

# American dreamexample



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The particular extract in Remarque's "All Quiet On The Western Front" that introduces the reader to 'Kantorek' contains many different characters all at once, this is an effective tool employed by Remarque as it helps keep the reader engaged and interested in the plot. The view towards Kantorek is extremely biased; the soldiers describe him as short and then claim 'its funny how often the miseries of this world are caused by short people' this is quite humorous as it is not possibly true yet shows how the soldiers saw Kantorek in a negative light.

In addition a lot is learnt about his character, he was the driving force that made his young students enlist at the recruiting office. It is clear that he played on their emotions and he is portrayed as dogmatic - he is forcing the men into war without considering the consequences, " kept on lecturing at us in the PT lessons until the entire class marched under his leadership down to the local recruiting office and enlisted" showing how he abused his power in a way and used his authority to cloud the minds of the young men.

Yet it appears the soldiers realise Kantorek's cunning ways into pushing them into enlisting " Schoolmasters always seem to keep their sentiments handy in their waistcoat pockets; after all, they have to trot them out in lesson after lesson" this emphasizes the ways in which young men were almost preyed on by authority, their vulnerability and innocence exploited in order to rally men for the war effort.

The overall view of Kantorek is very subjective as the main emphasis is on Kantorek and his attitude " I can still see him, his eyes shining at us through his spectacles... " showing just how influential he was as a school master.

The reader also sympathises with the character of 'Josef Behm', he is described as the 'reluctant' young man, 'a tubby cheerful chap. But in the end he let himself be persuaded...' showing how powerful and encouraging Kantorek really was, as well as evoking sympathy in the reader as it is learnt that he was one of the first men to die.

As the extract is from a soldier's point of view it is like a first hand account of the events and therefore rather reliable and dependable, which helps make the tone very subjective and matter of fact, this in turn makes the reader more sympathetic with the men as the events are very real to them. Also, the narrative point of view is in a rather conversational tone which makes the extract less formal, allowing the reader to relate to how the soldiers must be feeling and adding to their overall understanding of the plot.

It also seems quite controversial, "I have always tried to avoid landing up in companies with commanders who are short - usually they are complete bastards" this use of dry humour shows how certain people such as Kantorek were stereotyped and highlights that there was obviously a hierarchy in society and a general divide between the authoritative figures at the time and the rest of society, which was possibly more evident during wartime.

The viewpoint is experienced and realistic therefore accurate, also Remarque's uses a range of sentence structures, there are some complex sentences but then they are often followed by short ones, this is effective in showing the blunt view of the soldiers, "But that never occurred to us for a moment at the time". Also, there is some use of the personal pronoun 'I', which helps make the story more personal and intimate to the reader.

Vera Brittain has lost her fiancé, 'Although You are not there' showing how her hope is slashed by mourning, and when Josef Behm died the soldiers lost their comrade, this cross gender division helps highlight the point of loss, it affected everyone regardless of gender, and is something that everyone could relate to.

There is also a time divide between this extract and with Vera Brittain's poem as literature written after the war was more against nationalism such as Brittain's poem whereas pieces written at the time of the war were more gory and described fully the brutality of war, which can be seen in the extract from 'All Quiet On The Western Front' in addition, the text is very similar to Sassoon's declaration as they both highlight how men were forced into war by authority at the time 'political errors and insincerities', highlighting the point that young men were misguided and misled.

There is also a visible link with R. C. Sherriff's *Journeys End*, where the character of Raleigh, a young new recruit is extremely enthusiastic and almost excited by the idea of war upon arriving at the trench line, most probably spurred on by the propaganda and the censorship of the truth back home, yet in *All Quiet On The Western Front*, the men are commenting on how they entered with such enthusiasm themselves and how quickly their feelings changed once they realised the horrors that war resulted in.

As the extract was written by a soldier it seems more real and personal, helping the reader to engage and understand the plot that much more. The text helps demonstrate how men were forced into the war effort and how people in power abused their authority in order to influence others, using

motional blackmail and exploiting the innocence of the younger generation at the time.

For Behm enrolment was almost compulsory, he didn't want to enlist, but was forced to by Kantorek, who himself had nothing to do with the war effort, 'there were thousands of Kantorek's, all of them convinced that they were acting for the best' showing how it was a common view and practice to influence and encourage men into enlisting, as well as enforcing the point that the main concept of war. Put simply, survival of the fittest.