

War is unpredictable



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To an extent war is unpredictable, however the meaningless punishment and demoralising conduct is something that soldiers experience constantly throughout war. In Owen's poem "Anthem for Doomed Youth" he diminishes the patriotism and heroism that is commonly associated with war and replaces it with depictions of the harsh punishment and perfidious death of youth in war. Correspondingly in his poem "Dulce et Decorum Est" he extends the theme of unpatriotic behaviour and hollow death and suggests that war is also a devilish and sinful practice, where nothing but death and hatred arise.

Contrastingly, in Stanley Kubrick's war film "Full Metal Jacket" he does not look at death in war, but conversely the internal punishment that superior officers give to soldiers, harshly exploring the training and punishment soldiers receive before war. Ultimately, these three texts explore the lack of honour and worthless punishment that soldiers experience constantly in war, depicting war as a place of hatred and sin. In Owen's poem "Anthem" he removes the common Romantic concepts of glory and triumph that were associated with war from the early 20th century and realistically explores the truly unpatriotic nature of the battlefield.

His ideals contrasted the Romantic ideals of glory as well as the government and the media who exhibited war as valiant and fitting for the youth of the early 20th century. Instantly, Owen's title of the poem contradicts the reader's belief in the common war values where he pairs the terms "Anthem" and "Doomed Youth" juxtaposing with a gloomy and depressing description of the youth in war. Owen then compares the youth who "died as cattle" to an abattoir by using metaphor, emphasising the sheer amount

of death that occurs on the battlefield, also suggesting that the youth are indiscriminately dying with no justification.

Likewise, Owen uses juxtaposition to describe the sounds of war, in which he subverts the calming sound of “choirs” and depicts them as “demented”, illuminating the sound of screaming comrades in war and enhancing his anti-heroic view. Thus, Owen through his poem “Anthem” dishonours the common concepts of glory and triumph, and replaces them with “mockeries” of the dying youth in war, ultimately suggesting war unheroic and the soldiers deaths unglorified. On the contrary, Stanley Kubrick’s war film “FMJ” explores the internal and meaningless punishment that soldiers experience whilst training to become a soldier, aggressively depicting the training as harsh and suicidal. Directed in 1979, Steven Kubrick’s position on war was neither affirmative nor negative and simply stated he was concerned with “the way things are”, thus forcefully depicting the disciplinary discrepancies of the Americans in Vietnam. The opening montage of the camera focused on the soldier’s heads being shaved depicts the blank expressionless faces of the soldiers and shows the identity loss of the soldiers in war, illustrating their inconsequential individuality.

Kubrick uses harsh and explicit dialogue to stress show even though war is “fair” everyone participating is “equally worthless”, again punishing the soldiers for their racial background and individuality. Likewise, in the final scene of the introductory sequence before the war, Kubrick displays the suicidal aspect of the meaningless punishment, where Private Pyle” explains that even though there is war going on in Vietnam, he is in a “world of shit” after the punishment from the senior officers. This harsh portrayal of pre-war

training explains Kubrick's view that internally war can be as detrimental as it is on the battlefield.

Correspondingly, Owen aims to eradicate all romantic feelings in "Dulce et Decorum Est" and instead represent war as a sinful and devilish practice. The ironic titling of the poem initially subverts any sense of patriotism and glory associated with war, and condemns the romanticised portrayals of war that the government and the media have created. By deliberately subverting the heroic Latin phrase through the bleak ideas in his poem, Owen depicts the title as an "old lie" where he suggests that glorification and bravery in war is undermined by the fallacies of the government and the media.

In addition, his use of metaphor in the first stanza exemplifies the mechanised and fatigued state of the soldiers in war, where the soldiers "marched asleep" from the endless punishment and futility of war. Owen indicates here exactly how "lame" the soldiers were with the pain and suffering of war, illuminating the punishment and empty nationalism he attempts to portray. Furthermore, the graphic imagery of the sinfulness and devilish nature of war used in the third stanza highlights the devilish and sinful representation, by comparing a comrade to a "devil sick of sin".

Owen here evaluates war as a whole, as a place where even the devil can no longer handle the horrid pain and meaningless suffering. This powerful imagery removes the Romantic ideals of patriotism substituting them with a morbid depiction of "choking" with sin. Thus, Owen eradicates the glory and valour that had been associated with war literature in the 20th Century and indicts war as a fallacy to children who are "desperate" for honour.

Ultimately, Owen aims to challenge all feelings of glory and heroism that are commonly associated with war and shift these concepts to a historic fallacy where sinful and devilish behaviour arises.

Alternately, Kubrick strives to explore both the harsh and unforgiving nature of the battlefield and the meaningless punishment experienced internally in the U. S Marine Corps, where even the pre-war training results in the suicide of a soldier. Each text explains the horror and meaningless punishment as a constant and predictable outcome, as well as the horrifying and sinful behaviour that soldiers experience, however Owen's poem "Dulce et Decorum Est" more effectively depicts the unpredictability of war by emphasising how disgusting war is, promoting it as foreign to any kind of valour and partisanship.