

## A. The three “inspiring” speeches which Winston Churchill gave during the period of the “Battle of France”

- 1) **“Blood, toil, tears, and sweat”**, a speech given by Sir Winston Churchill to the House of Commons of the Parliament of the United Kingdom on **13 May 1940**.
- 2) **“We shall fight on the beaches”** is a common title given to a speech delivered by Sir Winston Churchill to the House of Commons of the British Parliament on **4 June 1940**.
- 3) **“This was their finest hour”** speech was delivered by Sir Winston Churchill to the House of Commons of the Parliament of the United Kingdom on **18 June 1940**.

## B. Alfred Tennyson (1809-92), “Morte d’Arthur” written mostly in 1835-42

This is Tennyson's first study from Malory's 'Morte d'Arthur'. We learn from Fitzgerald that it was written as early as the spring of 1835, for in that year Tennyson read it to Fitzgerald and Spedding, "out of a MS. in a little red book," and again we learn that he repeated some lines of it at the end of May, 1835, one calm day on Windermere, adding "Not bad that, Fitz., is it?" ('Life', i., 184). It is here represented as the eleventh book of an Epic, the rest of which had been destroyed, though Tennyson afterwards incorporated it, adding introductory lines, with what was virtually to prove an Epic in twelve books, 'The Idylls of the King'. The substance of the poem is drawn from the third, fourth and fifth chapters of the twenty-first book of Malory's 'Romance', which is followed very closely. It is called "an Homeric echo," but the diction bears a much closer resemblance to that of Virgil than to that of Homer, though the rhythm is perhaps more Homeric than Virgilian. It is Tennyson's masterpiece in "the grand style," and is indeed as near perfection as any work of this kind could be. In spite of its singular mixture of simplicity, purely Homeric, and artificiality, at times ultra-Virgilian, the incongruity never shocks, so noble and impressive is the general effect. The text of 1842 was never subsequently altered except in the spelling of "mere" and "though" in lines 37, 77, 147, 155, 162, 272, and in the insertion in 1853 of the line:-- "Across the ridge and pac'd beside the mere."

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd  
Among the mountains by the winter sea;  
Until King Arthur's table, man by man,  
Had fall'n in Lyonness about their Lord,  
King Arthur: then, because his wound was deep,  
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,  
Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,  
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field, [1]  
A broken chancel with a broken cross,  
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.  
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one  
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.  
Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:  
"The sequel of to-day unsolders all  
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights  
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep  
They sleep--the men I loved. I think that we  
Shall never more, at any future time,  
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,  
Walking about the gardens and the halls  
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.  
I perish by this people which I made,--  
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come again  
To rule once more--but let what will be, be,  
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm

That without help I cannot last till morn.  
Thou therefore take my brand [2] Excalibur,  
Which was my pride: for thou rememberest how  
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm  
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
Holding the sword--and how I row'd across  
And took it, and have worn it, like a king:  
And, wheresoever I am sung or told  
In aftertime, this also shall be known:  
But now delay not: take Excalibur,  
And fling him far into the middle mere:  
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word."  
To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:  
"It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,  
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm.  
A little thing may harm a wounded man.  
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,  
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word."  
So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept  
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,  
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,  
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang  
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down  
By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed rock,  
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,  
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,  
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth  
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt:  
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,  
[3]

Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work  
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long  
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,  
This way and that dividing the swift mind, [4]  
In act to throw: but at the last it seem'd  
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd  
There in the many-knotted waterflags,  
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.  
So strode he back slow to the wounded king.  
Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:  
"Hast thou perform'd my mission which I  
gave?

What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"  
And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:  
"I heard the ripple washing in the reeds, [5]  
And the wild water lapping on the crag."  
To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale:  
"Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,  
Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd  
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight:  
For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,  
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.  
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.  
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again [6]  
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing  
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me word."  
Then went Sir Bedivere the second time  
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,  
[7]

Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought;  
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,  
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote  
His palms together, and he cried aloud,  
"And if indeed I cast the brand away,  
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,  
Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,  
Which might have pleased the eyes of many  
men.

