

Comparison of anthem for doomed youth by wilfred owen and suicide in the trenches...

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Changing attitudes to war presented in the poetry selected.

World War One. The Great War to end all wars. This ??? Great War??™

mainly started in 1914 with the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand, and ended four years later with the Treaty of Versailles, 1918.

Propaganda played an important role in the recruitment of men, with posters plastered on every possible surface saying ??? Your King and Country needs you.??™ With persuasive poems displayed in newspapers for all to see, urging men to go to battle, this war which was compared to a simple ruby game. With each local neighbor jeering ??? 33, 000 men are enlisting each day are you one of them??? With all these schemes to persuade men to join the war, there was a ploy named ??? Pal Regiments??™ which allowed groups of friends to recruit together and therefore fight side by side.

Unfortunately, young men were brought up to believe that war was exciting, and going to war would earn them great respect. To address the changing attitudes to war, I have selected two poems to compare and analyze. ??? Suicide in the trenches??? by Siegfried Sassoon, ??? Anthem for Doomed Youth??? by Wilfred Owen.

Each of these acclaimed poets has their own experiences, styles, and viewpoints to the war. Owen was a Welsh poet, and Sassoon was an English author/poet, they do share a similar viewpoint on war as both were soldiers, and met in Craiglockhart War Hospital in Edinburgh both suffering from shell shock. Anthem For Doomed Youth was written between September ??“ October of 1917, and Suicide In The Trenches was published in 1918.

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The title of Owens poem gives the reader the impression that they are about to hear a formal musical item. The use of the words 'doomed youth' creates an ominous tone with the use of assonance. The title is misleading as we are led by the poet into the battlefield to hear the sounds of war, rather than the music of a memorial service. Sassoon's poem shows us how life can be worse than death; this can be seen through the eye-catching title 'Suicide in the Trenches'. The use of the word trenches further emphasized that not only the horrible conditions that one young soldier boy suffered, but also by many others in war. The theme running through 'Anthem For Doomed Youth' is the meaningless and absolute horror of the war, and the meaningless insufficiency of religion in response to the awfulness they occurs during the war.

Where as in 'Suicide In The Trenches' it also paints the harsh reality of death, suicide and depression that comes with war. The story behind Suicide in the Trenches is about a young soldier boys transformation from a happy and innocent person into a depressed soldier who desires to kill himself, because life is really worse than death. The poet deliberately uses the small boy as a subject of example to gain the readers sympathy. Where as Anthem For Doomed Youth is a expression of grief for young soldiers whose lives were unnecessarily lost. The structure of Suicide In The Trenches is three stanzas with four lines in each. The rhyme scheme is A-A-B-B in each stanza. This seems to be a rigid structure, but it really does bring out how someone's initial carefree innocence and freedom is being lost once he

enters the cruel and depressing battlefield. The structure of Anthem For Doomed Youth is a lyric poem, in the form of a hybrid sonnet.

This hybrid sonnet is a combination of a Petrarchan sonnet with a Shakespearean sonnet, with a rhyme scheme of A-B-B-A-C-D-E. This sonnet structure restricts Owens ideas, so they have to be compressed and compacted into a more intense piece of work. The language that Sassoon uses is clever in conveying the theme. He uses a balance of symbolism; alliteration is put to effective use in this poem. Something that can't be missed is the alliteration in the first stanza "slept soundly". The repetition of the letter "s" produces a harsh hissing sound, this then sets the tone for the rest of the poem. It also shows that people who sleep soundly don't have a worry in the world, reflecting the innocence of the boy at the start of his experience in war.

This is repeated by the whistling, the carefree state that person has to be in. In Anthem For Doomed Youth, Owen uses a hyphen to create a pause which can symbolize an abrupt change in thought, a shift in focus. He also uses personification when talking about the guns, "Only the monstrous anger of the guns." The truth is the guns are not angry; it's the men behind the guns, firing them, that are angry.

The use of alliteration in line 3, "stuttering rifle's rapid rattle" uses the sounds of the letters "t" and "r", to create an image in the readers mind of the quick fire of the guns on the battlefield. This is just one of the many usages of sound and visual imagery that Owen uses in his work.

In the first line of Anthem For Doomed Youth, Owen uses a rhetorical question to grab the readers' attention. "What passing bells for these who die as cattle?" In this question Owen used a simile, comparing the death and murders of young men as those to the slaughter of cattle, and that of the mass murder that occurs in the battlefield and the slaughter house. Owen starts each of the stanzas with a rhetorical question which then answers itself throughout that stanza. "Only the monstrous anger of the guns." In this quote the anger is misplaced, Owen has moved the anger from the soldiers to the guns they are using.

The use of the word "monstrous" suggests that the noise from the guns being fired is as if a large monster is roaring angrily at them. To further this point Owen uses alliteration and onomatopoeia to imitate the sound of the guns "harsh and repetitive. The repeated 't' sound in 'stuttering', 'rattle' and 'patter' imitate the short, hard sound of the bullets being fired. The repeated 'r' sound suggests the rapidity and frequency of the shots. So from this, the rhetorical question answers itself.

The personified guns are "rattling" out prayers, but ironically these prayers are not good for the soldiers, as they are bullets and kill them. "What bells will be rung for them?" the sound of guns and bullets. In the first stanza of Suicide In The Trenches, it describes the life of a young innocent male. We can see this by the choice of words that Sassoon used. I knew a simple soldier boy Who grinned at life in empty joy, Slept soundly through the lonesome dark, And whistled early with the lark. The words that I have

selected here show the naivete of the young male, as he is described as ??? simple??™. He ??? grinned at life in empty joy??™ were as he finds enjoyment in the simplest of things, suggesting his young age. He ??? sleeps soundly??™.

