

Robert service's on the wire and harold begbie's fall in essay



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In war, it is hard to imagine how people write something that is so poetic and beautiful, in its imagery, which comes from the horrific war that was going on all around them.

The First World War produced some of the most gifted and talented authors and artists of the last century and most of them portrayed the harsh brutalities of this 'great' war. The type of poetry in the First World War is varied. We can see the biggest contrast in poetry within the start and the end of the war. At the start of the war, it was portrayed as a great thing and you would be looked down on if you did not join, but by the end, people had experienced the true living nightmare of the war and were writing the harsh realities down for everyone one to experience.

Many people who had belief in the war lost their faith and many people were affected by the war even after it had finished. Over 19 million people died in the First World War and this shows us there was a huge waste of life and many of the poems show this enormous tragic event. In this essay I will be comparing Robert Service's 'On the wire' and Harold Begbie's 'Fall In'. 'Fall In' shows the negative pressures of those who did not enlist.

The poem was pro war and it tries to persuade men to join the army to fight in the war because otherwise they will be looked down upon by of society, including their own children. On the other hand, 'On the wire' is a poem that shows one of the most brutal ways of dying in the war. It depicts a man stuck on barbed wire in No Man's Land, being slowly cooked by the sun leaving him waiting and wanting to die. This poem is anti war as it produces an

extremely graphic image of the harsh realities of the war, making people see the true horrors of the war.

These two poems have quite different rhyming schemes ' Fall In' follows the pattern ' a, b, a, b' very precisely and this is repeated throughout the whole poem. ' On the wire' follows the ' a, b, a, b' pattern but in each stanza there are also different patterns of rhythm, in the first stanza it contains the pattern ' a, b, b, a' and in the second stanza there are two sections which follow the rhyming pattern of ' c, c'. The even rhythm scheme in ' Fall In' is there to make the poem read very easy on the tongue and deliver its message quite easy without anybody having to think too hard about what they are signing up for. The poem just makes them feel that the war is going to be easy because the rhyming in this poem is very easy so it would deliver a quick message making people they are going to get more benefits out of the war, while they don't know actually what they're signing up for. The simple rhymed lines are very clear and memorable, so the reader cannot forget what this poem is trying to portray. Also the sound of the rhyme scheme in ' Fall In' creates an echoing sound due to it's ' a, b, a, b' pattern.

This echoing sound is like soldiers marching because a soldiers march is ' left, right, left, right', which is the same as the ' a, b, a, b' rhyme scheme in this poem. We can see this if we take the last words of the first four lines in ' Fall In' which goes ' lack, street, back, beat', this follows the rhyme scheme and sounds very much like soldiers marching. By creating the sense of soldiers marching the author draws the reader into the poem and makes them feel more guilt because the sound of marching creates the sense of soldiers going off to war, while the man reading this would be in England, not <https://assignbuster.com/robert-services-on-the-wire-and-harold-begbies-fall-in-essay/>

fighting, so the marching sound persuades him even more to volunteer to go to war like everyone else. While the rhyme scheme in 'On the wire', changes in each stanza.

It is like this so the poem doesn't become repetitive and people don't just say the words without thinking about them like they would with 'Fall In'. This means that they would have to think about it and realise what these people went through. By not following the rhyming scheme it makes the poem more dramatic and catches the reader's attention and brings them back into the poem to deliver its meaning across to them. Also by not following an even rhyme scheme the author creates slightly harder sound on the ear. Such as the last words of the first four lines are 'sky, up, cry, cup', this follows the rhyme scheme 'a, b, a, b', while the last words of the next four lines are 'sun, swells, hells, done', this then changes from the rhyme scheme of the first four lines and creates the pattern 'a, b, b, a'.

This small diversity in the rhyme scheme continues through the whole poem. The purpose of this technique is so it makes the poem slightly harder on the ear to reflect the harsh content of the poem. By making the reader reflect on the content of the poem more deeply, it persuades the reader that war is an awful and horrible place to be. In 'On the wire' the language is very descriptive compared to that of 'Fall In'. In 'On the Wire' there are many metaphors such as 'its beating with hammers red'. The use of all these metaphors and descriptive language builds up throughout the poem, so the more the reader reads the more graphic this picture inside the reader's mind becomes.

This picture is quite graphic as it shows a soldier in real pain on the wire. We can see the author using descriptive language to build up this gruesome image where he says ' It's searing the flesh on my bones'. This quote is very disgusting and shows how this picture is built up because this is a very detailed quote. The reason why there is so much descriptive language because by building up a clearer image it shows a more graphic picture and informs people of what is really happening in the war. However in the poem ' Fall In' there is many more questions than descriptive language.

Such as where the author asks in the second stanza ' But where will you look when they give you the glance that tells you they know you funk? '. This is a rhetorical question because nobody wants their children to look down upon them because they did not take part in the war, so it persuades the reader to sign up for war. These questions are there to be answered by the reader and they ask do they want to be disowned. These are rhetorical questions because nobody wants to be looked down upon so it makes that man more anxious to join the war so he will not be looked down upon by anyone. By using all these rhetorical questions it tells the reader that the only answer to all the questions appears to be stand up and fight. This means men are persuaded to join the army, as they do not want to be having to answer any of these questions that are put forward to them in the poem, as it would mean they would be looked down upon by most people.

In both poems there is a lot of repetition. Such as in ' On the wire' the same line is repeated in last line of each stanza which is ' here on the wire... the wire.

.. ' and in ' Fall In' a question is repeated at the start of each stanza with the word ' sonny' in, and for the each stanza, except the fourth, a question is raised in the last two lines of the stanza. The purpose of all this repetition is to make sure that the reader knows what the poem is about and the speaker gets their point of view on the war, across to the reader.

