

Contradictory Views of Soldiers in the War

Posted on September 22, 2018

Contrasting Representations of Soldiers and War

Randall Jarrell's poem "The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner" (Jarrell, 1945/1980) and Cyril Tourneur's poem "Epitaph on a Soldier" (Tourneur, 1878) conveys contradicting realities associated with soldiers. When comparing the two poems, it is clear that both poets have vastly different views on the subject. Jarrell, in a harsh manner, highlights the miserable and tragic lives of soldiers who appeared in their fear and trepidation. On the other hand, Tourneur portrays a different side of soldiers life visible in their honor and eminence with admiration. Poets express contrasting views, Jarrell representing the darker picture of the war causing pain to soldiers, while Tourneur captures the glorious side of a war (Burt, 2002; Fussell, 1975; Library of Congress, n.d.).

Adopting contrasting symbolism allows poets to add literal meaning to their personal viewpoints of war. Jarrell, in his poem, apprehends the harshness of the war, revealing consequences through symbolism by assessing the miseries of the soldier. Allusion becomes visible when the poet writes, "six miles from earth, loosed from its dream of life" (3). He displays a bitter tone, revealing the miserable fate of the soldiers, in turn conveying the panic associated with the practical consequences of war. Satire becomes most visible when the poet writes, "I woke to black flak and the nightmare fighters" (4). A state represents the prospects of a warrior while frozen reflects the trepidation by creating necessary settings sufficient for assessing the meaning of war. In addition to bad fortune, the symbolism transmits feelings of confusion by including the visual depiction of how soldiers survive with hopelessness because they know their ultimate destination is grave (Burt, 2002).

The symbolism adds more clarity and makes the message readable. Compared to Jarrell, the symbolism used by Tourneur represents different perspectives. Symbolism is apparent throughout Jarrell's poem. Black flak symbolizes the bad fortune of the soldier,s eliminating every sign of hope and comfort. Nightmare fighters represent another symbol of the warriors who engage themselves in endless battles and see no end to them. Throughout their lives, they keep on fighting, reflecting their miserable state. 'Washed me out' symbolizes the end of a soldier's life, depicting that the only moment that provides relief is death. With his death, the fights, pain, and terror come to an end.

Heroism, Dignity, and the Glorification of Military Service

He designs a perfect symbol of bravery when he says, "ready still to drop into his grave"(4). The poet conveys a sensational tone, demonstrating the lighter side of the war by communicating the feelings

of passion and dignity that the soldiers experience in war. These hints transmit the meaning of pride, liberty, and glory by building a compelling idea of the soldier's life filled with amazement. Symbolism adds more vividness to the poem when 'prepared to die' symbolizes courage and bravery, which reveals contradictory views by rejecting the idea of fear explained by Jarrell. Bravest blest deace symbolizes the strength of the warriors, which differentiates him from other humans. A comparison of the symbolism exhibits Jarrell creating weaker soldiers than Tourneur's strong men. The symbolism in Jarrell's poem increases a sense of fear when the poet describes the soldier's death, which contradicts Tourneur's excitement.

Both poems utilize poetic diction to build an ambient echo supporting the purpose of war with different views. Adoption of appropriate diction allows Jarrell to convey the frightening state of young men taking part in the war. The poet exhibits an effective choice of words that serve multiple purposes related to the young warriors. The poet relates childbirth with the ultimate death of the soldier. Diction becomes most evident in the line, "The nightmare fighters" (4). Diction expresses the soldier's cured while inside the ball turret safely. Jarrell exhibits satire when he highlights the negative impacts of war on soldiers and their lives. Through explicit tone, the poet emphasizes the miseries of the soldiers while transmitting the meaning of never-ending struggles for the soldier. In the epitaph, the author adopts a formal diction while associating the death of soldiers with dignity and honor (Fussell, 1975).

A virtue of the poem expresses the nobility while peace builds relevance with tranquillity and calmness. Effective choice of words conveys the message of greater virtue that soldiers attain due to their efforts and sacrifices. The diction becomes more visible as the poet mentions, "who died a young man yet departed old" (2). The word died a young man expresses the central thought. It also makes clear that the young warriors never protest for a living because they have accepted the miseries and are ready to die. The tone expresses the bravery, courage, and passion of the soldiers. Effective diction allows poets to transmit the deeper meaning in an efficacious manner. The least artificial diction supports Jarrell's satire and Tourneur's simplistic tone.

