

"dulce et decorum est" and "anthem for doomed youth" essay sample

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“ Dulce et Decorum Est” and “ Anthem for Doomed Youth” Essay Sample

In the poem “ Dulce et Decorum Est”, Wilfred Owen aims to illustrate the truth about the war. He wants to show people the difference between what happened in the trenches and the lie being told at home. He uses metaphors, comparisons, images and a sinister tone to express his feelings and to show the horror and tragedy those involved experienced.

Metaphors are used to illustrate more vividly the descriptions used in the poem: “ old beggars under sacks” describes the soldiers that were deformed by the effort they had to make. This metaphor is important because it shows the effect the war experiences had on the young men.

He uses lots of comparisons like “ his hanging face, like a devil’s sick of sin” to compare the gas victim’s face to the devil which seems corrupted and baneful. The comparisons increase the effectiveness of the poem and illustrate the point more vividly because of the images.

The image at the beginning of the poem, “ bent double, like old beggars” describes the soldiers which were barely upright as they struggled to walk. From the start this image makes me feel sorry for the soldiers for the effort they had to make to march. This feeling is amplified by another image “ men marched asleep” which proves that they were more asleep than awake. In this condition the soldiers would have been barely able to defend themselves. Owen wants to prove that the soldiers were pushed to their limits. The image “ an ecstasy of fumbling” means in frenzy or in a hurry. It

makes me understand how scared and desperate they were, trying to find their masks even if they were so tired they could barely move. Using the image "as under a green sea I saw him drowning" the poet describes when he sees the soldier die because he couldn't find his masks. The death of the soldier is amplified by another image "obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud of vile, incurable sores of innocent tongues. This explains the grotesque view the poet had which would have been enough to give the poet nightmares for the rest of his life.

The tone of the poem is sinister, casting a solemn atmosphere and achieving a serious effect. The poem cannot be said quickly because of some words like "knocked-kneed", "fatigue", "floundering" and the punctuation: commas, dashes, hyphens and exclamation points causes the poem to sound conversational when spoken.

Wilfred Owen also describes other negative details of war in the poem "Anthem for Doomed Youth" where he is describing the funeral of the soldiers and expressing his hatred of war.

The first stanza concentrates on sound because the trenches are dark and deep and the visibility is reduced. Onomatopoeia, alliteration and personification create a spectacular sound image. In the personification "the stuttering rifles rapid rattle" the "a" sound is repeated along with the alliteration of the "t", which makes the words sound violent when pronounced. The poet personifies the guns: "monstrous anger of the guns" to show more vividly how brutal and frightening the weapons used in

the war can be. The sound images are shockingly violent, even from the start "men die as cattle". There are lots of images associated with war "bugles calling", and tumultuous sound "stuttering rifles rapid rattle".

Wilfred Owen is sarcastic and makes an allusion to religion: the flying bullets are "shrill demented choirs" and the "monstrous anger of the guns" become "hasty orisons" like fake prayers for the survival of soldiers when the only option is to die. In the second stanza are visual images, and images of mourning: "glimmers of goodbyes"

In both poems, Wilfred Owen uses several language techniques to shock the reader and to illustrate more vividly his hatred of war and that is not "sweet and right to die for one's country".