People who do sleep soundly don??™t have a care in the world, or someone who doesn??™t have responsibility, again suggesting his young age. ??? Whistled early with the lark??™ shows his enthusiasm, like so many other typical WW1 soldiers, who were most likely from the country and looking for an adventure around the world. This would not be what would be awaiting them for when they arrived for battle. In the next four lines of the same stanza in Anthem For Doomed Youth, it gives the impression that the battlefield would be, and is, harsh and discordant which makes the reader wince at the thought of boys having to do this. ??? The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;??? the use of words such as ??? shrill??™ and ??? demented??™ gives the reader a slight insight as to what it is like living in the trenches, and the noise that comes with it. Just as the bullets pray, the shells grieve in their ??? wailing???.

This helps develop the idea of the noise of the battle from the opening lines. The noise from the guns, shells, and bullets all build up to create an atmosphere of a mixture of disorienting sounds, that is the tragic reality for soldiers at the moments of their deaths. The inadequacy of religion??™s response to the soldiers deaths are prominent their prayers and bells that usually suffice are nothing but ??? mockeries??? to these soldiers. The second stanza in Suicide In The Trenches talks about the conditions of the

trenches, it uses the harshness of the trenches as a comparison to the first stanza.

??? In winter trenches, cowed and glum, with crumps and live and lack or rum,??? the use of the words ??? cowed??™ and ??? glum??™ contrast with his earlier ??? grin??™. Sassoon describes the trenches in winter, this contrasts with the ??? lark??™. This dark contrasts reinforces the boys depression and how the trenches in war can change a person. Sassoon uses iambic tetrameter in his poem, which creates a sort of nursery rhyme to it. This generates a positive and ecstatic feel to the poem, yet the reader soon comes to realize this is false, as Sassoon is being ironic as he attacks the lies that are being told to men that are enlisting. Sassoon also represents the common views of war at ??? home??™ in stanza one, as it creates a pleasant picture of war. But soon destroys that by revealing the true horrors of war in stanza two.

The next two lines of stanza two in Suicide In The Trenches portrays when the boy kills himself. The beginning of the poem has led up to this moment, as it is anticipated from the title. ??? He put a bullet through his brain. No one spoke of him again.

??? Throughout the poem Sassoon uses only one sentence in each stanza, but this is two short sentences. This helps set in the fact that the boy was so desperate that he killed himself. The use of the word ??? of??™ is curious to me. Sassoon doesn??™t say that no one spoke ??? to??™ him again, as he is dead; he says ??? of??™ as if no one will mourn the loss of his life, or that no

one cares. The second stanza of Anthem For Doomed Youth has a clear shift in focus. ??? And bugles calling for them from sad shires.??? 8 The last sound of the battle is the bugles being sounded to call soldiers home, and the sound of this links the two stanzas together.

, Owen develops his idea from earlier, that instead of passing bells from a normal funeral, the soldiers will only have the sound of chaos from battle. ??? What candles may be held to speed them all??? He then compares a right war to a death in a war without ceremony, without traditional rites and without dignity. Instead of candles being held to send them on their way into the afterlife, the soldiers simply have the last flicker of light in each other's eyes before they die. In this image, candles are being compared to small ??? glimmers??? of light in the eyes of the soldiers. They both bear a tiny, but holy light. The soldiers will not have a sheet/pall/flag placed over their coffin.

They may never have a proper burial. They will not be transported home for their own funeral. The pall will be absent from their funeral. The pall would be draped over the coffin before burial.

??? The pallor of girl's brows shall be their pall???. The absent pall is metaphorically replaced with the grief of girls at home. They would hear of the death and be pale. This paleness ??? representative of the angst of the mourners - would be seen on their brows/foreheads. The last stanza of Suicide In The Trenches is focused on the reader. ??? you smug-faced crowds with kindling eye Who cheer when soldier lads march by,??? This quote

describes the parades that are held when new soldiers are about to go off to fight. The use of the word "smug-faced" could refer to the people that aren't going off to fight, as they know they will not be put into any danger, unlike the soldiers. The last two lines of *Suicide In The Trenches* reveal the actions of the families and men left behind.

"Sneak home and pray you'll never know The hell where youth and laughter go." Sassoon is still addressing the reader by using the term you, this creates a sense of guilt in that person. This is further proven by the use of "Sneak" this shows that the people are ashamed of their actions and wish to not be caught. "They pray" that they won't have to suffer the horrors of wars like the soldiers they just send to the battlefields. It also shows that although the media portrays the war as easy and just a game, people do know of the awfulness of war, they are just not willing to accept it. In the last line of *Anthem for doomed youth* there is another comparison like the candles and the pall. "And each slow dusk a drawing down of blinds."

Owen uses alliteration here, and compares the usual funeral customs to the "drawing down of the blinds". Traditionally the blinds are pulled down when someone dies; it is a sign of respect. But the dead soldiers on the battlefield do not receive the same treatment. All they will receive is the day drawing to a close, "dusk will come naturally, darkening the place where they lay."

Overall Owens poem communicates the sorrow and horror he saw during the war, by describing the sights and sounds of battle, and comparing a fitting funeral for a soldier to the reality of death on the battlefield. The poem “Suicide in the Trenches” was a reminder to all of the horrors of war. The fact that we sent, and still send, our youth to fight in wars that claim the lives of so many, robbing them of the chance to experience life as it should be experienced; free of fear and of the deepening depression that war has left so many with.

And the fact that those who do return to civilian life, come back with images of the war, and, no matter what they do, they cannot adjust back to the way things were. When they were carefree, jovial members of society.