Figurative Language and Divergent Experiences of War

Jarrell employs figurative language to exhibit his pain, while Tourneur displays ease. The poems adopt different figurative language, with Jarrell focusing on the adversities while Tourneur emphasizes the glorious side of a soldier's life. A common element of the poem includes metaphors. The inclusion of metaphors makes the poem more understandable. Metaphors appear throughout the poem, and the most visible metaphor is the mother's sleep, which the poet includes to build relevance with death. The poet's language reflects the victimized state of the gunner, revealing the threatening circumstances of his life. Disappointing tone appears, "when I died, they washed me out of the turret with a hose"(5). The sadistic tone becomes visible when the line identifies the soldiers' final

destination.

The meaning becomes clear when the poet expresses that the only relief in the life of a soldier is death. The tone remains one of the convincing tools in Jarrell's poem, thus adding more clarity. The figurative language constructed by Tourneur exhibits extreme differences, while the metaphor expresses different meanings. In the Epitaph, the poet emphasizes tactile scenes to support his viewpoints. The poet eliminates the idea of fatalities associated with the battles, presenting opposing views. He transmits the idea of peace when he writes, "he died in the war, and yet he died in peace"(10). The poet visualizes the role of war and how it influences the soldiers. The poem portrays deaths as glorious and peaceful. Compared to Jarrell's poem, Epitaph ignores the darker side of a soldier's life, including violence, rage, and fear. Tourneur also incorporates metaphors in the poem to enhance the vividness. Ultimate death reflects the final destination of a warrior, which is the grave, and he knew that. Through metaphors, the poet expresses the deeper meaning of the poem, which leads to contradictory outcomes. Jarrell creates figurative language to get rid of his pain, while Tourneur relates it to proclaim pride.

Syntax, Tone, and the Meaning of Soldiering

The syntax expresses an immense starting point when Jarrell conveys a complex meaning of war in contrast with the traditional ideas of Tourneur's glory. The inclusion of syntax allows poets to concentrate on different aspects of the war in an orderly manner. The syntax remains one of the striking tools in Jarrell's poem, as it conveys the theme in a rhythmic manner. Through the appropriate use of words, the poet supports his perspectives. The rhythm allows Jarrell to draw attention when he creates an effective tone, which is apparent: "and I hunched in its belly till my wet fur froze"(2). He conveys the meaning of a soldier's life, which changes throughout when he leaves his mother's belly.

The moment he leaves the belly, his misfortune starts following him to his death. The poet employs satire to reveal the harsh realities. The meaning of discomfort becomes apparent through hopelessness. The syntax appears in Epitaph, "and in all strength of youth that man can have"(3). By adding more lucidity to the poems, both poets convey different meanings. Syntax permits Tourneur to generate certain feelings associated with particular events, which is apparent in "living so though young deprived of breadth"(7). With the formal tone, the poet states that the soldiers live a life different from other young people. The meaning is clear: the soldiers lack a normal life, which reflects their miseries. Both poets incorporate syntaxes to create reverse echo and reveal different facts related to the war. Syntaxes, the in-depth meaning of the poems, and strong sentences allow Jarrell to argue against the conventional viewpoint of Tourneur.

I believe that the poems show relevance to the present world as we compare the aggressive nature of humans with calmness. Humans encounter difficulties throughout their lives, reflecting the same idea conveyed by Jarrell. They are caught in the trap of miseries influencing their lives. Jarrell focuses on

the proposition that humans are unable to escape the darker side of the world (Poetry Foundation, n.d.; Burt, 2002). Their pain lasts only when they die, departing from the world. Contrary to Jarrell, I think Tourneur tries to promote positivism among people. He instructs them to handle complex situations with courage because they are strong. He tries to convince the people of the current world to remain courageous because life is full of sacrifice, but that leads to greater virtue. His poem builds stamina to face the dangers. I believe Jarrell threatens the people about the troubles, putting them in a situation of hopelessness, while Tourneur replaces that despair with hope. Contradictory views express both poets' intentions for promoting certain beliefs and lowliness against splendor, thus changing the conventions of life.

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