What good should follow this, if this were  
done?  
What harm, undone? deep harm to disobey,  
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule,  
Were it well to obey then, if a king demand  
An act unprofitable against himself?  
The king is sick, and knows not what he does.  
What record, or what relic of my lord  
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath  
And rumours of a doubt? but were this kept,  
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,

Some one might show it at a joust of arms,  
Saying, 'King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,  
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.  
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps  
Upon the hidden bases of the hills."  
So might some old man speak in the aftertime  
To all the people, winning reverence.  
But now much honour and much fame were lost."  
So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,  
And hid Excalibur the second time,  
And so strode back slow to the wounded King.  
Then spake King Arthur, breathing heavily:  
"What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"  
And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:  
"I heard the water lapping on the crag,  
And the long ripple washing in the reeds."  
To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:  
"Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue, [8]  
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!  
Authority forgets a dying king, [9]  
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye  
That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,  
For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,  
In whom should meet the offices of all,  
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;  
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl  
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.  
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,  
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence:  
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,  
I will arise and slay thee with my hands."  
Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran, [10]  
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged  
Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the sword,  
And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand  
Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,  
And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an  
arch,  
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,  
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock  
By night, with noises of the northern sea.  
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur:  
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him  
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.  
And lightly went the other to the King.  
Then spake King Arthur, drawing thicker breath:  
"Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.  
Speak out: what is it thou hast heard, or seen?"  
And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:  
"Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems  
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,  
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,  
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,

So great a miracle as yonder hilt.  
Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling  
him;  
But when I look'd again, behold an arm,  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him  
Three times, and drew him under in the mere."  
And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:  
"My end draws nigh;'tis time that I were gone.  
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my  
weight,  
And bear me to the margin; yet I fear [11]  
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."  
So saying, from the pavement he hath rose,  
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,  
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes  
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere  
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,  
And would have spoken, but he found not  
words,  
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,  
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid  
hands,  
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.  
But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,  
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed  
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the King,  
Muttering and murmuring at his ear"  
Quick, quick! I fear it is too late, and I shall die  
".  
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to  
ridge,  
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he  
walk'd,  
Larger than human on the frozen hills.  
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry  
Before. His own thought drove him like a  
goad.  
Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves  
And barren chasms, and all to left and right  
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he  
based  
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang  
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels--  
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,  
And the long glories of the winter moon.  
Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,  
[12]  
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,  
Beneath them; and descending they were ware  
That all the decks were dense with stately  
forms  
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream--by  
these

Three Queens with crowns of gold--and from them  
rose  
A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,  
And, as it were one voice, an agony  
Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills  
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,  
Or hath come, since the making of the world.  
Then murmur'd Arthur, "Place me in the barge,"  
And to the barge they came. There those three  
Queens  
Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.  
But she, that rose the tallest of them all  
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,  
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his  
hands,  
And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,  
And dropping bitter tears against his brow  
Striped with dark blood: for all his face was white  
And colourless, and like the wither'd moon  
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;  
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with drops  
Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls--  
That made his forehead like a rising sun  
High from the daeis-throne--were parch'd with dust;  
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,  
Mix'd with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.  
So like a shatter'd column lay the King;  
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,  
From spur to plume a star of tournament,  
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged  
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.  
Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere, [13]  
"Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?  
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?  
For now I see the true old times are dead,  
When every morning brought a noble chance,  
And every chance brought out a noble knight.  
Such times have been not since the light that led  
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.  
But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved  
Which was an image of the mighty world;  
And I, the last, go forth companionless.  
And the days darken round me, and the years,  
Among new men, strange faces, other minds."  
And slowly answer'd Arthur from the barge:  
"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,  
And God fulfils Himself in many ways, [14]  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.  
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?  
I have lived my life, and that which I have done  
May He within Himself make pure! but thou,  
If thou shouldst never see my face again,  
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer  
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice  
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.

For what are men better than sheep or goats  
 That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
 If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer  
 Both for themselves and those who call them  
 friend?  
 For so the whole round earth is every way  
 Bound by gold chains [15] about the feet of  
 God.  
 But now farewell. I am going a long way  
 With these thou seest--if indeed I go--  
 (For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)  
 To the island-valley of Avilion;  
 Where falls not hail, or rain, [16] or any snow,  
 Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies  
 Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-  
 lawns  
 And bowery hollows crown'd with summer  
 sea, [17]  
 Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."  
 So said he, and the barge with oar and sail  
 Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan  
 That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,  
 Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the  
 flood  
 With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere  
 Revolving many memories, till the hull  
 Look'd one black dot against the verge of  
 dawn.  
 And on the mere the wailing died away.

