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Thomas Hardy's *Drummer Hodge* and Rupert Brooke's *The Soldier* narrate the accounts of soldiers with regards to war, yet they convey opposite sentiments and ideas with regards to war. *Drummer Hodge* narrates the story of a young soldier who was dead and buried in a 'foreign' land. Since the war is nothing but dying to no purpose and national identities don't matter to the poet Hardy, Hodge was portrayed as someone naive who tragically was buried in the lands outside of his hometown. On the other hand, in the poem *The Soldier*, the soldier glorifies his love of the nation and portrays it as a source of life both materialistically and spiritually. Contrary to the expectations created by starting with an "I" language and the convention of describing the tragedy of a soldier created in *Drummer Hodge*, the poem has a focus on describing England with a personification of mother-nature, as well as how it soothes the soul both in life and afterlife.

In both *The Soldier* and *Drummer Hodge*, the use of natural imageries, diction, and rhyme are used to make a statement on the relationship between nature and the soldier, which in turn reveals the messages that the poets want to convey with regards to the themes of war and nationhood. While *Hodge's* death is portrayed in a tragic manner as there is no exploration on the meaning of war and national identity, *The Soldier* dominantly focuses on England as a life-giving and spiritually liberator. These qualities of England come to the surface when the sense of physical restrictedness of the poem *Drummer Hodge* is put in perspective with the poem *The Soldier*. Restrictedness is both in the way the poem is fit into relatively short lines with caesuras,

as well as the fact that the poem narrates consist of imaginaries near the tomb of the *Drummer Hodge*, who had only a limited understanding of the tragedy of the war. The war took the life of the *Drummer Hodge* who is nothing than a dead body in a strange, foreign land, whereas *The Soldier* found meaning in sacrificing his life for his country England, which is an inseparable aspect of his land and own self.

Similar sounding rhymes in a similar line structure in both poems is an important common pattern that creates different effects. In *Drummer Hodge*, the ‘loam/gloam’ rhyme reinforces the naivety and ignorance of Young Hodge. The word gloam should be considered both literally and figuratively: the time between daylight and darkness or a state of obscurity or ambiguity. *The Soldier* poem has a remarkably similar-sounding rhyme of “roam/home”, which in contrast conveys a sense of conformity, warmth, and freedom. The effect of England’s existence as a source of the creator of possibilities and confidence builder is revealed. The first rhyming lines in both poems have a similar structure: expressions (which are separated with oxford comma ) building upon the previous line of the poem. This creates a sense of deliberate reflection which will continue until the end of the stanzas, conveying the idea that the sentiments build up in a continuous and cumulative way. *Drummer Hodge* is ‘Young’ and ‘Fresh’, and ‘never knew’ (7) “why uprose to nightly view/Strange stars amid the gloam” (11). By the virtue of the sense of obscurity, restriction, and Hodge’s despair, the worth and impact of England in *The Soldier* are better understood. With ‘her ways to roam’ (6) and ‘suns of home’ (8), England offers a welcoming home and creates a sense of freedom and openness of possibilities.

The length of sentences and the use of caesuras and enjambments highly differ in both poems, producing different effects. It is worth noting that the size of the lines are explicitly shorter in *Drummer Hodge* than *The Soldier*, where there are more and longer clauses written. The use of enjambed lines that contain lengthy statements in *The Soldier* evokes a sense of relief and completeness, which becomes evident when compared with *Drummer Hodge*, where the shorter statements with caesuras create a sense of physical restrictedness and discreteness. The pessimism in the lines “to rest/Uncoffined– just as found” (2) in *Drummer Hodge* is highly enhanced by the shortness of statements between caesuras. In turn, the complexness of the lengthy lines such as “Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam” (6) in *The Soldier* becomes evident. The line structures are in parallel with the ideas and spatiality that the poems convey. *Drummer Hodge* constrains itself with the imageries near Hodge’s tomb, whereas in *The Soldier* England is personified through the natural imageries in the first stanza to convey that it is embedded in nature and was entrenched in the existence of its people in an intense way that is nearly impossible to unplug.

