

The Last Post | Ducle Et Decorum Est

The two poems *Dulce Et Decorum Est*, by Wilfred Owen and *The Last Post* by Carol Ann Duffy, are extremely similar with the imagery they display in ones mind, and show similar structure throughout the poem. Carol Ann Duffy, having not been affected by war in her life, based her poem on Wilfred Owen's, using 2 lines of *Dulce Et Decorum Est*. These 2 lines are a very small part of what makes these 2 poems similar.

Imagery

Both poems are about fighting for your country and opposing the idea of "Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori" which was once said by a poet in ancient Greece by the name of Horace Odes. The line means "it is sweet and glorious to die for ones country". Both the poems being against this, they strongly attack it. Carol Ann Duffy made an adaptation of the line in her poem which is "Dulce- No- Decorum- No- Pro patria mori". This builds a strong image of disliking war in our mind while reading. Wilfred Owen having used parts of it as his title and stating it as an "old lie" in his last line also attacks war itself. This part of both poems is very similar, but Carol Ann Duffy moves onto a theme of stopping war, and builds a strong image, about what it would look like if war stopped in lines 15-28, stating few of the luxuries that war has taken away from them. As world peace is something that the human race is far from achieving, she states in the next three lines that this something that could only happen in poetry or other fiction texts. On the other hand Wilfred Owen having experienced the horrors of war first hand, he continues to describe them, one being the constant risk of being attacked by the opponent whether it was by gas as in the poem or by the many other forms of warfare. With the sudden energetic words in line 9 he constructs a similar feeling and makes you feel as if you are in the trenches. The line is very different in structure and sound making it surprise you and this is what creates this feeling and imagery. He then describes those who didn't manage to get their gas masks on in time, and watching them die. He does this using punctuation to slow down the reading as if in slow motion.

Sound

Sound isn't a very large aspect in either of these poems, but there is evidence of sound conveying the war. Using rhyme, in certain key lines, helps reader memorize it quite easily, as shown in lines 9 and 11 in *Dulce Et Decorum Est*, as this is a turning point in the poem. *The Last Post* uses sound in a very different way in line 17 she lists 5 male names "Harry, Tommy, Wilfred, Edward, Bert-", that are all extremely British names, and sound very British. This is important as England was a large party in the war, and therefore conveys war.

Structure

The general sentence lengths vary throughout *The Last Post* where as in *Dulce Et Decorum Est* the sentences are generally quite a similar length. In both poems the stanzas always end with a large point, summarizing the stanza, bringing an end smoothly. When each stanza starts they build up slowly till the last line of the stanza. This brings smooth transitions between stanzas and both poets have done this throughout the poems, other than the second stanza in *Dulce Et Decorum Est*, where it starts with surprise and energy, "GAS! Gas! Quick, boys!". This makes you read faster whereas most of the poem is quite read quite slowly because the poem contains a lot of commas. These commas slow you down and make a lot of the images seem more dramatic and put a lot of emphasis. This also happens in *The Last Post* where it is largely slowed down due to commas, but Carol Ann Duffy lists a decent amount of things a couple of times throughout the poem which is an interesting aspect as this is quite unusual in poems, it happens in line 28 "and crammed with love, work, children, talent, English beer, good food."

To conclude these poems use a lot of similar techniques to convey the theme of war, partially this is because Carol Ann Duffy got a lot of inspiration from Wilfred Owen and this *Dulce Et Decorum Est* in particular. Both poets have used punctuation to slow down the reading throughout most of the poems, this has made scenes more dramatic. Both poems sending the same message they have much in common, and convey war through imagery, sound and structure of the poems clearly.

Adapted from < <http://blogs.yis.ac.jp/16kleind/2014/02/12/the-last-post-comparison-ducle-et-decorum-est/>>