to spare their garden, but to diminish the woodchuck population in their backyard. This makes the language of the piece seem a lot harsher compared to *Traveling through the Dark*. In *Traveling through the Dark* the car is personified and so is the wilderness to make the blame not just go on the speaker. The car seems to have interrupted nature and started a war creating the Man vs. Nature effect. The relationship between the animals and speakers in both poems are quite different. In one, the speaker is sympathetic toward the animal because humans feel as if they need to fix everything they have done if it was their fault or not. In the other poem the speaker kills the animals for the sake of their garden and does not care about life. The speaker in this poem also uses modern technology to kill the animals just as in the first poem. This similarity brings two different meanings into both poems. It either makes the speaker have the reader's side or have the reader be against the speaker. The uses of language affect the poem and change the mood of both poems.