

Compare how the reality of war is presented in 'Exposure' and **one** other poem from 'Power and Conflict'.

Despite Exposure and The Charge of the Light Brigade being written about different conflicts, they both offer an informed insight into the reality of war.

Exposure portrays the overwhelming monotony experienced by the soldiers in World War One, who have little company other than each other and the fierce weather conditions. In contrast, the narrator of 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' offers what is almost a eulogy to commemorate the bravery of some of the soldiers who died in the Battle of Balaclava during the Crimean War. Despite their differences, both poets offer a picture of the reality of war that is vicious and unforgiving through aspects of sound, personification, imagery and form.

Both poems use sound to present the horrors of war. In 'Exposure, the alliteration in "flowing flakes that flock, pause, and renew" shows the relentlessness of nature with the repeated sounds mirroring the onslaught of snow. The caesura around "pause" could suggest that the soldiers experience temporary respite from the fierce weather - the "pause" perhaps reflecting a moment of hope. However, this quickly dissipates when the snow begins to "renew". Similarly in 'The Charge of the Light Brigade', the sibilance in "Storm'd at with shot and shell" mimics the sound of bullets whizzing towards and around the Light Brigade. This use of sound makes the reader imagine they are in the heat of battle alongside the Light Brigade, heightening the poem's realism.

Each poet uses personification to magnify the threat of death facing the soldiers. In 'Exposure, the "merciless east winds that knife" the soldiers present nature as a fierce killer that wants to harm them. There is a sense of irony to this personification, as the soldiers can't fight back against the wind like they would with an actual enemy. By placing this image on the opening line, a reader could assume that Owen chose to frame the poem with an overriding sense of hopelessness in the face of real danger. Similarly, in 'The Charge of the Light Brigade', the cavalry ride "Into the mouth of Hell". This disturbing image uses language relating to the body to personify "Hell" as a giant figure about to swallow the soldiers. This also reflects the very real suffering in the battle, as "Hell" invokes images of an inferno filled with pain and agonised screams.

The poems' presentations of religion offer contrasting perspectives on hope during the reality of war. The half-line "For love of God seems dying" in 'Exposure' shows that even the sense of hope the soldiers may have had through their faith is withering to the point where all hope is gone. Owen's wording of this line allows for two meanings: firstly, that the soldiers feel that God's love for them is dying, or, secondly, that their love for God is dying and they are gradually abandoning their Christian beliefs because of the war. In contrast, religion is used in 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' to bring an aspect of hope to the soldiers' fateful charge. The phrase "All in the valley of Death" is a biblical allusion to Psalm 23, which speaks of God being present with individuals, even when they are faced with evil. This might offer

the reader a sense of hope, as it suggests that even after dying in battle, the soldiers would gain eternal life in Heaven.

Different perspectives in each poem present a contrasting view of the reality of war. The first-person plural narration in 'Exposure', such as in "Our brains ache" gives the conflict a greater sense of realism, as the soldiers' experience of war is presented first-hand. As a serving soldier, Owen was a strong critic of World War One and the cynical aspect of his poetry condemned the more enthusiastic approach to war in traditional war poetry. Through his brutally honest depiction of war and suffering in his poetry, Owen might have hoped to create a sense of protest to war back home. Conversely, the use of a third-person narrator in 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' allows the Light Brigade to be presented as heroes, perhaps ignoring the reality of suffering in war as a consequence. The verbs "Plunged", "Shatter'd" and "Storm'd" use strong, plosive sounds to reflect the power of the charge, showing that despite being vastly outnumbered and outgunned, the soldiers still fought bravely. In contrast to 'Exposure', the graphic reality of suffering is not explicitly presented in 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' giving the soldiers a saint-like quality, as if the narrator did not wish to distract from the soldiers' sacrifice with gruesome images of suffering.

Both poems use form to reinforce how the reality of war is presented. The regular rhyme scheme (ABBAC) in 'Exposure' reflects the monotony the soldiers feel in the trenches. Furthermore, the rhymes are often jagged half-rhymes, for example "stormy" and "army", reflecting how the soldiers' experience of war was not a comfortable one. In a different way, in 'The Charge of the Light Brigade', the intensity of the charge is reinforced through the poem's driving, fast-paced rhythm, partially created by the frequent repetition of phrases at the beginning of stanzas. By using this surging rhythm, Tennyson emphasises the bravery of the soldiers, especially in charging on regardless even though "Someone had blunder'd" in giving them the order. Crucially however, despite the narrator's emphasis on the soldier's bravery, the poem doesn't avoid the reality of the deadliness of war. The poem is punctuated by unrhymed lines, breaking the momentum and perhaps symbolising soldiers being cut down by enemy fire.

Despite writing about different wars in different centuries, Owen and Tennyson both present the vicious and unforgiving reality of war. Both use sound and rhythm to mimic the aspects of war, personification to emphasise the dangers faced by the soldiers and form to present different perspectives of this harsh reality. The scathingly bleak tone in 'Exposure' and the huge loss of life in 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' are used to question the point of war. Where they differ most prominently however, is that while the religious imagery in 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' implies a subdued sense of hope that the fallen soldiers may be granted eternal life, the soldiers' dying "love of God" in 'Exposure' reflects the utter hopelessness that characterises the reality of war.