

With reference to six poems, explain how attitudes to war changed over the course...

[Literature](#), [Poem](#)



World War One, or as most historians refer to it " The Great War," was supposed to be the war to end all wars. From 1914 to 1918, young men were encouraged to sign up to fight for the British army against the might of the Germans. Because conscription wasn't introduced until 1916, recruitment songs, posters and poetry were needed to encourage men to sign up. These songs and poems were specially written using a wide variety of rhetorical devices so as to display the potential advantages that joining the army could bring.

Most recruitment poems have subtle similarities as they are all written for the same purpose: to persuade. The main way they do this is through the use of rhetorical devices. In the poem 'Who's for the game? ' the first three verses have rhetorical questions featuring heavily. For example, " Who'll grip and tackle the job unafraid" and " Who'll give his country a hand? " This also occurs in " Fall In" with the line, " Will you send a strangled cheer to the sky / and grin till your cheeks are red? " These words are examples of rhetorical devices.

They make you question yourself after you have read it about whether or not you enlist. The titles of the two poems also set the tone of the different poems and make the reader aware of what they are about to read. Making sure that the title displays this is important, because you then know what some of what is about to happen before you have even started the first word. " Who's for the game" shows war as a fun, exciting prospect that men, if they signed up, would enjoy. Whereas " Fall In," the other recruitment poem, has a military connotation.

"Fall in" is a marching term that is used a lot in the army, so before you have read a word of the actual poem, you know that the rest of the poem is going to have a military background, perhaps talking about how war is like from the military's point of view. The structure of the poems are very similar, as they both have the same rhyming pattern with alternate lines rhyming - "played" and "unafraid" as well as "fright" and "tight". This makes the poems catchy and therefore easier to remember.

This will then cause the poem to stick in people's heads, continuously persuading them to join the army. In the poem "Fall In," the author relates personally to you with the lines "Is it football still and the picture show / the pub and the betting odds". These are all things that the people who the poems were read by would have done in their everyday life. This is mirrored in "Who's for the game?" where they mention "the red crashing game of a fight". This compares war to a game like football to make it more appealing to the readers of the poem.

This targets the audience through their word choice. "Crashing", is a positive adjective which makes the reader more accepting of war. This also makes the poem sound more appealing and attractive to the reader. Also in "Who's for the game?" they relate to you by appealing to men's sense of bravery and chivalry in the lines "Your country is up to her neck in a fight / and she's looking and calling for you". There are a number of appealing factors about that line, the first being the pronoun - "Your"; this makes it sound as if you own the country and it would be a shame to let it go.

Then they refer to the country as a female in the words, " her neck" This makes them think that they are strong and brave and also personifies war as a beautiful woman that they need to go and rescue. This emphasises the point even further by saying that she's " looking and calling for you. " The writer has made it sound like they're talking about every single male that hasn't signed up yet. In the next section I will look at a different viewpoint of the same experience of war, from soldier poets.

These poets fought in the trenches and wrote poems about what their experiences were like. The author of " Peace," Rupert Brooke, was a neo-classical poet whose poems glorified war and made it sound like a glorious adventure, however he never experienced combat at first hand. He became famous because of his good looks. An Irish poet was quoted to have described him as " the handsomest young man in England! " Arthur Graeme West, however, isn't as famous as him.

This is probably because he was known to write poems attacking young soldier-poets who were writing poems idealising war - like Rupert Brooke. His own personal gruesome experience was probably his motivation to write such a scathing poem about the young poets. In " Peace," the main aim of the poem is to explain to people about how great the war is and how much of an adventure it would be when you sign up to join the army. Brooke has used the sonnet structure to his advantage.

In the first eight lines, the octave, he is explaining about how war could liven up their lives in the line, "... nd wakened us from sleeping," and then in the

last six lines, the sestet, he brings the poem to a close reassuring the reader about death, " Naught broken save this body, lost but breath;" This talks about how when you die your body is the only thing that is broken, and nothing is lost apart from breath, It hints at the fact that the soul of a person will live on after death. This makes the reader more accepting of death, because it says that after death you will live on. However, in " God!

How I hate you," West has also used the end of the poem to hammer home his point. In the first five lines he talks about why he is writing the poem. The title itself is from when he is addressing the poets who are glorifying war. The title continues into "... you young cheerful men," the men being the poets. In the last part he goes into a much more detailed version of war with strong adjectives like " warm grey brain," and powerful similes like, " smashed like an eggshell" This is a good example as it likens a man's head to an eggshell which is very easy to smash.

The choice of simile here suggests that human life is fragile Imagery plays a huge part in both poems. " Peace" is showing war in a positive way like in the line "... we have found release there," this meaning that war has cleansed them from the boring Edwardian society that they lived in before the war. " God! How I Hate You," in contrast shows war in the opposite way, with the gruesome wording in the latter section. " Spattered all bloody," is one of the strongest phrases in the poem and it is made all the more poignant with the last two lines.

