

Dulce et decorum est and the soldier

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Dulce et decorum est is written regarding the First World War in the hindsight of the battle of the Somme. This takes a somewhat cynical view on warfare. The soldier by Rupert Brooke on the other hand takes a very strong patriotic feel and this shines through more than anything else.

The soldier paints a picture of English serenity and whereas "dulce et." portrays Owen's anger at the indifference of those at home who continued to propagate lies. You can see the influence of Siegfried Sassoon in this piece. The language is more direct and shocking "guttering, choking, drowning" helps convey the grievance in the air. In the soldier the language is less deplorable and has a feel more of a love poem "her sights and sounds... under an English Heaven" this coupled with the fact that the poem is written as a sonnet reiterates the feel of Love.

Both poems are based on death in Wars. However Brooke paints a more glamorised and less direct picture of death "if I should die, think only this of me: That there's some corner of a foreign field... blest by suns of home." This evokes the idealistic image of a perfect England in a 'Golden' age, such as many believe existed immediately prior to the First World War. This does however expose the arrogance that Brooke perhaps had. It places too much importance on his own sacrifices and not on the general sacrifices being made by so many, and on the loss of a way of life, which the war would bring out like many other First World War poets such as 'Edward Thomas' and 'Charles Hamilton Sorley'.

Owen on the other hand almost haunts the reader using fiery vocabulary to help depict the shocking death of a soldier "guttering, Choking, Drowning."

Owen clearly wanted to address the people at home and suggests to them that if, in their worst nightmares, they could re-live this experience, they would not keep repeating that it is good and sweet to die for your country. He is saying that no one who has witnessed these horrors could ever encourage anyone to take part in such a war. He had already pointed out the exhaustion of the soldiers " drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots" helping the reader to visualise the lack of awareness of the soldiers. This certainly will give the reader a much more negative take on the war contrary to the over-hyped propaganda war that those at home believe.

Brooke conveys the image that was painted by the media in Britain at the time of the war and even in death, he believes he cannot remove that sense of pride from him and his passing will not be in vain if, at home in England people are, once again happy and at peace. He feels that by his death he will have given back to England everything, and more, that it gave to him. The happiness and security earned by his sacrifice will buy his eternal peace " this heart, all evil shed away, A pulse in the eternal mind" Owen continues his cynicism of the war in the last verse using necessarily harsh and wicked language " come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs". They fling the man into a wagon, because they know there is no point in being gentle- he will soon be dead anyway. The description of his face and eyes " And watch the white eyes writhing in his face" gives him a ghost-like quality. This verse is intended to demonstrate the realism of a violent, unnecessary death; hence it builds to a crescendo of anger, before a final earnest plea to stop the lies.

These two poems could be no more different. 'The soldier' is a poem supporting the war in a way not too dissimilar to the way the media in that time promoted it whilst 'Dulce Et Decorum Est' is a pessimistic take on a war that was conveyed by the British media as far from the truth as possible. Owen wanted the British people to know the truth about the war and expressed these feelings best in his poetry. Brooke in contrast went along with the glamorized image that had been portrayed by the media, which wasn't a fair reflection on the war.