

## Synoptic Module

Revisit the armistice, letters from a lost generation + Geraldine Robertson Glasgow's poem Dulce et Decorum. How typical are they of work written by women in the war period.

Compare and contrast the techniques they use to make their point.

At the end of the Battle of the Somme and when the war was coming to a close women writers began to write more about the loss and emptiness that they felt when they lost their loved ones in the war. However, the women writers did not include a sense of realism within their poems and instead they romanticised their loved ones who had went to war.

I am going to look at three different texts and examine whether they are typical or atypical of the time in which they were written.

The first text that I am going to look at it is 'The Armistice' and it is a poem that has been written by May Wedderburn Cannan. This poem was written at the end of the war and tells us the story of women discovering that the war had ended. It shows us the sense of melancholy and relief than women felt at this time.

This text is typical of the time in which it was written as it does portray to us the loss and emptiness that women felt at this time. It is also typical of the time as women are working with typewriters and this would stereotypically a job that a man would have done but this was not possible as the majority of the men had been lost in the war.

The use of the alliteration and repetition in the words 'safe and sat and stared' shows us the plight that the women felt and their emotion at the fact that the war was finally ended. This is also shown through the slow, elongated sentences that the women have been speaking. The assonance in the words 'quite quiet' also shows us the sadness that the women are feeling as they remember the loved ones that they had lost in the terrible war.

Cannan tries to make this poem ubiquitous as she says that 'one said.' This means that the poem is typical of its time as it is able to relate to everyone and show that the majority of people at the time were feeling loss and emptiness.

We feel empathic for the people within the poem as they say that it is the 'first time in all these years, and no one will be killed.' This conveys to us the relief that the

women were feeling at this time when they discovered that the men were not going to be sacrificing themselves anymore.

We are able to see the typical emotion of the women at this time as ellipsis in the line 'My man was killed, Wounded...and died, ... at Ypres ... three years ago...' shows us the raw emotion that the women felt at this time.

Secondly, I am going to examine whether a letter taken from 'Letters from a Lost Generation' that was written in January 1916 by Vera Brittain is typical or atypical of the time in which it was written.

This letter was typical of the time in which it was written because many female writers were beginning to write of the loss that they felt during the war.

This is as it shows us that she was talking in a romantic tone and it was a private letter that she wrote to her brother as the belongings of her dead fiancé are returned to his parents. We are able to see the love that Vera has for her dead fiancé and this is very typical of female writers at this time during the war. This is shown when she says that he is 'more marvellous than' she had ever dreamed and this presents to us a very romantic image of him and this is very typical of the time in which it was written.

In this letter the writer capitalises the words 'His' and 'He' and this is very typical of the time in which it was written as it shows the adulation that the writer feels for her dead fiancé.

Typical of other letters written at this time the letter does not encourage others to go to the war. This is as she says 'I was glad that neither you nor Victor nor anyone else who may some day go to the front was there to see.'

This letter also portrays to us a very strong sense of loss as we see the writers' raw emotions as she uses words such as 'awful' and 'terrible' and this is very typical of the time. This is typical of the time as people were upset about the loss and destruction that was caused during the war.

However, this is also not typical. This is as there are realistic images within the letter that were not typical of the time in which it was written.

She tells us that his clothes 'smell of graveyards & the death' and that they were 'saturated with dead bodies.'

This letter is mainly typical of the time in which it was written but it was also atypical because it talked about realism.

Finally, I am going to examine the typicality of 'Dulce et Decorum' by Geraldine Robertson Glasgow.

This poem was written pre 1916 and so it would be typical for it to glamorise war and discuss gallantry. This poem talks about the call to war and tells us that death is a noble call.

The writer tells us that that in our youth we hold the 'brimming cup' and we should be excited to go and sacrifice ourselves in the war. This also includes religious imagery and this is very typical of the time in which it was written. Death is described as a 'whisper' and it feels like we are being told that we should not be fearful of it or what it could do to us.

In the second stanza there is a very positive image and the young men are being called to the war by 'the drum's insistent beat' and this presents to us a medieval image which was very typical of the time. The 'urgent note' of the beat shows us the pressure that was put on people to join the war and their country was calling them to join.

The men were presented as being eager and having 'quickened breath' at the idea of getting to sacrifice themselves for their country at the war. This is shown through the image of letting the 'goblet fall' and this conveys to us the idea of the young boy being eager to gallantly sacrifice his life for his country. This is also shown through the idea that they 'snatched the sword' and wanted to get on the front line and fight.

The final line 'So sweet to live? Magnificent to die!' shows us the honour and glory that you will receive from your sacrifice. The men were told that it is better for you to die being a hero for your country than to stay at home and be a coward. This was very typical of the time.

In conclusion, all three of these texts were partly typical of the time in which they were written. 'The Armistice' is typical of post 1916 women's literature as it discusses the ideas of loss and emptiness and it does not convey any realism. 'Letters from a lost generation' is partly typical of the time in which it was written as it does include ideas on loss but it also touches on realism. 'Dulce et Decorum' is very typical of pre-

1916 literature as it talks about gallantry and it glamorises and encourages people to sacrifice themselves for their country.