

Anthem for doomed youth by wilfred owen and an irish

Literature



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William Butler Yeats has written many pieces of literature, mainly about Ireland as that is his passion and cause of writing. However his poem "An Irish Airman Foresees His Death" is not solely about Ireland and even though it includes that theme it is rather a criticism of apathetic people who have no reason for going to war. The form of Yeats' poem is very structured and regular. The rhyme scheme is ABAB the whole way through the poem and has an unstressed, stressed beat every time. The poem is made up of one sixteen-lined stanza and has a straight forward structure.

Yeats has used this format for emphasis to get his point across. He has made the poem using paired lines which balance with one another neutralising any feeling that there may have been. Yeats has also made the layout of the poem very simple and uncomplicated to make Robert Gregory's reason for going to war stand out which is also simple and uncomplicated-He just wants to fly a plane. Wilfred Owen's poem was influenced by another war poet Siegfried Sassoon. Their conversations about the horrors of war together provided the framework to many of the poems that Owen wrote.

As a soldier at war, Owen was affected by the traumatising horrors of the trenches that he saw while he was out there. He was so badly affected that he was diagnosed with shell shock and sent to hospital in Edinburgh. These horrific scenes caused Owen to write such gruesome yet realistic compositions. Like Yeats' poem, "Anthem for doomed youth" is also a criticism only this time it is a criticism of how the young soldiers who die at war do not get the recognition or heroic funeral that they so deserve.

He tries to show in his poem that war is futile because of the high loss of life. "Anthem for Doomed Youth" is presented in a very different way to WB Yeats' poem. The poem is a sonnet and is divided into an octet and a sestet because focus of the poem changes from the battle field to home images and the division is a good way to show that. The rhyme scheme is more irregular than "An Irish Airman Foresees His Death" as the lines aren't all totally the same rhythm. Owen has made the poems' form confusing and chaotic as that is how he sees war to be. WB Yeats has made the tone of his poem cold and lacking in emotion. This is shown from the very beginning, including in the title.

The title of the poem is "An Irish Airman Foresees his Death" and because it is a person anticipating their death, it is a very serious matter. However Yeats has made this line just a statement showing us that the poem is very unemotional. Yeats has composed the rest of the poem using only statements also, showing no heightening of emotion. He has made the poems' tone this way as this is how he wants to present Major Robert Gregory as being. Yeats forces him to speak in such a way that he is shown to be pessimistic about life and an uninspiring person.

He makes this clear when Gregory says, "Those I fight I do not hate, Those that I guard I do not love;" Here the emotional impact is minimised because even though the words "hate" and "love" are quite strong, they are contrasted against each other and also used with "I do not" so it is balanced out showing no feeling. Yet again, Yeats uses the idea of balancing things as he did in the poems structure to weaken any sense of emotion. Yeats also

makes Robert Gregory out to be quite depressed when he makes him say, "A lonely impulse of delight"

The word "lonely" suggests that he does not often feel the positive feeling which is "delight" which presents him as being unspirited which make us think less of him as a person and show a lack of respect towards him. The tone of Owens poem is negative like Yeats' poem but in a different way. "Anthem for Doomed Youth" is set out having a very angry tone as Owen bitterly disputes the lack of respect for those who die at war. He emphasises this at the beginning of both sections of the poem by asking a question.

To open the Octet he asks "What passing bells for those who die as cattle?" and to start the sestet he asks "What candles may be held to speed them all?" These questions are asked in such a way that they almost demand an explanation which comes across then as being asked in passionate rage. After each question though, Owen expands on each to give a detailed, heartfelt answer and to obtain this he uses a variety of literary devices. Similarly to "An Irish Airman Foresees His Death", the mood of this poem seems to be quite pessimistic and again this is first shown in the poems' title.

The title is "Anthem for Doomed Youth" and this shows pessimism and downheartedness as the word "doomed" means having no chance to succeed and no hope. This is showing that young people who go to fight are done for and that there is no hope for them. Owen is showing this sad fact because he wants to emphasise that war is pointless and that it is not necessary that so many lives are lost. Yeats uses very simple and minimised imagery in "An Irish Airman Foresees His Death" and again this reinforces <https://assignbuster.com/anthem-for-doomed-youth-by-wilfred-owen-and-an-irish/>

his straight forward and uncomplicated views. When the small amount of imagery is used, it is kept as uncomplexed as possible.

An example of this would be, " Drove to this tumult in the clouds," and here the potential of the imagery is compressed into the one word, " tumult" rather than expanded on. There are only two adjectives used to describe things in the poem and they are both used negatively. The first is " lonely impulse" which is a quite a glum and depressive word and this again contributes to the inanimate mood of the poem. The second is " cheering crowds" and even though the word cheering seems like it may lift the poem slightly, the word " nor" is placed before it which removes all decisiveness from the phrase.

Likewise with image detail, alliteration is used seldom in the poem and the reason he uses it is because this is what he wishes to stand out. The best example of this in the poem is, " My country is Kiltartan Cross" The reason Yeats has chosen to emphasise Kiltartan is because this is where Robert Gregory is from and he shows his loyalty to a very small community rather than a country. Robert Gregory then goes on to say, " My countrymen Kiltartan's poor, No likely end could bring them loss Or leave them happier than before.

Here he is stating outright that no matter what the outcome of the war, whether he dies or not, the people of his small community will not be affected. Robert Gregory is basically saying here that he is a nonentity and belittling himself by admitting that no one cares what happens to him. This is quite a sad and concerning thing to state with no emotion but this impact

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has been successfully achieved by Yeats' deliberately holding back on exclamation marks. Exclamation marks portray emotional meaning and passion.

