

Strange meeting essay



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Wilfred Owen was brought up in a really god-fearing family. and it wasn't until he left his mother's house that he became progressively critical of the function that the Church played in society. Owen enlisted in January of 1917 and fought in the Battle of Somme until he suffered shell daze. and was sent to Craiglockhart infirmary to retrieve in May of 1917. While in the infirmary. he met Siegfried Sassoon. a fellow poet. who influenced much of Owen's subsequently poesy. While in the infirmary Owen experienced atrocious incubuss due to the shell daze. and he would utilize these dreams as inspiration for his poesy. One image plagued his dreams. which was the thought that war was a kind of " mouth of snake pit. " and it was this image that inspired Owen's verse form Strange Meeting.

Owen's verse form is besides evocative of Percy Bysshe Shelley's The Revolt of Islam. which besides depicts a journey through a unusual land. Wilfred Owen's chief aim when composing his poesy is to cast visible radiation on the gruesome and hideous world of being a soldier. which counters the chauvinistic propaganda that depict soldiers as honest. proud. and heroic. Many soldiers came home mentally and physically disabled. which is the exact antonym of what people expected.

Owen was a maestro of poetic devices ; he frequently used pararhyme. half-rhyme. initial rhyme. onomatopoeia. and vowel rhyme to to the full affect his reader in the tone of his verse form. Pararhyme is when the stressed vowel sounds differ. but are flanked by indistinguishable or similar consonants ; the 2nd rime is normally lower in pitch than the first. which produces the consequence of disagreement. and failure. Examples of pararrhyme are: groined/groaned (lines 3-4) . and hall/hell (lines 9-10) . Half-rhyme is

consonant rhyme on the concluding consonants of the words involved.

Consonance is the repeat of the same harmonic two or more times in short sequence.

Half-rhyme can present a little note of strife. An illustration of Half-rhyme is: swift/tigress (line 28) . Alliteration is the repeat of an initial consonant sound in the first syllables of a series of words and/or phrases. which helps to convey imagination and emphasis timing. It besides helps to do a line more memorable. An illustration of this is: grieves/grieves (line 21) .

Onomatopoeia is when a word imitates or suggests the beginning of the sound that it describes. Examples of this are: groaned (line 4) . sprang (line 6) . and thumped/moan (line 13) . Assonance is the chorus of vowel sounds to make internal rhyming within phrases or sentences. An illustration of this would be through/wounds (line 38) .

It seemed that out of conflict I escaped

Down some profound dull tunnel. long since scooped

Through granites which titanic wars had groined. (lines 1-3)

The storyteller begins the verse form with “ it seemed. ” which connotes a sense of uncertainty. like it could wholly be merely a dream. There are merely a few ways to get away conflict. which are: you are injured and sent place. you are killed. you are captured by the enemy. you become a apostate. or peace is declared ; nevertheless. even if you manage to get away the war physically. the war will still be with you mentally. The manner

that this verse form is set up leads the reader to believe that the soldier is dead. and he is now falling the tunnels into snake pit.

“ Dull tunnel” refers to Siegfried Sassoon’s poem The Rear-Guard. which depicts a soldier fumbling his manner along a tunnel that is pitch-black to acquire to the fresh air of the battleground above. The fact that the storyteller says that the tunnel is profound leads us to believe that there is something particular about this tunnel. This tunnel serves as the “ mouth of snake pit. ” “ Long since scooped” means that the tunnel was delving a long clip before he went down into the tunnel. This journey through the tunnel is an backbreaking 1. because of the granite that had been shaken loose by the “ titanic wars” above. World Wars are characterized by their outrageousness in size. power. and force. which besides happens to be the definition of the word titanic. “ Groined” is used here in topographic point of the word grooved ; the walls of the tunnel had been grooved by the titanic wars displacing the granite.

Yet besides at that place encumbered slumberers groaned.

Too fast in idea or decease to be bestirred.

Then. as I probed them. one sprang up. and stared

With hapless acknowledgment in fixed eyes.

Raising distressing custodies. as if to bless.

