

Writers present wars
in a variety of ways in
literature. discuss
how shakespeare ...

[Literature](#), [William Shakespeare](#)



War is presented in various ways in literature with each writer presenting it in their own unique way due to influences in their social and historical background e. g. Owen wrote poems about war as he was experiencing it. One of the factors on whether a piece, be it a poem or a play or a novel, was positive or negative towards war all depended on the writer's attitude towards war e. g. Jessie Pope's "Who's For The Game?" is all about her trying to convince men it was all a bit of fun to join the war and fight for their country, which makes perfect sense for a woman to say as women during the time of world war one often encouraged men to join war as they stayed behind to look after the children ect. But the poems I want to discuss are "Dulce Et Decorum Est" by Wilfred Owen and "Who's for The Game?" by Jesse Pope. The play i'm going to Discuss is "Macbeth" by William Shakespeare. "Macbeth", written in the 17th century, immediately opens with treason, with war in the country. This battle showed off the skills of Macbeth and Banquo as soldiers and how they fought together to help Scotland win. "As cannons over-charg'd with double cracks; so they doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe." The language used is all positive and it praises Macbeth and Banquo. It appears that their feats are praised also. "For brave Macbeth.... Smok'd with bloody execution" Brutality and viciousness in war are thought of as a good thing in the Elizabethan times, war brings the good out in those who are willing to fight, to defend their country like Macbeth and Banquo. So instead of being horrified when it is told that Macbeth "unseam'd him from the nave to th'chaps" instead there is the use of positive adjectives to show that in fact he is thought of as a "

worthy gentlemen. " Because he was able to cut a man's head off. War is bloody and brutal but these men are rewarded for taking part in it by being given a new title, Macbeth was made the new " Thane of Cawdor, " which was a very high privilege for any soldier to get a new title by the king. Shakespeare glorifies war when it's in defence for your own country. He writes that the King Duncan says that a soldier's wounds are full of " honour" this clearly shows that he believed it was ok for this man to get hurt because it was from the war that was defending the country. It comes across as though he believes that war is necessary when it comes to bringing peace back to the country. This attitude is completely opposite to that of Wilfred Owen. One of Owen's main messages that he spoke through his poems is that war is completely unnecessary and that men should be able to communicate through words instead of actions. Although it appears that Shakespeare is pro-war and believes men should be fighting for their country he doesn't hide the fact that he does know the consequences of war and that it is full of blood and death, he doesn't hold back on the blood imagery he uses to describe the battle. Owen too uses his own fair amount of blood imagery throughout his poem " Mental Cases" For example Owen describes the sunlight being a " bloodsmear" and uses strong metaphorical language to compare dawn to a " wound" that opens and " bleeds afresh. " It is explained that the " foe" during the battle of Scotland and Norway are covered in blood as they " bathe in reeking wounds" that they have received from Macbeth and Banquo as they " redoubled strokes upon the foe. " The line " memorise another Golgotha" means to make the scene of bloodshed

as memorable as the scene of Christ's crucifixion, which itself was quite a bloody ordeal. It really creates a gruesome picture within the mind. But this is soon down played as the King says the wounds are full of "honour" This is very similar to a section of Jessie Pope's "Who's For The Game?" for she too is aware that war has got some consequences as she states "Who would much rather come back with a crutch Than lie low and miss all the fun?" but the reality is most men didn't need a crutch because they were brought back home in coffin or not brought back at all. During the penultimate scene between Macbeth and Macduff, Macbeth states "I will not fight with thee" but Macduff in return calls him "coward" which immediately causes Macbeth to rebuke him. By calling Macbeth a "coward" this is an insult to his bravery and manhood. A talented and brutal soldier like he is would not stand for such a name to be associated with him. It's the same issue in "Who's for the game?" Pope calls to the "unafraid" which also appeals to the men's sense of bravery. Macbeth does say he "will not yield" and will fight to the very end like a true soldier would do. This is seen a positive thing and the fighting is viewed as right and necessary which again is the opposite attitude to Owen who believes that war is unnecessary. The brutality of war is again tolerated when Macduff enter holding the head of Macbeth and his fellow soldiers agree that this sight "gives them new comfort" Throughout out this play it is quite clear about Shakespeare's attitudes towards war. He quite obviously views war as a necessary thing when it comes to defending the country and to achieve peace again in the country. His presentation of warfare is cleverly linked with heroism and that fighting is a true test of

loyalty to the country and the monarch. However many other writers and poets e. g. Owen have different opinions on war and the necessities of it. "Dulce Et Decorum Est" was written by a man called Wilfred Owen. Owen himself fought in World War One and wrote poems on his experiences in the war like this poem. He was killed in battle a week before the treaty of Versailles was signed. The poem tells us a first hand account of what it is like in the front line of WW1, but more specifically of how the British soldiers were attacked by chemical weapons. As they rush to equip themselves against the gas attack, one soldier doesn't get his mask on in time. Owen describes the gruesome affects of the gas on the man and concludes the reality of war and how everybody is told the same old lie "Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori" or in English it is a sweet and seemly thing to die for ones country. The poem is a single stanza poem and its narrative, meaning its telling a story. It is made up of the regular "A B A B" rhyme scheme. This particular rhyme scheme shows how the regularity of war and how the same routines appear to be happening day in, day out. The title translates literally as "it is a sweet and seemly thing" from this we assume that Owen is a pro-war poet but this is misleading as we soon discover this is sarcastic. . It starts off with the men walking back "bent-double" after a day of battle. It's a very vivid physical description of the men's exhaustion. World war one was notorious for the lack of hygiene and so the simile "coughing like hags" is to emphasise the unpleasantness of these peoples situation. "Men marched asleep" describes how utterly exhausted the soldiers were. It is described how many men had lost their boots "but limped on, blood-shod" meaning

