

Theme of conflict

[Literature](#), [Poetry](#)



World War I is known as one of the greatest wars in history. Many soldiers in World War I expressed their thoughts and feelings in poetry. Two famous poems are 'Dulce et Decorum Est' by Wilfred Owen and 'The Soldier' by Rupert Brooke. Both men present the theme of conflict in their poetry however the poems are the complete opposite of one another. Although they both present conflict they both have very different views on the subject. Owen presents conflict as nothing but pure horror and thinks that it should not be witnessed by innocent eyes. However Brooke presents conflict as something that is patriotic.

He thinks it's his duty to repay his country with his life; therefore conflict is something you should be prepared to experience. 'Dulce et Decorum Est' shows the real truth about war. It makes us aware of the true horrors that people experienced and shows us that conflict is a horrific thing. The use of the simile "Bent double, like old beggars under sacks" gives us, the reader, an image of people that are not big, strong and brave soldiers. We imagine soldiers as heroes and even though they appear to be weak and struggling, soldiers never deserve the title "beggars."

The use of the adjective "old" shows that the men aren't in a fit condition to fight in the war and are struggling. By choosing the noun "beggars" the writer gives us an impression that the lack of respect these soldiers are given is huge, when they should have the utmost respect as they are risking their own lives for their country. The soldiers in World War I were extremely overtired and overworked. "Coughing like hags we cursed through sludge" The simile used in the second line of the poem depicts an image of men with absolutely no energy, who are exhausted and unhappy.

The use of the word “ sludge” infers that the conditions they were working in were truly horrific. The use of the 1st person plural ‘ we’ shows that Owen experienced this horror full on and makes the reader empathise with him. The use of the verb “ cursed” shows that the soldiers are so tired they are cursing through sludge. We expect soldiers to charge, but they are so worn out they can barely trudge, they are struggling to walk and the imagery we get of the incredible heroes is terribly upsetting.

During World War 1 the conditions were unbearable. “ But limped on, bloodshod. All went lame; all blind;” This shows the consequences of the war. The use of the verb “ limped” indicates that they are injured and have no choice but to keep going. The soldiers are exhausted and Owen is trying to get us to imagine how terrible this war is and why conflict is such a bad thing. At the beginning of the second stanza there is a sudden realization within the soldiers that shocks them into action.

“ Gas! Gas! Quick, boys! An ecstasy of fumbling,” The use of the metaphor “ An ecstasy of fumbling” implies that the men are desperately panicking to get their gas masks on. They know that this is one very important piece of equipment, so important that it could save their lives, therefore they are “ fumbling” to get them on. The sudden realization of what was happening made them rush to try and save themselves, no matter what condition they were in. The exclamatory shows that they still want to live, regardless of how horrendous the conditions are.

Owen experienced so many ghastly things during the war that it makes the reader empathise with him and agree with his opinion on conflict. “ But someone still was yelling out and stumbling, and flound’ring like a man in

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fire or lime..." By using the conjunction " But" the reader instantly knows that something has gone incredibly wrong. The use of the verbs " yelling" and " stumbling" indicates that one of the men are in trouble. We know, as the reader, that one of the men hasn't got their gas mask on in time. By saying that the man is " Flound'ring around like fire" implies that the soldier is in incredible pain.

The gas from the bomb is killing him and there is nothing anybody can do. The man is terrified, he can't control what is happening to him and nobody can stop it. The other men are witnessing his death. This isn't just a horrendous experience for the man who is dying; it is also a horrendous experience for the men watching their fellow friend die a horrible death. Wilfred Owen is trying to tell the reader that conflict should not be experienced by anybody, and he feels this because this is what has happened to him throughout the whole war.

He is trying to give the reader a simple message through the words of his poem. " The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est Pro patria mori. " These two lines are the most powerful out of the entire poem. Owen is trying to tell us that it is not sweet and beautiful to die for ones country, it is a lie! Throughout the poem Owen presents a world of horror where men that we know as heroes, are treated worse than animals. He is saying that conflict changed them and they couldn't escape it. The message that Owen gives is simple and very blunt.

They have experienced horrors that we can never imagine and he doesn't want any to experience what he has. In Rupert Brooke's poem " The Soldier" he voices a very different opinion on the subject of conflict. Brooke's poem is <https://assignbuster.com/theme-of-conflict/>

all about patriotism, he shows that conflict will not take away his patriotism, it will make it stronger. His poem was written before he went to war, therefore he has no experience and his opinion is completely different to Owen's as his was written during the war and he had experienced all of the horrors.

Brooke seems like a proud soldier who is blinded by his patriotism. Brooke questions about the war before he leaves England. "If I should die, think only this of me:" The use of the modal verb "should" suggests that Brooke is questioning the war and if he will continue to live after it. It shows that he knows there is a possibility of death. He wants to be remembered and the use of the first person pronoun "I" creates empathy in the reader. Brooke is proud to be English and shows it many times throughout the poem.

That there's some corner of a foreign field, That is for ever England." Brooke implied that even though he is in a foreign country, no matter where he is in the world he will always remain English. Also by having this positive view of death and personifying the land that is England, death becomes much less significant as it is much greater of a cause. Brooke is so patriotic he wanted to repay England with his life and thinks that conflict is something you should be prepared to face. "A pulse in an eternal mind.

The author is saying that, even if he dies in the war he would be able to save his country. His country will be resembled by him and the soldiers who died for their country. This way he will be living in his England symbolically. Brooke is proud to be English. "And laughter, learnt of friends' and gentleness, In hearts at peace, under an English heaven" These final lines are showing the happiness that England has given him and because he

fought for England he will forever be at peace in an English heaven with only good thoughts and laughter in his heart.

Brooke's message throughout the whole poem is that he feels it is his duty to fight for his country and even though it is most horrific he is blinded by his patriotism and therefore thinks you should be prepared to die for your country no matter what. This creates conflict as he hasn't experienced what Owen has as he hasn't even been to war yet, therefore has no clue on the real experience of war and the consequences it can have.