Had wink'd and threaten'd darkness, flared and fell:  
 At which the Parson, sent to sleep with sound,  
 And waked with silence, grunted "Good!" but we  
 Sat rapt: It was the tone with which he read--  
 Perhaps some modern touches here and there  
 Redeem'd it from the charge of nothingness--  
 Or else we loved the man, and prized his work;  
 I know not: but we sitting, as I said,  
 The cock crew loud; as at that time of year  
 The lusty bird takes every hour for dawn:  
 Then Francis, muttering, like a man ill-used,  
 "There now--that's nothing!" drew a little back,  
 And drove his heel into the smoulder'd log,  
 That sent a blast of sparkles up the flue;  
 And so to bed; where yet in sleep I seem'd  
 To sail with Arthur under looming shores.  
 Point after point; till on to dawn, when dreams  
 Begin to feel the truth and stir of day,  
 To me, methought, who waited with a crowd,  
 There came a bark that, blowing forward, bore,  
 King Arthur, like a modern gentleman  
 Of stateliest port; and all the people cried,  
 "Arthur is come again: he cannot die".  
 Then those that stood upon the hills behind  
 Repeated--"Come again, and thrice as fair";  
 And, further inland, voices echoed--  
 "Come With all good things, and war shall be no  
 more".  
 At this a hundred bells began to peal,  
 That with the sound I woke, and heard indeed  
 The clear church-bells ring in the Christmas morn.

Here ended Hall, and our last light, that long

[Footnote 1: 'Cf. Morte d'Arthur', xxxi., iv.: "They led him betwixt them to a little chapel from the not far seaside".]

[Footnote 2: 'Cf. Id.', v.: "Therefore,' said Arthur, 'take thou my good sword Excalibur and go with it to yonder waterside. And when thou comest there I charge thee throw my sword on that water and come again and tell me what thou there seest.']

'My lord,' said Bedivere, 'your commandment shall be done and lightly will I bring thee word again.'

So Sir Bedivere departed and by the way he beheld that noble sword, that the pommel and the haft were all of precious stones, and then he said to himself, 'If I throw this rich sword in the water, thereof shall never come to good but harm and loss'. And then Sir Bedivere hid Excalibur under a tree."]

[Footnote 3: 1842-1853. Studs.]

[Footnote 4: Literally from Virgil ('AEn.', iv., 285). "Atque animum nunc huc celerem nunc dividit illuc."]

[Footnote 5: 'Cf. Romance, Id.', v.: "I saw nothing but the waters wap and the waves wan."]

[Footnote 6: 'Romance, Id.', v.: "That is untruly said of thee,' said the king, 'therefore go thou lightly again and do my command as thou to me art lief and dear; spare not, but throw in.']

Then Sir Bedivere returned again and took the sword in his hand, and then him thought sin and shame to throw away that noble sword, and so eft he hid the sword and returned again, and told the king that he had been to the water and done his commandment."]

[Footnote 7: This line was not inserted till 1853.]

[Footnote 8: 'Romance, Id.', v.: "Ah, traitor untrue!' said King Arthur, 'now thou hast betrayed me twice. Who would have weened that thou that hast been so lief and dear, and thou that art named a

noble knight, would betray me for the riches of the sword. But now go again lightly.... And but if thou do not now as I bid thee, if ever I may see thee I shall slay thee with mine own hands.""]

[Footnote 9: There is a curious illustration of this in an anecdote told of Queen Elizabeth. "Cecil intimated that she must go to bed, if it were only to satisfy her people.

'Must!' she exclaimed; 'is must a word to be addressed to princes? Little man, little man, thy father if he had been alive durst not have used that word, but thou hast grown presumptuous because thou knowest that I shall die.'" Lingard, 'Hist'., vol. vi., p. 316.]

[Footnote 10: 'Romance, Id'., v.: "Then Sir Bedivere departed and went to the sword and lightly took it up and went to the waterside, and then he bound the girdle about the hilt and then he threw the sword as far into the water as he might, and then came an arm and a hand above the water, and met it and caught it and so shook it thrice and brandished it, and then vanished away the hand with the sword in the water."]

[Footnote 11: 'Romance, Id'., v.: "'Alas,' said the king, 'help me hence for I dread me I have tarried over long'. Then Sir Bedivere took the king upon his back and so went with him to that water."]