These lines are almost mocking the young-soldier poets, saying that even though that the war is so ghastly, "... still God's in His Heaven" and all is right in the world. There are also hints at sarcasm, which is meant to make the soldier poets embarrassed about what they've written. The last poems I am going to look at are " Dulce et Decorum est" and " Anthem for Doomed Youth. " " Dulce et Decorum est" is a war poem written by Wilfred Owen in collaboration with Siegfried Sassoon. Wilfred Owen was seen as one of the most important war-poets in World War One.

He wrote poetry in the trenches and kept a diary. He experienced shell shock after a shell burst near him in 1917 and was sent to a military hospital in Scotland called Craiglockhart where he met Siegfried Sassoon. Whilst there, his poetry changed and became more explicit and more didactic in content. The poem is very negative about war. They mention a lot of the effects that war can bring on you like, " Drunk with fatigue," which meant that the war was so tiring they were acting as if they were drunk from the effects.

Also, " Deaf even to the hoots," means that they were concentrating so hard on the war that they couldn't hear anything at all. The reason for all this negativity is that it was written in 1917, three years after war had broken out so they had had time to see how bad the war is and to construct a poem saying how startlingly horrific it is. Owen does very well at portraying a gas attack, the main event in the poem. The first of these very emotive stanzas is " vile, incurable sores. " The first word, " vile" immediately makes your repulsed and moved about the use of this foul language.

Another one is "gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs." I think this is the worst and most dreadful of the three stanzas because corrupted makes you think of how ruined and destroyed this young soldier's lungs must be after inhaling the gas. The last one is "watch the white eyes writing in his face." The strongest word in this stanza is definitely writing. These poetic techniques are really vivid because they make you really disgusted at what has happened to these poor soldiers during the war.

All these really horrible descriptions of war really hit home the ideas about the 'bogus' patriots, like Jessie Pope, whom the poem is addressed to. The reason for addressing the poem to her is that she stayed at home yet encouraged men to join the army and to go and fight in the war. As well as her it is also addressed to all the soldier poets like Rupert Brooke who glamorised war. This gave the poem more fame than others because most people saw the reception from the other well-known poets that it was aimed at. As well as using a lot of descriptions to describe war he uses continuous verbs like "... uttering, choking, drowning." This gives you the sense of the war never ending with no hope of going out as after you've read one word you're immediately pounded on with another one. This gives the poem more depth than the actual words written on the page. Also a lot of similes in the first paragraph including, "Bent double, like old beggars under sacks," as well as "coughing like hags." These also give you the idea that war is a really terrible place to be because things like hags and beggars aren't very nice things to be likened to.

The soldiers have also not become human because of the war - they have aged and become dehumanised. I think that putting the title at the end of the poem rounds off the whole poem because you don't really read those last lines but it gives you time to digest the poem and focus on what you have actually read. In this poem, there is also use of sarcasm and an accusatory tone because of the people that the poet was directing it to - Jessie Pope and other poets just like her. "Anthem for Doomed Youth," was written by Wilfred Owen in collaboration with Siegfried Sassoon when they met in Craiglockhart, a military hospital in 1917.

They wrote it together relying on each other to adjust bits slightly using both poets' skills. The war was reaching its conclusion and poems were becoming more detailed as four years of war had given them lots to write about.

Gruesome injuries, horrific detail and the soldier's own personal accounts affected how poets displayed their words to the reader. The grisly nature of the poem is displayed immediately in the first stanza with the description, "What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?" This likens deaths of soldiers to that of cattle.

If someone dies like cattle it is not going to be a glorious death. The quote also states about how, after a soldier's death, no one will sound church bells in memoriam of them in the line, "What passing-bells..." This makes the deaths sound unimportant and that nobody cares if a soldier dies. Instead of bells, the only sounds they were likely to get were "the monstrous anger of the guns..." and, "the stuttering rifles rapid rattle." This likens the typical



funeral noises to that of war. There is also a use of alliteration with "rifles' rapid rattle" It shows how brutal and quick the rifles could fire.

They use personification in the "choirs of wailing shells." Instead of a choir of church boys singing the soldiers had the "wail" of an exploding shell. This creates a shocked and surprised mood to the comparison of shells to choir boys. With the line, "What candles may be held to speed them all?" It questions whether or not anyone cares about the amount of death that is happening. It says that boys won't care because they are the ones that possibly could go to war in the future. Girls will be the only ones feeling sorry for them and "girl's brows shall be their pall."

"Palls" are the cloth used to cover coffins so it means that the girls will be the most caring people. Also at the end of the poem, to round the end off, they use a metaphor about death. "And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds" This likens death to the drawing-down of blinds, or in the soldier's context, their eyes closing. This makes the reader feel more accepting of death, it being likened to just drawing down of blinds - something that some people do every evening, and there is a sense of finality over this sombre and grave ending.

In conclusion, my favourite poem was "Anthem for Doomed Youth," because it had a very musical background, "no prayers nor bells" and "... save the choirs." The poem is a great poem, I think because two poets wrote it together. With two poets working on one poem, they can annotate each other's work and make additions to it and change some parts to suit both

there own. With all the references to music there is a lot to focus on, however if you can get your head around the poem it is a very emotive and meaningful poem.