Consequently because there are none, it shows how Robert Gregory is feeling which is passionless and accepting and awaiting his fate- imminent death. Another way Yeats' reiterates the feelings of Robert Gregory is by repetition when he is speaking. Gregory says, " The years to come seemed waste of breath, A waste of breath the years behind" The words " waste of breath" are emphasised greatly as not only are they repeated but they are repeated straight after each other, one is at the end of a line and the next is at the start of the following line.

He also uses the word " balance" twice within the last four lines which again ties in with the balancing theme used throughout the poem in the different methods to eject feeling. Owen uses all different types of imagery to get his point across which is the opposite of what Yeats has done. The first line is a rhetorical question which contains in it a simile. This simile is very effective, " What passing bells for those who die as cattle? " The fact that Owen compares people to cattle shows that these soldiers are nameless and undignified. He says that they " die as cattle" and cattle are slaughtered in mass numbers.

This gives us the impression that they die gruesomely and that there are a lot of lives lost. Another line which implies that many people are killed is when Owen writes, " Only the monstrous anger of the guns" Because the guns have been personified as having monstrous anger they seem evil and

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almost on a mission to kill. Owen then goes on to explain that, " Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle Can patter out their hasty orisons. " Here it is suggested that the soldiers are not given any support through prayer and is almost ironic that the metaphoric prayers given by the guns are actually of no meaning anyway.

This is said almost bitterly as the word " only" is emphasising that the soldiers do not get anything deserving instead they merely get scornful travesties. Owen gives the poem an aggressive sound to it through the use of alliteration and onomatopoeia simultaneously in the line, " Only the stuttering rifle rapid rattle" The repetition of the 'r' sound makes the poems mood seem assailing while the repetition of the 't' sound suggests a mass of guns firing. Owen also uses alliteration in the following lines, " Nor ay voice of mourning save the choirs,-

The shrill demented choirs of wailing shells And bugles calling them from sad shires" Here Owen uses the alliteration of S's in the words, " shrill", " shells", " sad", and " shire". These words are all negative to emphasise the depression and sombre of war. The repetition of the's' is a soft sound which gives a slight gentle sadness effect to these lines. However at the same time, this is contradicted with the fact that the line, " The shrill demented choirs of wailing shells" still seems to have a some what painful form to it.

The words " shrill" and " wailing" suggest that the sound is very unpleasant and that this may be a cruel way to evict the little dignity the soldier has.

Owen gives a sense of irony in the poem by juxtaposing religious imagery to battlefield imagery. This is done very convincingly in the Sestet of the poem

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which results in it being very heart-rending. Owen asks at the opening of this section, " What candles may be held to speed them all? " He then goes on to answer this by saying, Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes Shall shine the holy glimmers of good-byes" This is saying that the soldiers will not get candles held by boys at a funeral to show the respect they are worthy too but that their eyes will glimmer like a candle flame as the soldiers will be teary-eyed as in their minds, they will be saying goodbye to their loved ones during their last few minutes on earth.

Owens next line is a metaphor to strengthen the melancholy of this section. The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;" This is saying that the pallor of girls' brows will have to be their pall as they are not going to get a real one for recognition so even though they will only have a pall metaphorically, it will be the best that they will get. The last line of the poem is very well written to and is very effective and deep. " And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds. " This is linking to the idea that when someone dies, as a mark of respect, the blinds in that house are closed so others know and can pay their respects.

The end of each day is compared to this as it is saying that as dusk comes slowly someone will have died and metaphorically blinds will have been drawn down to show this. Owen has made this last line alliterative too to fortify this in our minds. As shown in the poems, both WB Yeats and Wilfred Owen are against war, they just choose to get their point across in different ways. Owen's view of war is that it is something very futile, worthless and pointless; this is similar to Yeat's view as he also sees war as being pointless.

However the difference between the two poems is in how the grammatical terms are used.

Yeats uses a laid-back, emotionless tone and a depletion of imagery in "An Irish Airman Foresees His Death" because he wants to show that the subject of the poem is more important than the use of technique. The reason he writes in such a futile manner is because this is how he sees the fact that Robert Gregory is fighting in a war that is not his. Yeats criticises him for being apathetic and for going to war without a cause or the feeling of being called. He also makes Robert Gregory seem that he is not worthy of respect as he is not going to war for a sense of Nationalistic Pride or a reason that is even remotely patriotic.

The person Yeats has chosen to be the subject of the poem was a perfect example to base the poem on as it makes the poem effective and makes the torpid mood of the poem more convincing. Wilfred Owen's poem "Anthem for Doomed Youth" is full of emotion and he has made the mood sad to show the futility of the high loss of life which gives it a more realistic tone. Like Yeats, Owen uses rhyme, rhythm and imagery only he makes his more varied, frequent and complexed. To do this, Owen has used an assortment of literary devices such as metaphors, similes, personification, onomatopoeia and alliteration.

This helps Owen to elaborate his poem in more serious, gruesome detail which he often does, even in other literature and a good example of this would be another poem called "Dulce et docormest." He has seen the horror and futility of war first hand and this is reflected through his use of

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emotive language. The two poems are diverse to one another as Owen uses numerous amounts of imagery and has a lack of structure which results in an abundance of emotion where as Yeats is the complete opposite and comprehends constant structure and image deficiency which consequently leads to a lack of emotion.