that although they had lost their boots due to the battle and the conditions on the road, they were willing to walk on with cuts on their feet and covered with blood just to get that one night's rest. That line describes war as being full of blood just like the battle between Scotland and Norway in "Macbeth" Shakespeare too uses a lot of blood imagery like Owen here. It shows us that the men had serious determination to get a break from all the fighting that they were willing to walk miles with terrible feet and suffering from exhaustion to get a good night's rest. Just as everything is quiet and peaceful as the men head back to rest, somebody shouts " gas! Gas! Quick boys! " this sentence is proof that this poem is an eyewitness account of what is happening as he is able to quote the exact words used in the scenario. It also shows how quick a counter attack can be and how unpredictable the war can be. After this there is a caesural pause to show the reaction of what these men have just heard. This makes the poem more real to the reader as they can relate to times when they have momentarily frozen as they react to something. The use of a paradox " an ecstasy of fumbling" is used to describe the frantic, panicked movements of the soldiers in a hurry to put on their gas masks on. Unfortunately someone was " yelling out and stumbling" as they didn't get their masks on in time. " yelling" is an onomatopoeic word and allows us to hear what the man is saying; it also makes the image in your head more real and vivid. He was " stumbling" because the poison was beginning to choke him. The man is then described as " flound'ring" this is often used to describe a ship going down as it is sinking. It's very strong imagery shows how the body is beginning to sink and how he is physically

changing. The wars that take place in "Macbeth" are much more physical than the wars at this time. In "Macbeth" it is described how the men suffer from physical "wounds" that are visible, unlike the "wounds" described in "Dulce Et Decorum Est" the "wounds" in "Dulce Et Decorum Est" are not visible and happen on the inside of the man due to the different chemicals in the gas. Owen then uses a lot of onomatopoeic words to explain what's happening. He uses words like "plunges" or "guttering". These words also make a guttural sound. "choking" and "drowning" are uses of sea imagery. The reason this is used is because it fits the situation, it's the same as people drowning, and their lungs fill with water only in this situation the man's lungs are filling with poison. The poet explains how they "flung" the man's body into the back of a wagon. It's a very brutal way of putting things but it realistically shows the brutality of war. The man's eyes are rolling back into his head... "watch the white eyes writhing in his face"... death or unconsciousness soon follows for the man. The alliteration on the three "w's" really emphasise the pain this man is in. the whole scene is horrible, Owen explains the horror by comparing the situation, maybe even war itself, to a "devil sick of sin" It's the worst situation possible. Owen then directly speaks to the reader as "friends" and explains if you had witnessed the thing that he's has then you wouldn't tell people the old lie, "Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori" which means it is a sweet and seemly thing to die for your country. The long sentence is for the revelation of the lie. This is a very strongly worded poem that is full of feeling and meaning and left the readers no doubt that Owen is in fact very anti-war. Owen puts things very

brutal and doesn't spare the readers feelings when he's trying to get his opinions on war across. The story within this poem tells of the reality of war and that war is full of dirt and death and horror. It comes to life through the language techniques and through the different sounds presented. Owens biggest message through all of his poems is the futility of war and that men should be able to make agreements through words not actions unlike Shakespeare who does believe that war is necessary when it's defending your country and monarch. " Who's For The Game? " was written by Jessie Pope, a female poet who wrote this poem from home. Pope is a pro-war poet, so naturally this is a propaganda poem written with a conversational tone. It's designed to make men feel guilty and join up as she challenges them when she asks " Who's For The Game? " It's got a lifting rhythm and playful mood matches the tone. It also has the regular " A B A B" rhyme scheme. Pope makes the whole concept of war out to be the " biggest game that's played" and by doing so because men are enthusiastic about their games and she wants them to be the same about war. It does make the young men think ' I am interested in the games that I am a part of and should be interested in fighting for my country' so she is getting them to consider joining up. " The red crashing game of a fight. " Has the appropriate use of " red" like blood because there is a lot of blood throughout war. The onomatopoeic " crashing" also symbolising the crashing of the soldiers as they crash against one another. " Who'll grip...unafraid" the verbs used here are usually applied when talking about games but are also applicable to war. The " unafraid" appeals to the men's sense of bravery just like in " Macbeth"

in the final battle between Macduff and Macbeth, Macduff call Macbeth a “coward” which causes Macbeth to rebuke him. A slight truth then comes in to the poem. Pope writes “ who would much rather come back with a crutch than lie low and be out of the fun? ” this is ironic because war isn’t fun but she does want enthusiasm. The alliteration on “ lie low” is to emphasise that it is the cowardice thing to do. Also by saying “ your country” and that its “ calling for you” makes the men feel guilty as in its their responsibility to look after it. It also emphasises how needed they are. Before finishing very directly she personifies the country which creates a greater sense of loyalty towards it. Pope presents war with a light heated rhythm to it. She presents it as a positive and noble thing to do, fight for your country. This is similar to Shakespeare’s attitude but almost opposite to that of Owen. The extended metaphor of war being a game shows how she believed that war was simple and easy to win without looking at the real consequences as most men didn’t come home with a crutch, they came home in a coffin or their body was unrecoverable so they didn’t come home at all. War is presented in positive ways and negatives and each writer likes to have their own opinion on it. War is brutal and vicious and dirty and full of blood and death and horror. The most convincing piece that portrays all of these things about war is “ Dulce Et Decorum Est” Owen convincingly preaches the futility of war through this poem and what actually happened in it as he did experience it. Owen has the correct idea to war and that is that war is unnecessary and that men should be able to make agreements through words and not actions.