

# Othello and henry v essay



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Over the centuries attitudes to war have changed due public understanding and advancements in technology. The extracts from Shakespeare's Othello and Henry V, which were written between 1599 and 1604, portray war very differently from the poets of the First World War. At these different times war would have been very different, so it is understandable that attitudes maybe different.

The Shakespearian extracts are written for the stage where as the poems are more venting emotions, so they will have different approaches to how war is portrayed. Othello's speech from Act 3 Scene 3 of the play Othello is very dramatic and Othello praises war, he does this as feels more at home in war than he does in society. When this speech takes place Othello has just been told his wife has been unfaithful, so he thinks this means the end of all happiness for himself. He is the best soldier around and he is disillusioned with life and war. In the speech there is a lot of description and language that captures the sound of war, “..

. and the shrill trump.” Shakespeare describes as important and exciting, “ big wars,” whereas in the poem “ Futility” by Wilfred Owen, even the title suggests a difference of opinion that war is pointless. In Othello's speech war is glorified, Othello is describes has made his life meaningful and how important, “ glorious war,” is to him. In the speech by Othello war is very much bought o life, from this speech we get the idea of war being heroic and glorious, mainly due to the amount of description and the language used.

In the second line, “ the plumed troop,” give the idea of soldiers marching. Farewell the neighing steed and the shrill trumpThe spirit-stirring drum, the

ear-piercing fife. These lines bring the sounds of war to life paint a vivid picture of war; the language in these lines and in the whole of the speech is archaic. The poem "Flanders Fields" was written by John McCrae in the First World War, he was influenced to write this poem by the death of a close friend.

In the poem there are some elements of the heroic idea of dying for a cause, but there is also the reality of war. In Flanders Fields the experience of war is brought to life by the description and the honesty of the poem. We are the Dead. Short days ago We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow, Loved and were loved, and now we lie In Flanders Fields. This verse describes the uncertainty that soldiers felt, with the constant linger of death close to them, which was never that far away in war. The language is very simple but incredibly powerful, "between the crosses, row on row.

"In the last verse archaic language is used which is similar to the language in Othello's speech, such words as "foe" and "ye" are used. This speech from Shakespeare's Henry V also glorifies war like the speech from Othello, this speech is also written for the stage so it will be dramatic, in the play the speech is used to rally up troops. In this speech the notion that it is better to die gloriously is conveyed and that you should never let the enemy win, "close up the wall with our English dead!" It also says that it is good to be gentle when there is not war. In peace there's nothing so becomes a man As modest stillness and humility. Then the men are told that they should be furious when there is war, "then imitate the action of the tiger," the comparison of animals is used to sound more ferocious.

Then lend the eye a terrible aspect; Let it pry through the portage of the head  
Like the brass cannon; let the brow o'erwhelm it  
As fearfully as doth a galled rock  
These lines describe an eye staring out of a cannon and in war how your forehead should look like rock, these are both very powerful images. Even though this speech mainly glorifies war it still reminds us of the harsh reality of war a bit, that people die, "wasteful ocean." The ancient Greek war hero is mentioned to prove that they will be victorious. The men are also asked to prove themselves by going to war, "dishonour not your mothers," this could also be called blackmail.

The comparison of animals is again used in a simile in the line, "I see you stand like greyhounds in the slips," this is used as in the slips the greyhounds are crazy and eager to be let out, this is how the soldiers feel towards war. All through the speech the idea of patriotism and duty is used, "whose limbs were made in England." This sense of duty to your country was also used in propaganda to sign up young men in the First World War, most famously is the poster of Lord Kitchener saying, "Your country needs you." This speech is masterful and winds up the men for war. The poem "Futility" by Wilfred Owen is about the pointlessness of war and questions the point of creation.

In the poem Owen uses half rhyme, Until this morning and this snow. If anything might raise him now  
This gives the poem a disturbing quality that amplifies the pointlessness of war and life. Owen was outraged at the horrors of war and felt pity for the young soldiers sacrificed in it, in this poem he is saying what is the point of life if this is what we are reduced to doing to each other. "Futility" is very much opposed to the speech in Henry V, as it

condemns war where as in Henry V it is more praised and also in Othello it is glorified. "Futility" is definitely a sad poem that is full of passion for the outrage of war.

Attitudes to war had changed considerably by 1914, because as soon as the First World War began it was realised that it was going to be a far more gruesome war than any other before. As soon as war was declared in 1914 men flocked to sign up and fight for their country. The attitude of soldiers in the First World War changed rapidly once they were on the front, many started off in favour of war but after seeing death and war in close quarters many changed their minds. In Shakespeare's time war was glorified, this could be because it was a completely different style of war and there were fewer deaths, where as in the First World War warfare was very advanced and could inflict many more deaths.