

By comparing the extracts from testament of youth, the ghost road and Binyon's for the fallen and referring to your wider reading examine how typical in both style and treatment of subject matter these writings are of literature from or about world war one.

Timing has a significant effect when war literature is written as does whether the source was a first hand account or a work written from others sources. Laurence Binyon wrote 'For the Fallen' in 1914 when war had just broke out and at this time people were joyous and glad of the excitement of war, Binyon reflects this view as he personifies England as a 'mother for her children' describing England as a caring character unwillingly sending her children to their deaths for 'the cause of the free'. This patriotism and duty seen by 'death august and royal' were wide spread, and although there were deaths the full extent of the trench warfare horrors had been censored, so was only experienced by those at the front. Binyon himself only visited the front at one point so perhaps did not experience horrors as did other writers such as Owen, yet he had more first hand than Pat Barker's writing 'Ghost Road' in 1999. Despite this Pat Barker and Vera Britain's biography written in 1933 are able to have a wider perspective on the events and Vera Britain in particular is able to look back in hindsight in a way in which Binyon could not and have time to consider events that passed and analyse them.

'Ghost Road' contains horrific, graphic images of 'dismembered bodies hurtling' and 'eyelids eaten away' which although designed to shock a reader so as they are eager to read more are also researched so are true of events which took place during the war. Barker doesn't hold back from the extreme physicality of the imagery similar to Sebastian Faulke's 'Birdsong' where horrendous images of 'only a hole remaining between his shoulders' are common, Faulke's also uses love and sex to link in with the physicality of the war wounds. Britain also uses her emotional relationship with Roland for a stark contrast with the vast sense of loss of the last line. This could be authors having to modernise for present-day readers or the lack of patriotism of today's society which allows or even needs brutally truthful accounts to entertain the reader.

The author's opinion of the war also needs consideration as Binyon was pro-war and felt the personal experience of honour and duty as many young men of 1914 did. Because of this he will have experienced the excitement at the beginning of war and this reflects in his writing such as the 'glory that shines upon our tears'. 'For the Fallen' also gives a sense of respect and waste for the men who 'shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old,' particularly emphasising the youthfulness of the dead. The funeral imagery that is run throughout gives the poem a idea of a funeral for all those lost, missing or presumed dead in battle, so no ennobled soldiers are left unhonoured. Binyon focuses on this lament for the dead, they 'are marching upon the heavenly plains' giving the impression those who die for their country are viewed more worthy in god's eyes. Unlike Pat Barker's description of a 'severed head' which could be considered disrespectful toward the dead. Binyon uses euphemisms

telling of the young men who now 'sleep beyond England's foam' this attitude towards death is mirrored by Vera Britain as she chooses to believe her fiancé 'drifted unconsciously into death' so as to relieve herself of the pain and loss of her loved one.

Vera invites the reader to have empathy towards her as they know her anticipation is an anticlimax and Roland in the end 'had died of wounds at a casualty clearing station.' The romantic sense in which she describes him and their 'love that had arisen so swiftly' is discredited by the matter of fact way she declares his death adding pathos to the extract. This statement is given as if in shock or simply immune to the pain similar to the immunity soldiers gained towards death at the front, they got to the point where as Hulme described, 'men walked as on Piccadilly over a dead Belgian's belly.' This immunity does not stretch to every situation however, Barker talks of 'a friend's death precipitating a total collapse' and 'nausea, vomiting, spell of forgetfulness' as if the war not only affects the men physically but also mentally, their whole being with nothing left untouched. Barker's character Rivers even sees the war torment Craiglockhart's sleep giving him endless hypnagogic hallucinations of 'lips eaten away'. Binyon also shows the war affecting the whole being as he talks of the passion and duty of how the men were 'staunch to the end against odds uncounted.' This sense of duty is elaborated on in war literature, Barker talks of Craiglockhart 'behaving with exemplary courage and loyalty.' Sebastian Faulke's hard metal like character Stephen is willing to die due to love for his men by the end.

'Testament of Youth' is written as a biography in prose as is the fictional work of Pat Barker's 'Ghost Road', while 'For the Fallen' is a poem written in iambic pentameter form. The Iambic is used to give a rhythmical tone reflecting a procession of the marching men, and is perhaps used to imitate the 'solemn drums.' The rhythm enables the poem to be read slowly and set a tone of pride and respect, the biblical tones throughout the poem such as 'flesh of her flesh' serve to give the poem a more serious theme as those lamenting the dead often need religious support. This is true of agnostic Vera Britain who thanks 'whatever God might exist' for Roland but when worry sets in she turns to religion ironically praying 'whosoever liveth in me shall never die'.

Death is the major theme running through all the sources, with 'Ghost Road' using horrific adjectives to show how the soldiers were degraded even in death but this death left an impact on the friends and relatives who were left behind such as Craiglockhart. Binyon is also assertive to the dead being remembered with him shortening the last line so forth disrupting the steady pattern and emphasizing last lines such as the imperative 'we will remember them', and the very last line having further emphasis with repetition of 'to the end, to the end, they remain.' Other immortalising imagery such as 'stars' give a comfort to the reader which they do not achieve from Ghost Road or Vera Britain as the matter of fact death is left without a sense of the soul being at rest as they do as they 'march upon the heavenly plain' in For the Fallen. This shows the views of the authors as Binyon is very pro-war and patriotism for the country whilst Britain and Barker show the extremity of the loss and give an anti-war vision to their work as does Wilfred Owen as he opens with a harsh question of 'what passing bells for those who die as

cattle.' This question probes the reader into asking themselves why the war occurred, and with Owens imagery of 'stuttering rifles' and 'sad shires' it is tough for a reader to think pro-war.

Sibilance is frequent in For the Fallen as 'stars that are starry' allows for the poem with its harsh theme of death to be softened having a soothing effect upon the reader. To add to this calming flowing effect fricative sounds are added such as 'flesh of flesh.' This enables a harmonious sound for the dead who died for a cause which is often why the poem is read at remembrance services to put those who have lost loved ones at peace.