

Compare and contrast the ways in which carol ann duffy presents female characters...

[Literature](#), [Character](#)



Compare and contrast the ways in which Carol Ann Duffy presents female characters in 'The World's Wife'. The World's Wife is a joyous collection of poems about women which was published in 1999, which are given a voice in society as the original stories/myths gave women no say. The poems features biblical, mythical and historical which are very well known. All the poems are dramatic monologues in a feminist approach. Most poems are seen as witty, interesting and hilarious.

The main themes shown in 'The World's Wife' are marriage, homosexuality, birth and relationships. In the poems Delilah and Red Cap, we explore the themes female dominance, determination and manipulation, as they go to desperate measures to get what they want. In Little Red Cap Duffy presents how young female characters will go to unimaginable measures to get what they need. 'sweet sixteen, never been, babe, waif, bought me a drink' The vulnerability and courage she has to get what she wants, that Little Red Cap needs to know the wolf's tricks and tips for her own career.

In Delilah Duffy also presents how she needs to go through certain strengths and certain actions to be able to get her way and manipulate him 'He fucked me again until he was sore'. Duffy shows in order for Delilah to get what she wants she needs to give her knowledge in love and 'how to care'. Also the reader has acknowledgement of how it relates to the biblical story. Delilah and Little Red Cap both show that the female gains power, as the poems show reverse gender roles. The reader explores how in both poems Delilah and Little Red Cap have to hurt their lover in some way.

' I took an axe to the wolf as he slept, one chop, scrotum to throat'. This quote shows how Little Red Cap is now independent and does not need a man to be able to live a good life, also the quote shows the wolf had no compassion to help Little Red Cap and she had now realised this after ' 10 years', also in Delilah Duffy presents how Delilah now has power to make her lover feel equal and to be just as strong as she is. ' Then with passionate deliberate hands I cut every lock of his hair.'

The biblical story of Delilah and Samson tells how Delilah betrayed Samson by cutting his hair, as the hair gave Samson the power he needed to be able to fight against the beasts, Duffy presents this point in a different view, from Delilah's side and how she thought what she was doing was actually benefiting him, as Samson wanted to care and be afraid. Duffy gives Delilah an innocent, loving character twisting what actually happens in Delilah and Samson. In both poems ' Little Red Cap' and ' Delilah' they both cut something of their lovers body, showing that the women have gained power by mentally and physically hurting the men.

In the poems ' Mrs Rip Van Winkle' & ' Penelope' Duffy explores how woman can enjoy and be fulfilled without male presence. ' Mrs Rip Van Winkle' can finally relax and be herself ' I sank like a stone...and gave up exercise' Duffy adds humour with light comedy housewives can relate to. The quote shows how ' Mrs Rip Van Winkle' can now indulge and let herself go, as she doesn't have anyone to impress. Her husband sleeps and she is free from having to please him.. ' And while he slept I found some hobbies for myself Painting. Seeing the sights I'd always dreamed about.

' Duffy emphasises' how before when Mr Rip Van Winkle was awake, he had dominance over her, as she delicately picked the verb ' dreamed' as the male had been very dominant before falling asleep not giving her opportunities she would have thought to be able to do when she had been married. Her husband sounds like a very boring man that views women as objects as she had no way of travelling the world until he was fast asleep. In contrast Penelope starts off with needing male companionship and ending with independence and lost love.

' At first I looked along the road hoping to see him saunter home' Duffy makes Penelope a dependent, loving female who has devoted her life to her husband as she cannot live without him. ' At first' implies that Penelope will later on give up on waiting for her husband, and that she will find something else to do that is wiser with her time. The fact that Carol Ann Duffy uses ' hoping' shows that her lover isn't coming back home any time soon, or she would have used a verb that made the audience more certain. We see as the poem goes on that Penelope starts to gain self-fulfilment by creating a hobby for her in order to forget her husband.

' Thinking to amuse myself...running after childhood's bouncing ball' Penelope now has the freedom to finally do what she wants to like Mrs Rip Van Winkle by being creative and not having a male companion. Penelope uses her skill of embroidery as an escape for not worrying or caring about her husband, she finally feels free and liberated, which shows how her husband had affected her lifestyle. In both poems ' Anne Hathaway and ' The

'Devils' Wife' we see how women can be in such awe by their male equivalent that they are misguided by the flaws every other person can see.

In Anne Hathaway, Shakespeare's wife feels so grateful for something that is pretty normal and not much of a gift to other people. ' my widows head as he held me upon that next best bed' The humour in this poem is seen as a significant concept as of how love-struck Anne Hathaway is seen in Carol Ann Duffy's view of Shakespeare's fancy gift to his wife. Duffy represents Anne Hathaway as quite a delusional character and who is not smart enough to realise how much of an uncaring person Shakespeare is towards her.

'In 'Anne Hathaway', readers are shown that Hathaway, the suppressed and often forgotten wife of play write William Shakespeare, is content with being left his 'second best bed' in Shakespeare's will. As well as in ' The devils Wife' we are shown how much Myra Hindley will do to be able to catch and feel Ian Brady's love. ' I'd lay on my bed at home, on fire for him. ' Even though she knew what her morals were, just for Ian she would go to such extremes to be respected and loved by him, even if her dignity was lost and was seen as disgusting she had done it in awe of her lover Ian Brady.

She is not remorseful as she knows Ian Brady is her lover, so she becomes very submissive and looks up to him in awe. In conclusion the main themes expressed in Carol Ann Duffys ' The Worlds Wife' are linked with her views on feminism and how Women should be just as equal to Men, emphasising how Females need a voice in society too, Carol Ann Duffy uses humour and factual reference to get the reader's attention. [1]- " Small Female Skull: Patriarchy and Philosophy In the Poetry of Carol Ann Duffy" in the Poetry of

Carol Ann Duffy 'Choosing Tough Words' edited by Angelica Michelis and Antony Rowland.