

Joining the colours and the send-off both essay



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The poems *Joining the Colours* and *The Send-off* both discuss, young, guileless boys marching off to war. *The Send-off* is written by Wilfred Owen, and ex-soldier, which explains why the reader acquires a deeper understanding of war and its sinister quality.

Whereas Katherine Tynan writes *Joining the Colours*, so it analyses the way in which the women left behind are affected. In both poems we can see that the authors have a greater appreciation of the war and of the soldiers' future than the soldiers themselves do. Either from an ex-soldiers perspective or a woman's. The tones of the poems are different due to perspective of the poets. Katherine Tynan {*Joining the Colours*} is a female and has only ever-experienced war from the home front. I think that the fact of her sex is indicated in the title because " *Joining the Colours*" suggests that it is heroic and an honour and most women would see war as this.

Although she obviously aware of the men's future which is indicated by lines such as " *Love cannot save*". A woman would see the men going off to join the processions off to war with colourful banners and flowers " *Colours*" being the banners and excitement off leaving to fight. Also it could mean *Joining the Colours*, colours being the army. Whereas Wilfred Owen titled his poem *The Send-off*, theoretically the send off to war, but he knows it will be for some of them a send off to death. The rhythm of *Joining the Colours* is lighter than *The Send-off* but has a very sinister undertone. The first line of *The Send-off* is typical of the tone of the poem.

" *Blithely they go as to a wedding day*", which is ironic because the author and the reader know that they are going to the opposite, the wedding day

symbolises flowers and a church service, also associated with poppies and funerals. "Blithely" conveys their youth and foolishness, and their belief in glory. "Poor girls they kissed" they shan't kiss anymore and nor shall the girls behind kiss them. The focus of the poem is the home front, this is due to the fact that the poet is a woman and that would have been her experience of the war. The tone of The Send-off written by Wilfred Owen is slightly sardonic and ironic due to the author's experiences.

Ironic, in the sense that the Tramp watching at the station is more fortunate than they are, he's saying that someone with one even with the life of a tramp is more fortunate than the young boys who are entering a hellish life. Owen writes with a great contempt for the war and the government. We can see this by the way in which he refers to wrongs hushed up. "Siding-sheds" the men were pushed away from the main platform, as if the soldiers going off to war and even more so returning home were an embarrassment.

"A lamp winked at the guard" Even the personification of a lamp emphasises the secrecy of the action. And the reader also feels that the lamp and guard are laughing at the stupidity and utter ignorance of the soldiers. This conjures up images of secrecy and conspiracy. Both poems use metaphors and similes to emphasise their meaning and to provoke the reader to think. "Singing like the lark" in Joining the Colours has been used to accentuate the youth of the boys. The lark is associated with springtime that is associated with youth and new birth.

The bird is also symbolising freedom, which is what the young boys are sacrificing; they'll never be free again from the horrific memories. "Singing"

also shows up the boy's ignorance, they aren't aware of their futures.

Neither poem refers to one character in the soldiers group but always refers to them as "they", this conveys that the soldiers are anonymous and it is a premonition of what's to come: they will die on the battlefield anonymous and will be buried anonymously. Katherine Tynan also uses personification in the line "food for shells and guns" where she gives guns and shells human qualities. This creates an image of a terrifying war machine slaughtering young innocent boys, to feed its hunger for violence. Owen also uses personification "Signals nodded" nodding is like giving your consent, in this context giving consent for the train to leave.

But its underlying meaning is I think the signal is giving consenting to the massacre of yet another group of boys. It all seems very routine by the way, in which Owen has used commas to make it almost sound like a train pulling out of a station. Tynan also uses alliteration "The street staring" this again emphasises the fact that everybody even the street is looking at them leaving, almost like a funeral procession. Owen uses "Grimly gay" in The Send-off, which shows a great contrast between the two words, but also it shows a contrast in the soldier's feelings fearful but excited. I think that Owen being an ex-soldier can see himself in the young soldiers.

The structure of Joining the Colours uses four stanzas, rhyming words are the second and fourth lines such as "dark" and "lark" and "guns" and "sons". The two words always contrast one their dark futures "grave" and the other is counteracting this "save". This creates pace and flows when you read the poem out loud. You also get a sense of pace when reading The Send-off as in four of the six stanzas the end two or three words rhyme, "way" and "gay".

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This poem is broken up with odd lines, which gives the reader more of a chance to think about the previous line, and therefore has more of an impact. The other poem is broken up by lines and words but still flows.

Joining the Colours tells the story of the soldier's journey to death and war with the last line of each stanza; this slows down the pace and adds a serious tone. It starts off with "mother's sons" reflecting childhood and accentuates how young the soldiers are. "Into the dark" conveys that they are going into the unexplored and also that they have been kept in the dark by the government." Singing" is referred to previously in the poem in the same context; they go into the dark singing the soldier's song to disguise their apprehensions and fears. Joining the Colours has alternate lines the first being positive and the second negative, such as "marching all in steps so gay" and then "food for shells and guns" throughout the poem.

In The Send-off there isn't a definition of positive and negative between lines, but the poem still takes the reader on a journey with the soldiers to their deaths, except not in each stanza like Joining the Colours but slowly, starting with them leaving and ending with some returning. Each poem and the way in which it is structured has a strong impact on the reader. The Send-off doesn't flow as well as the other nor does it have contrasting with lighter lines therefore it makes the reader concentrate on the important issues, the futility of war and therefore it has a larger impact. Joining the Colours has more of an impression on me although I personally prefer The Send-off as a poem.

Because of the contrasting lines particularly “ mothers sons” and “ food for shells and guns” explained previously. This really forces the reader to think about the futility of war and the different views so close together. I believe that poems such as these are essential to understanding the war, because they delve deep into the heinous treacherous crimes, not only of the soldiers but also of the government. All these points are tainted with the feelings, fear, deceit, excitement, and finally love.