

Module B: 1134 Words

The relentless encounters of the immoral and violent war, allowed Wilfred Owen to grasp a genuine framework the anguished and demoralised reality of soldiers suffering in harsh and brutal environments. Owen's poem insightfully addresses his concerns about the government's propaganda to immorally glorify war as innocent lives are wasted in the battlefield. *The Next War* delves into the regular confrontation death, as soldiers grown fond to death perceiving them as a companion rather than something that is avoid, revealing that war dismissive and harmful to one's life. The *Futility*, illustrates the pointlessness of war. The imbalance duality between life and death stress Owen's purpose as the question of one's act of fighting at war. *Dulce et Decorum*, reflects on corrupted nature of government propaganda as it explores the consequences of portraying war as sweet and honourable, to genuine experience of suffering in trenches. Equally, Owen reiterates the underlying message that war is pointless and desensitizing as soldiers only face evitable death when fighting for false glorification.

Owen captures the **emotionally and psychological traumas** of war through the images of **death**. In *The Next War*, Owen raises concern about the **loss of sanity in soldiers** as their regularly exposure to near death experiences, hinders their sense of **recognising death as a companion**. **"Out there, we've walked quite friendly up to Death"**, personifies 'Death' through the **capitalisation of 'D'** to delineates its **dominance** over the soldiers. The notion of 'Death' as a **physical embodiment** intrinsically alludes that at war, soldiers are accustomed to death that they accept it to be a **better option**. It is this, that Owen's **sarcastic tone**, of **positive connotation, friendly' ironically grasps the contrasting ideas** that death and war has a **kind and approachable nature** rather than evil and grim. It reveals 'out there' soldiers are being emotionally and psychologically degraded that much, that **they can't perceive from life and death** thus, prompting the **bitterness and disdainful nature of war**. Furthermore, the **imagery of death** is evident in, **"He spat at us with bullets, He's coughed / Shrapnel"** where the **harsh verbs 'spat' and 'coughed'** creates a **visual imagery of dysphemism** to mimic the **violent sounds** of war. Accompanied with the **enjambment** and isolation of 'Shrapnel' through the **caesura**, Owen distorts the flow of the poem to allow the **focus on the traumatic experience gunfire (Shrapnel)** yet revealing that **death is the prominent image**. Consequently, the poem provokes the audience to heavily reflect on Owen's concern, that the soldier's familiarity with death and deadening sounds of gunfire, diminishes their innocence and psychologically degrades their sense to strive for life.

The idea of **glorifying war** and **accepting it as honourable and patriotism** shows the immense **immorality of government propaganda**, as soldiers are blinded against the cruel and merciless reality of war. In *Dulce et Decorum Est*, Owen raises concern about government corruption enforcing young individuals to face the **suffering of war**. The **couplet stanza** manifests the isolation and nightmarish scenes that soldiers endure at war. **"In all my helpless sight / He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning"**. Owen distinctively, **accumulative listed** the **onomatopoeic sounds** of agony to **replay the horrific brutality** and provided the relentless details of war. The distressful 'dream' clearly exhibits the **dreadful and haunting impact of war**, as the **present tense, 'plunges'** reveal that those who survived, are still **reliving the never ending nightmare of anguish and 'helplessness'**. As this was a common condition soldier suffer after war, known as **Post Traumatic Stress**

Disorder. Owen set a high standard on portraying the **mental deterioration** war offers, as in the eyes of **society**, they are too naïve to **perceive the reality of war**. Only the soldiers who were involved in wars truly understand what war is capable of destroying. Demonstrated in the **proverb, “To children ... the old Lie: Dulce et Decorum Est, Pro patria mori”**, the **capitalisation in ‘Lie’** emphasis **Owen’s hatred opinion** to define **propaganda** and retaliates on war supporters. With the adaption of **Owen’s ‘helpless’ and shocking experience**, it contradicts with the **government’s theory on war as, ‘sweet’ and ‘honourable’**. This all insinuates **Owen’s values**, that **war is not society expects** and the need to **prevent the naivety of ‘children’ devoting their valuable lives to the ‘Lies’ of war**. The poem sets the response to understand the brutal setting of war, yet deliver **awareness of society’s terrible ethics on promoting young children to the pitiful nature of war**.

The **physical and mental suffering** from losses in the battlefield, ideally construct the **pointlessness of war**. In Futility, Owen’s **suffering and pity** for the many soldiers fallen has led to him question the **existence of life** and importantly the **relentless nature of war**. This is asserted in, **“Think how it wakes the seeds/ Woke once the clays of a cold star”**, as the second stanza immediately starts with an **imperative phrase, ‘think’** to **force the audience with Owen’s concern on the God’s power** and its **ability to create life**. **‘It’** with **the biblical allusion of ‘clay’** is used to symbolise the **representation of god** raising life to a lifeless ‘clay’, hence, providing **Owen the speculation of the sun giving life back to the dead soldier**. However, **the alliteration of ‘c’** reiterate the **harsh, cold environment to contrasts the mighty sun’s power, conveying how war is harsh for taking countless lives and questions the power of the sun**. Demonstrated in, **“Was it for this the clay grew tall?/ To break earth’s sleep at all?”**, where Owen’s **repetition of rhetorical questions**, insinuate the amount of **desperation and realisation** that life is **futile, founding out the pointlessness** in life, when given to the hands of war. At this stage Owen is starting to **feel confused and betrayed** by the Sun challenging its power and existence of life when suffering through war with powerful but **unanswerable and futile questions**. This betrayal and grief **disillusioned Owen’s sense of faith and hope of life and death**, furthering reinforcing that the nature of war can be devastating and inhibits one’s faith and hope to the world, portraying its negativity and pity upon soldiers.

Owen skilfully, through his experiences in war, allowed his concerns and attitude to be projected in a wider and deeper understanding, achieving the issues that destruction and devastation is an intrinsic inheritance (nature) of war, leaving innocent, in despair and desensitized. The Next War, displays the natural appearance of death in the essence of war, Futility successfully conveyed disappointment and remorse to mankind’s existence as it is given to the pointlessness and finally Dulce et Decorum Est, a poem in criticizing the corrupted nature of humanity to remorseless of war. Through the acts of recounting his experiences, his poems collectively submerge to convey one powerful message. That is, to seize the existence of war.

