

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

World War I that began on 28 July 1914 and lasted until 11 November 1918 generated suffering throughout the world, most especially Europe. This war, also known as the “Great War,” was a war between the Central Powers countries: Austria-Hungary, Germany, Bulgaria, and Turkey; and the allies that consist of the U.S., Britain, France, Russia, Belgium, Serbia, Greece, Romania, Montenegro, Portugal, Italy, and Japan. Billion of men and women died during this war.

Brooke and Sassoon’s involvement in war provided them the chance and materials to write about the war. Their strong images and different points of view about war that are shown in their works are known globally and acknowledged as some of the famous poems ever written.

Rupert Brooke was already famous during his study in King’s College. He joined other famous poets, philosophers and writers in Bloomsbury Group, a group of famous writers which consisted of Virginia Woolf, John Maynard

Keynes, E.M. Forster and Lytton Strachey. He was also a part of another literary group known as the Georgian Poets and was one of the most important figures in Dymock poets, which are associated with the Gloucestershire village of Dymock, where he spent some time before the war. His war poems came to public attention when *The Times Literary Supplement*, a famous magazine for literary works during 1915, quoted two of his sonnets “V: The Soldier” and “III: The Dead.”

The other poet I chose to analyze for the comparison is Siegfried Sassoon. In contrast to Brooke, who brought patriotism theme in his poems, “Sassoon wrote of the horror and brutality of trench warfare and contemptuously satirized generals, politicians, and churchmen for their incompetence and blind support of the war” (“Siegfried Sassoon 1886 - 1967”). Sassoon was known for his satirical and realistic way of describing war as well as for his use of imagery in describing his trauma and feelings towards war. On the other hand, Brooke’s poems were seen as a romantic way of portraying war.

Both Brooke and Sassoon gave a lot of contributions to the literary world. They have inspired other literary figures; one of them was the poet John Gillespie Magee Jr., who was inspired by Rupert Brooke so that he wrote a poem entitled “Sonnet to Rupert Brooke.”

These two men of literature wrote a lot of war themed poems. I only chose a few poems which are notable and comparable from both poets. Brooke’s poems, which themes are mostly about the soldier’s patriotism of war are variant to Sassoon’s satirical poems, which themes mostly talk about the shell-shock trauma the soldier experienced and the horror of the battlefield itself. Brooke’s romantic and patriotic description of war in “The Soldier,” “III The Dead” and “Peace”

have gained a lot of interests considering how he strived to romanticize war and how the words in his poems are well composed, while Sassoon's "Survivors," "Counter-Attack," and "Suicide in Trenches" are famous for their gruesome and traumatic images of war—a violent contrast to Brooke's romantic poems. Sassoon's works are satirical and realistic as Sassoon himself had been in the battlefield and injured. He was sent to Craiglockhart Hospital, where he wrote his gloomy poems of war which were based on his experiences in the front line.

The themes are the most dominant element in each poem I chose and they are seen through diction. It helps reveal the different perspective of each author towards the war. Theme as described in the online Oxford Dictionaries is "an idea that recurs in or pervades a work of art or literature." ("Theme"), and diction is "the choice and use of words and phrases in speech or writing" ("Diction").

I chose theme through diction to show the authors' different points of view of World War I itself: Brooke with his patriotism theme and romantic portrayal of war, while Sassoon with his satirical and gloomy theme of war. Their diction show what they were trying to convey about war, how war was portrayed in their own points of view, and how they are involved in war themselves.

The approach I chose is formalism, which focuses solely on the poems because the themes of the poems are revealed through the diction used by the authors.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problems that I am going to discuss are:

1. What are the themes of the poems?
2. How do the diction of the poems help reveal the themes?

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Based on the problems above, the purposes of this study are:

1. To reveal the themes of the poems.
2. To show how the diction of the poems help reveal the themes.

METHOD OF RESEARCH

The method of research that I use is library research, beginning by reading the chosen poems of Rupert Brooke's and Siegfried Sassoon's. The research is continued by analyzing the primary texts using the information and materials from the Internet to support my opinion and analysis. Lastly, I draw some conclusions of what has been discussed.

ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

This thesis consists of four chapters, preceded by the Table of Contents and the Abstract. Chapter One is the Introduction, which consists of the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, the Method of Research, and the Organization of the Thesis. In Chapter Two, I analyze the themes of Rupert Brooke's poems through diction. In Chapter Three, I analyze the themes of Siegfried Sassoon's poems through diction. In Chapter four,

the conclusion, I conclude each poem analyzed in this thesis. This thesis ends with the Bibliography and the Appendices, consisting of the Synopsis of the Novel and the Biography of the Author.

