

English essay

Life, Death



English Essay 'Anthem For Doomed Youth' Anthem For Doomed Youth by Wilfred Owen is a poem which I read recently, in which the author conveys horror's of death in World War 1. The author's use of technique's is quite effective. His use of the sonnet form, word choice, juxtaposition, irony and figurative language creates a strong image of the tragedy lack of respect for the young soldier's dying at war. Anthem For Doomed Youth is one of best known World War poem's because of the way in the Octet, Wilfred translates the horror and tragedy of the war and the struggling fight for funeral rites for the young dead soldiers. The title is one of the effective technique's that the author use's. It's the way the tile conveys a strong contrast in the imagination of the reader. "Anthem For Doomed Youth." The connotations of the word "Anthem" creates a very positive theme for the poem. We, in our minds, would probably link the word Anthem to praise, time of celebration or in a church with the national anthem which ties in with the War. Owen contrast's "Anthem" with "Doomed Youth" to show the bitterness and horrific time of the war and the death of the young soldiers. The juxtaposition of the poems title is the contrast between the "Doomed" and "Youth". This is an extreme contrast as "Youth" we consider as a life not yet lived and celebrating the future not yet been discovered, yet the celebrating "Youth" are "Doomed". "Doomed" suggests no hope and the likely hood of the soldier's not returning. The way the author uses the contrast to give the reader a taste of the bitter irony theme to the poem, Another contrast straight away in the poem is the form of the poem which gives's strong contrast with the theme. Owen starts to write in the sonnet form which is usually used to write a poem of phrase or love. There is not

only a contrast between the form and the content of the poem but he also contrasts the form and the title. The form and the title is quite ironic because Owen writes about the death and loss of the war in a form of which is used for admiration of the soldiers are war. By using this technique's Owen conveys a sense of pity on those who are in favour of the " Supposedly Glorious War. " The start of the poem is the octet which opens with a rhetorical question. " What passing bells for those who die as cattle? " The theme of death is brought into the poem with the words " Passing Bells" which refers to a bell tolled after someone's death to announce the death to the world. There is a further simile with the words " who die as cattle" finishes the question and make's you link the dying soldier's of the World War to animal's in a field. The simile consist a image of the cattle being led away in a herd to be brought to there death and that links with the soldier's being led to war in large number's to probably to suffer from a horrendous death. Sound imagery is introduced through the use of the words " Passing bells", this continues through-out the octet. Owen answers the question by replacing sounds of church bell's for funeral of the young soldier's with the sound of guns and war . " Only the monstrous anger of the guns Only the stuttering rifles rapid rattle Can patter out their hasty orisons. " Owen uses personification to create the sound of the guns over throws the sound of the funeral church bells. The effective word choice helps to convey the idea of the guns over powering the church bells. Like the use of cattle, the author, creates a effect which emphasises the horror of the World War 1. By personifying anger with guns shows that there was true violence in the war and the soldier's died still with the threat present towards the other soldier's.

Owen uses onomatopoeia to describe the anger of the men firing the guns. He also uses alliteration with "Stuttering rifles rapid rattle" which shows the sound of a gun. The soldiers have no orisons, which means prayers, here funeral prayers, all they have in the final minutes is the repeated sound of screaming and gunfire. "No mockeries how for them; no prayers nor bells nor any voice of the mourning save the choirs the shrill demented choirs or wailing shells and the bugles calling for them from sad shires" A metaphor: the prayer bells and choirs of the church have become "chill demented" and "wailing" is another juxtaposition used by the author. We have God's worlds and the devils both as one juxtaposed to highlight the hellish nature of the young soldiers' death. "What candles may be held to speed all? Not in the hands of boys but in their eyes Shall shine the holy glimmers of goodbyes" The sestet begins in the same way as the octet with a rhetorical question. It starts off by saying about the candles which will not be held in a church ceremony by the choir but will have light in the eyes of the dying soldiers. He says 'glimmers' referring to the 'candles' suggests a temporary light. The flame of the candle is like the lives of the soldiers, easily taken away or regularly snuffed out. In the final 3 lines of the poem, the funeral imagery continues: "the pallor of the girls' brows shall be the pall Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds And each slow dusk, a drawing down of blinds" Here Owen suggests that in a funeral the white coffin cloth will be represented by the shocked white faces of the women left at home. The metaphor continues by saying the tenderness of women will be their funeral flowers. The word flower is particularly effective not just about the funeral but about the beauty, fragility and sadness which reminds us of the effective

title at the start. In the last line Owen resembles the light being extinguished which relates to the soldiers coming to a end and slipping away. Owen emphasizes all the regular deaths by using ' each' in the last line which suggests it has been going on every day. In conclusion, in the poem Owen conveys the horror of the war extremely well. Through out he uses juxtaposition, figurative language, sonnet form and effective word choice. He has painted a image which is moving yet horrible.