

# In flanders fields essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

In my opinion I think that the poems, 'In Flanders Fields', 'Break of day in the trenches' and 'Dulce et decorum est' do teach the modern reader a variety of different things, therefore to say: "the modern reader learns little from them" is an inaccurate conclusion to draw. I think the modern reader can learn a sufficient amount from the three poems because of the clear themes that run through them. In the poem; in Flanders fields written by John McRae, it is obvious to the reader that this poet was a patriot and that he felt that the duty of the living soldiers was to honour the deed by continuing to fight on in the Great War.

This poem portrays the similar attitudes of many soldiers who fought as it reflects how important it was for them to give and sacrifice their lives for the victory of their country. As a reader, you can learn the significance of the poppy; the red colour symbolising blood and death, the natural world taking its course by allowing the poppies to grow on the dead to show its natural beauty and how death is part of a cycle and also how the natural world still exists in the chaos and destruction of war which can also be linked with the Rat in 'break of day in the trenches'. The reader can also gain an insight into the a soldiers thoughts and feelings which can justify why they felt as if they had no option but to win and honour the dead who have already sacrificed their lives for the victory of their country. Break of day in the trenches is a great way for a 21st century reader to understand and remotely feel the suffering that took place daily for men during the First World War in the popularly talked about trenches.

It teaches us the futility of the war and the similarities and common humanities that were shared between the English and German soldiers. This

is poignantly represented by a ' queer sardonic rat' in the poem written by Isaac Rosenberg. The rat that is mentioned highlights the importance of the freedom that these men lacked but the rat; an unwanted, diseased carrying animal that is most commonly seen as vermin had. He has the opportunity to walk around freely and do as he pleases whereas the man in a trench can only stay where he is positioned.

Ironically, the rat can ' cross the sleeping green between' to have a better chance of survival than the men, who are ' less chanced than you for life'. This idea is sharply perceptive. The reader can get a sense of the real trench life and how devastating the destruction was to their lives and the appalling conditions they had to bear with. The powerful line of ' the darkness crumbles away' suggests how close they were to the earth as it was as basic as a hole in the ground. Lastly, the poem ' Dulce et Decorum est' written by Wilfred Owen allows the modern reader to divulge into the world of a soldier who has to witness shocking and harrowing scenes of death and destruction day in day out.

The poet gives the reader just a snippet of a typical gas attack and how they cope and deal with such a horrific situation. The reader can feel the pain and emotion that he is feeling as a poor soldier is caught in this form of attack. The lines; ' Bent double, like old beggars under sacks..

. coughing like hags' shows the audience that men who are meant to be fit, healthy and able are in fact aged by the stresses and strains of these conditions and how their physical and mental states are deteriorating. The imagery and the descriptions of the gas attack in this poem are vivid which

helps the reader to put in into context and can help them to visualize what is happening (‘ I saw him drowning’) The speech that is used is effective because a reader can imagine the panic in their voices and how terrified they must be. Not only does the reader gain an insight into the troubles of the soldiers but the attitudes that many soldiers, poets, women and children had.

The title translates as; it is a sweet and fitting thing to die for one’s country however this is very ironic as the poem suggests that it is a complete contrast. This line represents the attitudes of some people who expect the war to be a wonderful, romantic and honourable deed when in reality it causes pain. The reader can see that children were ‘ ardent eyed for some desperate glory’ and they believed it was an honour to die in this way which is what the title suggests. Overall, the modern reader can learn a substantial amount from reading these poems as they all cover different aspects of the war but the most resourceful poem is ‘ Dulce et Decorum est’ because the modern reader discovers the reality of life as a soldier and the ongoing difficulties that he has to face be it from staying clear from rats of escaping a gas attack.

The stereotypical war idea has been removed and the reader can learn this through this poem.