And by his smiling. I knew that sullen hall. “”

By his dead smiling I knew we stood in Hell. (lines 4-10)

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The “ sleepers” in the tunnel are most likely other soldiers that have died in conflict. They are encumbered by non merely their uniforms and kits. but besides by their emotional agonies ; they were non able to rest in peace merely yet. because they feel guilty about the things that they had done to their fellow human existences. These work forces were excessively caught-up in their ain ideas to bestir to action. It is about like they are in purgatory. The storyteller went along analyzing the work forces in the tunnel until he came upon one soldier that sprang up and stared at him.

The other soldier recognized the hapless confusion on the narrator’s face. The soldier lifted his custodies to the storyteller in a despairing demand to bless him. which makes us believe that the soldier is thanking the storyteller for some ground. The soldier smilings. which is an illustration of sarcasm ; the two work forces are in snake pit. which is supposed to be a awful topographic point. but the soldier smilings. which indicates felicity. “ Sullen hall” means that the tunnel is gloomily silent: morose ; the tunnel is kind of like a anteroom or waiting room to hell. “ Dead smile” is an oxymoron ; if one is dead so that individual can’t smiling. but the storyteller uses it to depict how empty the soldier’s psyche is. The war had caused his emotions to toss much like a soldier’s morality is flipped ; in a civilised universe violent death is incorrect and punishable. but in war it is expected. so a smiling that one time meant felicity now means unhappiness.

With a 1000 pains that vision’s face was grained ;

Yet no blood reached at that place from the upper land.

And no guns thumped. or down the flukes made groan. (lines 11-13)

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The " thousand pains" that the storyteller is mentioning to are the figure of bad things that the soldier had done or were done to him. The storyteller equates the soldier's face with a " vision ; " a vision is defined as something seen otherwise than by ordinary sight (as in a dream or enchantment) . which is farther grounds that the storyteller is woolgathering all of this. The soldier's face is described as being " grained" with furrows or worry lines much like the tunnel has been " groined" by the " titanic wars. " The upper land refers to the conflict field. which normally has wounded or dead organic structures of soldiers. This " hall" is a kind of dry oasis from the war ; they were free from the sounds and bloodiness of the war. " Flues" are transitions (as in a chimney) for directing a current (as of fume or gases) .

" Strange friend. " I said. " here is no cause to mourn. " (line 14)

This line marks the beginning of the duologue between the storyteller and the soldier. Aside from this line. the storyteller is the hearer and the soldier is the speechmaker. This lines introduces the paradox (a statement that seems contrary to common sense and yet is possibly true) of " strange friend. " The storyteller tells the soldier non to mourn. because he likely feels that snake pit is better than holding to digest the depredations of war.

" None. " said that other " save the undone old ages.

The hopelessness. Whatever hope is yours.

Was my life besides ; I went runing natural state

After the wildest beauty in the universe.

Which lies non calm in eyes. or braided hair.

But mocks the steady running of the hr.

For by my hilarity might many work forces have laughed.

And of my crying something had been left.

Which must decease now. I mean the truth untold.

The commiseration of war. the commiseration war distilled. (lines 15-25)

The soldier begins his soliloquy by stating that he has cause to mourn.

because of all the old ages that he does non acquire to populate. The soldier provinces that he and the storyteller portion a similar intent and individuality ; they both had expansive hopes for their lives. but were cheated out of their hereafters. He “ went runing natural state after the wildest beauty in the universe. ” which corresponds to Owen’s quest to happen both beauty and truth when he was younger. Owens early poesy was greatly influenced by two English Romantic poets: John Keats and Percy Bysshe Shelley ; Keats was known for his animal imagination. and Shelley was known for his idealism. (Side note: Shelley was married to Mary Shelley. who wrote Frankenstein) .

The soldier (and on some degree Owen) realizes that the romantic universe position that he one time had was false. Boy’s dream of misss with braided hair. and they mindlessly flint from one undertaking to another seeking out the “ wildest beauty ; ” but the beauty they seek mocks them for their na? vet© . because the universe is unpredictable and grotesque. Other work

forces laughed at his artlessness. but he rapidly learned the horrors of war and his artlessness was lost. One thing to maintain in head here is that many soldiers during WWI were merely 18 old ages old. and some were even younger ; so they went from the sheltered life of school and parents to one where they had to contend and kill to last. The war distilled (purified) commiseration ; Owen's foreword to his verse forms stated " my topic is war. and the commiseration of war.

