

Poetry comparisons on war

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Attack by Siegfried Sassoon; Anthem for Doomed Youth by Wilfred Owen; Belfast Confetti by Ciaran Carson; No More Hiroshima's by James Kirkup

Compare and contrast the attitudes to conflict shown in three or four of these poems, pointing out how the poets use language to explore their ideas and emotions. Two of the poems listed above, attack and anthem for doomed youth are to do with things that happened during world war 1. Both Wilfrid Owen and Siegfried Sassoon were involved with this war, fighting for their country. The poems that they wrote about the war told of their experiences and in attack some of the terrible things Sassoon saw and was made to do. Anthem for doomed youth is more about what happened to the people at home and what they had to go through when they realised their men weren't coming home. I think that the authors of these poems wrote about the war because they wanted people to realise that war wasn't a good thing, all it brought about was pain, suffering and it killed a lot of people unnecessarily. Belfast Confetti is written about the troubles in Northern Ireland. In it the poet Ciaran Carson describes his route through the troubled streets. the poem talks of home-made bombs, firing guns and other missiles. It mentions some of the street names that he goes through all of which are the names of battles in various wars. When reading the poem you imagine that it should be said very fast almost imitating the gun shots spoken about by the author. The last poem I'll be writing about is No More Hiroshima's by James Kirkup. This poem is all about what remains of the city of Hiroshima after an atomic bomb was dropped on it at the end of world war 2. Kirkup describes his first impressions of Hiroshima as he passes through and other things he saw there that made him upset. I think that he decided to write

this poem because what he saw affected him greatly and in some way he was almost angry when he saw some of the inhabitants attempts at trying to once again reconstruct a normal life for themselves. The bomb itself which was the first atomic bomb ever to be used in warfare was dropped on August 6th 1945. Over 130, 000 people were killed or severely injured by the bomb and its after effects. This means that Kirkup had nothing at all to do with Hiroshima itself as the bomb was dropped before his time. Also he wasn't Japanese. The first poem that I have decided to write about in full is attack by Siegfried Sassoon. As I mentioned before this poem is written about world war 1. and what happened to the soldiers when they went out of the trenches. The things that they saw, did and thought as they went to meet their fate be that death or survival which could be just as unlucky in some cases. By the way that the poem has been written you can tell that the poet is very much against war. One of the things that I think stands out most is that at the end of the poem he says' " O Jesu, make it stop!" The poet is speaking as someone who has experienced war and knows an awful lot about it, which is true. however he has written the poem in the third person which makes me think that he wasn't one of those young men struggling in the poem. I think that Sassoon decided to write this poem so that the people at home would see what war was really like, not just the glorified tale that most people had heard. He wanted to try and make sure that nothing like this would ever happen again. When spoken this poem would have to be said fairly slowly and with a sad tone of voice because this poem is very gloomy and not one that you should enjoy reading or listening to. Something which I have noticed being used in this poem is Metaphors, some examples of them

are, " Smouldering through spouts of drifting smoke that shroud The menacing slope;" and " Lines of grey, muttering faces, masked with fear" I think that these have something in common because their both talking about covering something up. Shroud is the sheet you wrap a dead body in and mask. The only other thing used is personification. " And hope, with grappling furtive eyes and grappling fists, Flounders in the mud." Most of the poem has been written in iambic Pentameter. You also notice that the first four lines of the poem have no punctuation what so ever. this reflects the battle, it makes you want it to stop and take a pause. you just want it to stop. This poem attack is very similar to Anthem for Doomed Youth because they are both written about world war 1. by authors who had been involved with the war. Both poems speak of war as being something dreadful that wasn't to be taken as a joke but to be understood and seen for what it really was. They are both written from an onlookers point of view, by experienced men. The way that the poems have been written makes you feel upset and angry. this maybe for slightly different reasons in each but still on the same subject. Both of these poems are written in iambic pentameter and Anthem for Doomed Youth is a perfect sonnet, Attack isn't quite, but it does include some metaphors and personification which aren't in Anthem for Doomed Youth. In the poem Anthem for Doomed Youth the poet Wilfrid Owen explains how and why the men that were on the battle field in world war 1. wouldn't be given a proper funeral. We know that what Owen writes in the poem is true because he himself fought in the war so we can rely on what he says. It also talks of the people back home, their loved ones and how they would be feeling. In ways the poem is very clever when it says things like " And each

slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds" people used to close their curtains when someone that they knew had died. This line to me seems like each night the people at home are remembering them sometimes without even realising that they're dead. This poem is written in the third person. The poet himself isn't actually there, even though he knows a lot about the war by being an officer in it. I think that this poem was written for much the same reasons as Attack. It was to shock people and make them realise how truly terrible war was. If this poem were to be said I think you would need to say it with an angry almost aggressive note to your voice because its quite an upsetting poem to read. Wilfrid Owen was quite obviously an educated man we know this because his poem is written in almost perfect English also its in sonnet form. This is ironic because what happened to all of those men was such a terrible thing it was far from perfect and the sonnets are usually to do with love this one is filled with war and hatred. In the third line down the poet has used Onomatopoeia " rifles' rattle rapid fire' this is to make it stand out so you take more notice. Anthem for doomed youth is quite different from the next poem no more Hiroshimas. This poem was written after world war 1. and no more Hiroshimas was written on something to do with world war 2. These were very different wars and the poems talk about very different things. Anthem for doomed youth is written about soldiers dying in a battle. It tells of what happens to them when they die, how they don't have a proper funeral and sometimes their family don't even realise that they're dead. No more Hiroshimas is different in that its not so much about a battle but a single attack on a city, it too tells of the destruction caused and of the people that died in the blast. Another thing that makes them different is that Wilfrid

Owen has written a poem about something that he knows a lot about and was very much involved with. However James Kirkup wrote No More Hiroshimas about something he had nothing to do with and the poem was written as he was looking back on the event that had happened quite along time ago. The poem No More Hiroshimas by James Kirkup is all about the after effects of the atomic bomb dropped on the city of Hiroshima in 1945. It completely ruined the place both physically and mentally in that the buildings were destroyed, people were killed and severely injured also in that the survivors would just have felt like giving up. Kirkup describes his impressions of the city and what he thinks of it. Some of the things that he sees really upset him especially the relics that he mentions at the end, some of the things that had belonged to people who had been affected by the bomb. He also talks about the town itself and the buildings that are now there. He calls them tacky with jaded frippery. This poem is written in the first person. Kirkup is actually there even though the event that he's based the poem on happened in the past. The poet is speaking as someone who is witnessing what the city is like now. He does occasionally mention the bomb but most of it is in the present. I believe that Kirkup wrote this poem to let people know what happened to Hiroshima and how dreadful it was and that this type of mass destruction isn't needed. This poem is written in a very gloomy tone of voice and the poet sounds angry all the way through. In this poem I have found examples of juxtaposition, 'The souvenir-shops piled with junk, kimoned kewpie dolls, Models of the Bombed Industry Promotion Hall, memorial ruin.' Kirkup compares the gaudy souvenirs along side models of bombed buildings. This is telling us that in a way Hiroshima has just turned

into a place that only exists for tourists. This poem doesn't really have a very structured rhyme scheme but it is almost written in verse. The last section is the most structured part of the poem, the bit that starts, 'The other relics'

The whole way through the poem the author is criticising the struggling towns peoples attempts at trying to rebuild their city. He says things like, 'punctually the electric chimes ring out across the tidy waste, Their doleful public hymn-the tune unrecognisable, evangelist.' This really makes me feel sorry for those people that survived, it also makes me feel a bit annoyed with Kirkup. Those people are trying their best to regain a sense of normality and all that he can do is make fun of them.