

REFLECTION ON THE IDEA OF THE WAR FROM GIRALDI'S DIARY AND THE POETICAL TEXTS YOU ANALYSED

During the first term of the school year my class took part in a project about the First World War, and in particular the object of our analysis was to gather ideas about the perception of the First World War and the idea of women during the conflict. With this aim in mind we interviewed people from different generations: the one of our grandparents, the one of our parents and last but not least the one of our generation.

In the end the idea was to compare the collected results with the perception of war and the role of women during the conflict that one can gain from the reading of poems and a short story written during the war. Textual analysis was chosen to better understand the way messages were conveyed from the different texts. To conclude we had to reflect on the project and gain occasions for further reflection also on works about the war written by contemporary writers.

As an introduction to the present work, it must be said that England took part in the First World War in 1914 and it sided with the Triple Entente (England, France and Russia) against the Central European Powers (Germany and Austria - Hungary).

D.H. Lawrence's short story The Fox shows the consequences of war in England: *"War conditions, again, were very unfavourable to poultry-keeping. Food was scarce and bad"*.

The short story also presents one of the roles of women during war. "The fox" indeed is about two women, Bandford and March, who are running an English farm all alone, because men were all in the frontline.

The poem The Glory of Women by S. Sassoon presents some aspects of women's behaviour during the war. The poet uses irony to talk about women because he believes that they did not really understand the brutal realities of war differently from men at the frontline who are living the horrors of war in the first person: *"You listen with delight, / By tales of dirt and danger fondly thrilled. / You crown our distant ardours while we fight, / And mourn our laurelled memories when we're killed."*

Also They by S. Sassoon and Dulce et Decorum est by R. Owen give the reader a cruel idea of war but in different ways. The first poem consists of a dialogue between a Bishop and a group of soldiers. The Bishop states that war is glorious and war changes men for the better; but soldiers disagree and list the real savage changes of war: *"For George lost both his legs; and Bill's stone blind; / Poor Jim's shot through the lungs and like to die; / And Bert's gone syphilitic"*.

Vice versa the second poem is based on the poet's experiences of the horrors of war in the trenches. All the poem is in line with the title (a quotation from the Latin poet Horace "dulce et decorum est pro patria mori") that makes the war something honourable and respectable, in opposition to R. Owen's idea of war: *"coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge", "Many had lost their boots / But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind; / Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots / Of gas-shells dropping softly behind"*.

Nicolò Giraldi's diary "La Grande Guerra a piedi" presents an idea of the First World War through memory. Indeed the writer took a journey starting from London and ending in Trieste. He wanted to collect memories and testimonies about war particularly in cemeteries. He only found memories at frontlines since in England there were no cemeteries, because during the period of the war it was not allowed to repatriate soldiers' bodies to England.

Implicitly, the poem The Soldier by Brooke reports the same thing: *"there's some corner of a foreign field / That is for ever England."* Differently from the other poems, The Soldier shows patriotism and the real atrocity of war is not mentioned, because it speaks with the voice of a soldier who did not take part in the conflict.

In conclusion the idea of war among the works is of horror, fear, cruelty and brutality but only if someone has experienced the frontline can really understand it.

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