The repetition makes the main points of the poem stick out and makes the reader remember them more easily. With ' On the Wire' the reader is left with the same image of the man stuck on the wire at the end of each stanza. This makes sure that the reader does not forget what the poem is about and how horrible the war can be. While in ' Fall In' the reader is asked a rhetorical question at the start and end of each stanza, this again is to make sure that the reader doesn't forget and to keep them thinking after they have read the poem if they want to be seen as a hero by fighting in the war or a villain for not fighting.

It makes the reader want to sign up by repeating all the questions and by keeping with a familiar tone throughout the poem. By keeping a familiar tone it brings out the repetition in the questions and makes them easier to remember. Also at the first question in each stanza the word ' sonny' is used. This is to make the question seem more personal to the reader and make them think if they should join in on the war, because it makes the question less formal and more appealing to them. During the 1900s religion was more part of everyday society than it is today. This is why religion played a very important part in the First World War.

This was because the men in the war needed something that they could believe in to raise their spirits and moral. Both of these poems appeal to God, but in different context. In ' On the wire', God is mentioned many times, but it is as the wounded soldier appeals to God for help, and starts to question if he is looking over him because he is in so much pain and very close to death. We can see him appealing to God in the line ' God, can't you hear my cry? ', this shows that the soldier is so close to death that the only thing he has left to believe and appeal to is God. This shows the reader that war is a terrible thing because God doesn't help those who are dying in battle.

We can also see how it makes the reader question religion and the power of God by using the line, ' Is it God doesn't care? Is it God doesn't know? '.

These lines yet again make the reader question the relationship between war and God, and if it is a sin to go to war. However in ' Fall In' God is perceived as a very different character. In the last line it is mentioned ' England's call is God's', this means that it is God calling men up to fight for their country. It tells us God is calling men to fight, and this would have been very persuasive for men to join the war because if they didn't they would not be acting on God's will and they would go to hell.

So by using this line the speaker contrasts that of the view of God in ' On the wire', by saying he is making men fight for the war, not being against it. The purpose of the questions raised about God in ' On the Wire', are to show that God doesn't care or help those dying in battle. This would have persuaded men not to go to war because religion was more part of everyday society, so it would mean a lot to these men if they knew that God wasn't going to be with them when they went to war. While in ' Fall In' the purpose of the

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questions raised is to inform people that God is on their side to go to war and that God wants them go to war. This would have persuaded men to go to war because they would not want to go against God's will, so they would have gone and fought in war. In the poem ' On the wire' there is a lot of alliteration, especially using the syllable's'.

We can see this in lines such as ' See! It's the size of the sky' and ' See how it swells and swells'. The main purpose of the alliteration in this poem is to make the poem run more smoothly when it is read and to create pace when it is read. By creating pace in the poem the reader will not rush straight through the poem without taking any of the meaning in, so by adding pace the meaning will mean more to the reader. This makes sure that the reader can take in all what the poem is about of not forget it as soon as they have finished reading it, so they have time to think about it and make the decision to go and sign up for the war. It makes the poem look better and sound better so the reader is attracted towards the poem and not put off.

This will mean they will read and may be persuaded by it to go to war. It also builds up a bigger picture and makes the image you have more graphical, putting you off the idea of war. ' Fall In' uses alliteration for a different purpose. It uses it to persuade you to go to war.

Such as in the line ' where will you look, sonny, where will you look' there is alliteration in the letter ' w'. This is to make the question more appealing to the reader, so they will be persuaded to go and fight in the war.'On the Wire' uses alliteration to persuade the reader against the war, while ' Fall In' uses alliteration to persuade the reader to go to war. Fall In' uses many words

that people would have used everyday such as 'sonny', 'football' and 'pub' which is colloquial language. This makes the reader feel more associated with the poem because they can understand it better meaning they will be able to understand what the poem actually means better.

This means they would be more persuaded to fight in the war because the poem uses language they would hear every day. Also in 'Fall In' they use many words that people would not like to be linked or associated with. Words such as 'tyrant', 'dead', 'shamed' and 'bent', are very emotive and make people feel that they don't want to be connected with these words because they may be looked down upon by their peers. So they are pushed by the poem to fight in the war so they are not looked down upon by society. Both poems contain personification. In 'On the wire' Personification is used to describe the sun, where the author says 'It's laughing, the curse sun! '.

This gives the reader a sense that the sun is his enemy and he can't stop him laughing because he cannot move as he is stuck on the wire. This then makes the reader feel pity for him because of the situation he is in, showing them how terrible the war is. Also by making the reader have a more vivid image in their mind it makes them understand the poem more and what it is about. In 'Fall In' personification is used in the same way as 'On the wire'.

The author mentions a 'strangled cheer'; this creates an image in the mind of the reader making the poem come alive. By making the poem seem more alive, the author can get the message across to the reader easier, making them fight in the war. In conclusion 'On the wire' is a very graphic poem. It uses metaphors and alliteration to build a very detailed and eloquent image

in the mind of the reader, so they can understand what the soldier stuck on the wire is feeling, bringing the reader more into the poem and making the reader more understanding of the meaning that the poem has. By creating such a graphic image of a dying man, it persuades the reader that the war is a bad thing as people experience the true horrors of war that no man should feel.

On the other hand ' Fall In' uses its repetitive rhyming scheme to catch and draw the reader into the poem making it very clear and memorable so the message could be delivered much easier. Also ' Fall In' uses colloquial language and men would have been familiar with it, making them more involved in the poem and persuaded to fight in the war. Both of these poems use the language and poetry techniques in them to get the message that they are trying to get to the across to the reader. They are both very persuasive and get their message about the war across very clearly.