The poesy is in the commiseration. " Owen wanted people to sympathize with what the soldiers had to travel through. alternatively of handling them like they were Grecian Supreme beings or superhuman. Killing and experiencing like your life is in peril every twenty-four hours wears on work forces ; people back at place expected these work forces to come place unchanged. but that was frequently non the instance. Many work forces came place with psychological upsets or with broken or losing limbs ; propaganda glorifies war when it is really non every bit heroic as the authorities wants people to believe.

Now work forces will travel content with what we spoiled.

Or. discontent. furuncle bloody. and be spilled.

They will be fleet with speed of the tigress.

None will interrupt ranks. through states trek from advancement. (26-29)

Soldiers are the 1s who fight for a country's freedom. and those at place don't truly believe excessively difficult about how their freedom is achieved ; alternatively they are " content" (satisfied) with what the soldiers have "

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spoiled" (robbed. pillaged) for them. viz. their freedom. The work forces that the soldier is mentioning to could besides be his fellow soldiers. who were proud of what they had done to their enemies. and for their state. Or these work forces could be unsatisfied by what they had accomplished. Their blood furuncles. which is an indicant that they are really angry. and blood would be spilled whether it was theirs or their enemies. They are killing machines. natural marauders like the tigress runing her quarry. The soldiers will lodge together. even though they are far from place. and the modern universe ; all they have to trust on is their fellow soldiers. they need each other to last.

Courage was mine. and I had enigma.

Wisdom was mine. and I had command:

To lose the March of this retreating universe

Into vain bastions that are non walled.

Then. when much blood had clogged their chariot-wheels.

I would travel up and rinse them from sweet Wellss.

Even with truths that lie excessively deep for contamination.

I would hold poured my spirit without stretch

But non through lesions ; non on the Ce of war.

Brows of work forces have bled where no lesions were. (lines 30-39)

In this subdivision, poetry and world collide ; the soldier begins by romanticising who he was before the war, and about the things he would hold dear, but he is suddenly brought back to world. The Romanticism Era was between late eighteenth century and mid-19th century, and it rejected “ the principles of order, composure, harmoniousness, balance, idealisation, and rationality” (Encyclopedia of Britannica) . The soldier (and Owen) embraced this motion in his young person. His vernal ideals made him brave, and gave him enigma ; they besides made him wise, which gave him command. “ March” alludes to soldier’s processing the “ retreating universe. ”

“ Retreating world” can hold a few significances: the universe is deceasing, loss of civility, or the loss of humanity ; war causes unmeasurable effects on the universe, bombs don’t merely kill worlds, they kill nature. The universe becomes like a “ vain” (worthless) “ citadel” (a fortress commanding a metropolis ; stronghold) that has no protective barrier ; the universe becomes insecure. “ Chariot wheels” mentions an ancient vehicle, which was frequently used in war. When the blood became excessively thick and prevented them from going any farther, the soldier says that he would rinse away the blood from the wheel Wellss.

This is a metaphor for cleansing the psyche ; the soldiers kill to remain alive and hence they amass big measures of blood, which bogs-down their psyches, and rinsing the wheels helps them to retrieve their psyche. “ Even with truths that lie excessively deep for taint” refers to William Wordsworth verse form “ Ode: Hints of Immortality” : “ thoughts that do frequently lie excessively deep for tears” (line 203) . The soldier provinces that he would

hold given his all to the war. but he did not subscribe up for all of this
decease. "Foreheads of work forces have bled where no lesions were"
possibly means that the soldiers killed so much that they were
metaphorically sweating the blood of their victims.

"I am the enemy you killed. my friend.

I knew you in this dark: for so you frowned

Yesterday through me as you jabbed and killed.

I parried ; but my custodies were loth and cold.

Let us kip now — . " (40-44)

This last stanza solidifies the storyteller and the soldier's bond. There is a
alteration of tone ; and the linguistic communication is largely monosyllabic.
The two enemies become friends. and forgiveness is apparent. The dark
tunnel becomes light. and they can see each other. The storyteller killed the
soldier the twenty-four hours before. "Parried" means to guard off a arm or
blow ; the soldier tried to avoid being stabbed. but his custodies were loath
to make the title. The concluding line is farther grounds that this verse form
is depicting a dream. because you dream when you sleep. Some could
besides construe this line as these work forces fall ining together in decease.
but the eclipsiss indicates that there is more to come and if they died that
would be the terminal.