English Sac: Wilfred Owen’s War Poems

Wilfred Owen blames his society for the deaths of all these young men, he believed none of the young men who fought was truly provided with the knowledge and understanding of the war and what they have gone into. Wilfred’s poems highlight how many young men are encouraged to enlist into the army all comeback suffering and permanent damage to their lives. In his poems, the hypocrisy of society is abrupt and commonly presented as they wrongfully encourage the many young men to fight for honour and glory promising only good things. To convey this, Wilfred provides graphic and sensory images of soldiers suffering whilst on the battlefield to display how different war is to how society portrays it, upon providing these images he mentions the effects that it is having on young soldiers both physically and mentally from enlisting in war destroying their whole lives ahead of them. By providing evidence of war and the negative effects of war he exposes the ignorance of society and how they wrongfully promote war.

To encourage the arrogance of society, Owen paints graphic pictures of the everyday conditions of which these thousands of young soldiers are faced, he does this to awaken pity in his audience and how thousands of young men are being wrongfully tricked into applying for war. War was emphasised by the society as being glorious and honourable, this was far off of the real thing as soldiers suffered for months on end only to be awarded a small amount of honour, soldiers would trade their perfectly good lives for sleepless nights and constant fighting just for a taste of fame. Owen aims to convey the suffering that the soldiers had to face to confront the audience with graphic and emotional text. Although many of Owens images are intended to horrify and awe the audience, he does not do so very well, instead, he aims to feature the brilliance and nobleness of the soldiers during the war. Many soldiers were left with permanent fear of loud noises, “The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells” some enrolled at the age of 16 and died as boys on the battlefield, promised nothing but only honour and fame “The pallor of girls’ brows shall be their pall”. Wrongfully seduced into enrolling by the government throwing their lives away for a war that was pointless. By pointing out the conditions of which the young men live and die left scarred for life, Owen highlights the pain of which they faced and the suffering they endured all in attempts to arouse compassion for these soldiers.

The visualisations Wilfred Owen created each had separate values all aimed towards how the war was falsely advertised to all the young men, society promoting only good things about war and promising glory but upon return, they receive a pat on the back and a job well done, this was not worth the lifelong injuries some men and boys obtained when deployed, some men's injuries were so bad they’d commit suicide, they did this as they had seen “blood come gargling from corrupted lungs” and “wading sloughs of flesh”, They would’ve seen their best mates turn into flying body pieces in seconds from landmines and grenades. Stray bullets left men wounded as they slowly lose their grip on life, and men committing suicide on the battlefield as they couldn’t handle it anymore. “the bullets chirped – in vain, vain, vain!” the wailing cries of grown men was weak when compared to the sounds of screaming and gunfire that echoed for months on end. Owen portrays pain in his poems and explains how young men suffered when deployed and how they were wrongfully tricked into going to war, he creates both graphic and emotional visualisations in which his followers could picture what they went through. Owens poem ‘Mental Cases’ shows the profound mental effect of the war on most of the soldiers, describing their faces in very high detail as ‘wearing this hilarious, hideous, awful

falseness of set-smiling corpses. Owen’s goal was to provide the truth behind war and to try and prevent the young men from enrolling and ruining their lives, Owen was disgusted towards his home society and how they portrayed the war and blames all the deaths on them, the visualisations give the society a vague picture of what war was like for these young men.

Owens most famous poem ‘Dulce Et Decorum Est’ provides a stomach-churning visualisation of a gas attack victim on the battlefield of World War 1, in which he describes the victim's “white eyes writhing his face, like a devil’s sick of sin” the poem visualises the gruesome effects gas has on a man, the soldier failed to get a gas mask in time as their shelter exploded with a gas bomb, The poem is very graphic as Owen goes into detail on the soldier's bodily features and facial expressions during the ordeal to provide his audience with a first-hand experience of war. Owens work can be read at several levels which means his audience is wide, his simple yet detailed texts paint a very detailed picture of what soldiers faced and the constant dangers on the field, ‘Dulce Et Decorum Est’ goes into detail about one of the many dangers faced in this case was gas explaining the horrifying ordeal in detail.

Owen wishes to expose the truth of war to society and explain how it is wrongfully advertised, this is in an attempt to prevent young soldiers from throwing their lives away for the promise of fame and glory. Owen goes into detail about the brutality of war, although the young men are forced to participate in war it is wrongfully illustrated, and Owen believes they are victims and are being sent to their graves by society. Owen provides detailed graphic and emotional which explain and visualise the pain and suffering endured by these young men. Owen strongly believes that the soldiers are being menacingly deceived, getting promised many things and wrongfully advertised the situation of war.