The repetitions of ‘for ever’ in both poems are striking. Both of these expressions are used in the last stanza in *Drummer Hodge* where the sense of sorrow reached its peak. The state of physical and spiritual incongruity between nature and the dead soldier was emphasized: “Hodge for ever be” (14) in that “unknown plain” (13), where his “homely Northern breast and brain/Grow to some Southern tree,” (15-16). The sense of uneasiness that this incongruity creates a stark contrast between the harmonious and mutually benefiting relationship between *The Soldier* and England. Thanks to this contrast, the conforming and purpose-giving aspects of England are better felt by the readers, as well as the blaze of glory when *The Soldier* says “That

there's some corner of a foreign field/That is for ever England.” (2-3) Use of ‘For ever’ in both poems points to the focus of the narrative that poets want to create: Hodge and England.

Brooke breaks conventions and expectations to better convey its patriotic theme. The speaker starts the poem *The Soldier* by addressing people that if he dies, people should remember what he will thereafter say. Using ‘I’ and ‘me’ in this first line and the title create an expectation that the poem will be written from his personal perspective and will glorify him as a soldier.

Then, he uses two long and enjambed sentences while describing England: readers should put the effort to read these in order to understand how does he describe them. The intense efforts needed for the creation of nationhood is emphasized, luckily resulting ‘a foreign field’ to become ‘for

ever England.’ (3) After a caesura, the poem continues “There shall be / In that rich earth a richer dust concealed” (3-4). The expression ‘For ever England’, caesuras, and using ‘there’ in the beginning of the two sentences contribute to the expectation that the poem will have a speech-like and glorious tone that will evoke a majestic patriotism by virtue of his personal story. Contrary to the expectations created in the first line, the speaker describes himself as ‘a richer dust’ (4), an oxymoronic expression when dust’s first meaning about tiny particles is considered. Another juxtaposition is between the ‘earth’ and the ‘dust’. These size-related expressions further emphasize the grandness of the nation and the magnitude of the sacrifices necessary in

comparison with the particularity individuals. The fact that Brooke breaks the expectations he created strengthens the effect that glorifying England creates. While the convention in war poetry is mainly elegizing unnamed soldiers or describing the tragedy of their death (like *Drummer*

*Hodge*), *The Soldier* focuses on England for the sake of it. Patriotism is not a medium through

which dead people are better elegized or wars are waged better. It is worth writing a poem to England even if no one is dead.

The word choice contributes further to the thematic purposes. The intentional use of the word 'dust' when referring to the dead body two times before using the word 'body' underplays his existence in comparison with how England affected him, which are consecutively listed with oxford comma in six different verbs: "England bore, shaped, made [him] aware" (5); England has a fundamental effect on who he is. The focus of the poem is completely on England, which is mentioned 5 times in the first stanza and always as an active agent. The personification of England portrays England as a loving and nurturing motherly figure. Asyndeton used through lines 5 to 8 reveals the soothing and caring effect of England on him; when conjunctions are not used, his breathless and impassioned tone comes to the forefront, implying that England arouses lots of emotions in him.

The connections drawn between a mother-like personified England and the natural imageries are important for the patriotism theme, which builds up to Englishness transcending the material sphere. It is worth noting that in the second quatrain of the poem, there are allusive references to the four elements of nature: 'dust'(4), 'air ', 'rivers', 'suns', (8) whose Englishness is emphasized. With the imageries about nature ordered consecutively, patriotic feelings of the speaker were associated with natural scenes. Just like the way matters come to being in different parts of nature in different states of matter (four elements), his love of nation legitimately arouses in many aspects of his life. Rather than its human-made and social construction qualities, patriotism is portrayed as something materialistic and embedded in nature. Born in and living

in England's land shaped the soldier physically, who in turn will make foreign lands England.

When this is thought together with the parallels drawn between England as a mother-nature and the eternal natural cycle that creates England, it becomes evident that the poet gives meaning to his life and afterlife at the same time. Line 9 of *The Soldier* marks the turn of the sonnet, where the poet will thereafter focus on the afterlife. It becomes evident that in the afterlife the soldier will be fully immersed in the pure idea of England, he will be “a pulse in the eternal mind” (10), which reveals the spiritual energy that England means to him. England is not only a nature-like reality that gives an identity and purpose to people and land, but it also acts as a spiritual entity that is able to offer salvation to his citizens' souls.

## Works Cited

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