

Sassoon vs brooke



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One, views on war were vastly different amongst the population. The soldiers on the front line saw the world through different eyes compared to the people at home. Some attitudes were based on experience and pain, whilst others on the idea of patriotism and blind belief. "They," by Siegfried Swanson, is a simple and direct poem decrying the righteous establishment sending men to die in a so-called noble cause. Caisson's bitterness against the war is made clear through his poetry, which is filled with his resentment against war, the futility of it and the high price that had to be paid.

Swanson uses many different ways to convey his feelings, and particularly his bitterness and resentment towards the war and the officers, but his true meanings are clear and he writes in such a way that shows clearly what he thinks and feels about the war. "The Bishop" represents the pompous flag-waving establishment without a clue to the horrors of the battlefield. "They" are "the boys" at the front. The term "they will not be the same" is ironic and true. There is the inference that the boys will transcend

into some grace-like state for having fought and sacrificed "in a just cause." Swanson knew the boys, those who survived, who would return home changed for far darker and haunting reasons. The elites running the war thought nothing of sending troops to their deaths back and forth. The sentiment sold to the populace back home was that it was the "just cause" and it was a noble thing to "have challenged death" resulting in "new right to breed an honorable race." The second stanza however is Caisson's blunt and harsh retort of reality. It is a brief roll call of injury and disease.

Syphilis ran rampant among the boys engaging random relationships and Swanson employs this as illustration in mocking the Bishop as the disease is hardly a righteous or noble means of death. The voices against the war cry out " You'll not find a chap who's served that hasn't found some change", and not in a good way. The final line exposes the hypocrisy. " The ways of God are strange" is the blind ignorance of the excuses. ' Rupert Brooke also wrote about war but in a much different light. He has a very positive outlook on war and a very strong patriotic love of England.

In fact in *The Soldier* he praises the wonderful land of England (gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam, A body of England's breathing English air'). In contrast with Swanson, Brooke adopts a natural positive attitude: " think only of me as this: That there's some corner of a foreign field. " as a man who accepts that his survival is not guaranteed and death in defending his country would make him complete. ! The language used reflects his feelings. He only ever uses one negative word, " evil", and even this is used in the context of being " shed away".

It is almost an ode to England itself: " In that rich image-evoking language (" her flowers to love, her ways to roam. ") ! The poem is a sonnet which is a style traditionally used by people writing love poetry. In this case Brooke is using the sonnet form to express his love for his country. The break of thought allows the reader to have time to think about the poet's words and absorb them in. The writer moves from one scene he is describing, England being a trial creation of beauty (" her flowers to love, her lands to roam"), on to England being alive, personifying England (" A pulse in the eternal mind").

Yet there is a continuing presence of the importance and power of England, and this is shown by the use of words such as "richer", "blest by sun" and "English Heaven". The form, structure and choice of language all work together. ! Brook's poems have been associated with the idealistic attitudes prevalent in the years leading up to 1914 and the outbreak of war; in this sense, his poetry is actually re-war, unlike Caisson's verse, which is during the war, and speaks less of ideals and more of realism. However, war is a common thread for all writers to use. As Swanson pointed out, there will always be war, and as long as there is war there will be someone to write about it. Poets express their protest or support through their writing. War poetry can also be a form of propaganda. Caisson's was traditional propaganda opposing war; while Brook's was a positive form of propaganda. Each man had very strong opinions based on their own personal experience.!