

Register and language in "attack", "anthem for doomed youth" and "slough" essay s...

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Register and Language in “ Attack”, “ Anthem for Doomed Youth” and “ Slough” Essay Sample

These three poems are all about war. They focus on different aspects and are written in very different ways. They express different views and use different language. I am going to explain these differences and also the similarities.

“ Attack” by Siegfried Sassoon, is written in the third person, and it describes the situation in a reporting style. He starts describing very far away, “ the ridge emerges” and then moves in closer to the looks on the soldiers faces, “ masked with fear”. He paints a picture using lots of different colours. He reports with a very pessimistic and negative attitude. He uses metaphors and personification “ The menacing scarred slope”. He doesn’t focus on particular people, and the soldiers aren’t seen as warriors just worried faces. Then on the last line he states his opinion of horror and fear.

“ Anthem for Doomed Youth” the sonnet by Wilfred Owen is a very sombre poem. It is written as an extended metaphor, war is like a funeral. There are very few references to actual war. Owen uses alliteration “ Stuttering rifles rapid rattle” and religious language “ Orisons...Choirs...Bells”. He does not talk about blood and gore. He uses a very solemn style and states his opinion more subtly than Siegfried Sassoon. It ends with a rhyming couplet. He uses personification as well, “ Only the monstrous anger of the guns.”

“ Slough” by John Betjemen implies war in a different context. Slough was becoming increasingly industrialised and some housing conditions were very

cramped. In willing the destruction of Slough, Betjeman urges the bombs to pick out the vulgar profiteers but to spare the bald young clerks. He uses personification " The earth exhales." He also uses clever metaphors " They've tasted Hell." He is a Luddite and very much against the change and over-development that has spread like a disease across Slough.

All three poems have different ways of expressing their ideas through language and register. In " Attack" Sassoon uses description, personification and metaphors to put across his point. He sits back and lets the reader form their own opinion and then finishes with his. In " Anthem for Doomed Youth" Owen uses an extended metaphor, alliteration and personification to make his view heard. He takes a very sad attitude and uses solemn and religious language. There are not many actual references to the war unlike " Attack" and not much blood and gore described. " Slough" is a very different poem altogether, it is not talking about the war but more about the city Slough. Betjemen uses metaphors and personification. He is a Luddite and puts his view across in a very simple way, with no hidden meaning. I therefore conclude that these three poems have similar language but different meanings and registers.