[Footnote 12: 'Romance, Id'., v.: "And when they were at the waterside even fast by the bank hove a little barge and many fair ladies in it, and among them all was a queen and all they had black hoods and all they wept and shrieked when they saw King Arthur. 'Now put me into the barge,' said the king, and so they did softly. And there received him three queens with great mourning, and so they set him down and in one of their laps King Arthur laid his head; and then that queen said: 'Ah, dear brother, why have ye tarried so long from me?'" ]

[Footnote 13: 'Romance, Id'., v.: "Then Sir Bedivere cried: 'Ah, my Lord Arthur, what shall become of me now ye go from me and leave me here alone among mine enemies?'

'Comfort thyself,' said the king, 'and do as well as thou mayest, for in me is no trust to trust in. For I will unto the vale of Avilion to heal me of my grievous wound. And if thou never hear more of me, pray for my soul.'" ]

[Footnote 14: With this 'cf>/i>. Greene, 'James IV'., v., 4:-- "Should all things still remain in one estate / Should not in greatest arts some scars be found / Were all upright nor chang'd what world were this? / A chaos made of quiet, yet no world."

And 'cf'. Shakespeare, 'Coriolanus', ii., iii.:-- What custom wills in all things should we do it, / The dust on antique Time would be unswept, / And mountainous error too highly heaped / For Truth to overpeer.]

[Footnote 15: 'Cf.' Archdeacon Hare's "Sermon on the Law of Self-Sacrifice". "This is the golden chain of love whereby the whole creation is bound to the throne of the Creator." For further illustrations see 'Illust. of Tennyson', p. 158.]

[Footnote 16: Paraphrased from 'Odyssey', vi., 42-5, or 'Lucretius', iii., 18-22.]

[Footnote 17: The expression "'crowned' with summer 'sea'" from 'Odyssey', x., 195: [Greek: naeson taen peri pontos apeiritos estaphan\_otai.]]

### **C. John McRae (Canadian soldier), "In Flanders Fields" about the terrible battle of the Ypres salient in the spring of 1915**

In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,

Loved, and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.

## D. Poetic feet in classical meter

Below are listed the names given to the poetic feet by classical metrics. The feet are classified first by the number of syllables in the foot (*disyllables* have two, *trisyllables* three, and *tetrasyllables* four) and secondarily by the pattern of vowel lengths (in classical languages) or syllable stresses (in English poetry) which they comprise.

The following lists describe the feet in terms of vowel length (as in classical languages). Translated into syllable stresses (as in English poetry), 'long' becomes 'stressed' ('accented'), and 'short' becomes 'unstressed' ('unaccented'). For example, an iamb, which is short-long in classical meter, becomes unstressed-stressed, as in the English word "betray."

The most common in English verse are the iamb, the trochee, the dactyl, and the anapest.

*x* = short / unstressed syllable  
/ = long / stressed syllable (ictus and x notation)

### Disyllables

x / iamb  
/ x trochee  
// spondee  
x x pyrrhic, dibrach

### Trisyllables

/ x x dactyl  
x x / anapest  
x / x amphibrach  
x // bacchius  
// x antibacchius  
/ x / cretic, amphimacer  
/// molossus

## E. Examples of War Poems by Jessie Pope (1868-1941)

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>“Who’s For the Game”</b></p> <p>Who’s for the game, the biggest that’s played, The red crashing game of a fight? Who’ll grip and tackle the job unafraid? And who thinks he’d rather sit tight?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>“The Call” (1915)</b></p> <p>Who’s for the trench? Are you, my laddie? Who’ll follow French? Will you, my laddie? Who’s fretting to begin, Who’s going out to win? And who wants to save his skin? Do you, my laddie?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">.../...</p>	<p>Who’s for the khaki suit? Are you, my laddie? Who longs to charge and shoot? Do you, my laddie? Who’s keen on getting fit, Who means to show his grit, And who’d rather wait a bit? Would you, my laddie?</p> <p>Who’ll earn the Empire’s thanks? Will you, my laddie? Who’ll swell the victor’s ranks? Will you, my laddie? When that procession comes, Banners and rolling drums? Who’ll stand and bite his thumbs? Will you, my laddie?</p>
--	---

## F. Siegfried Sassoon, “A Soldier's Declaration” (1917)

“I have seen and endured the sufferings of the troops, and I can no longer be a party to prolong these sufferings for ends which I believe to be evil and unjust. I am not protesting against the conduct of the war, but against the political errors and insincerities for which the fighting men are being sacrificed. On behalf of those who are suffering now I make this protest against the deception which is being practiced on them; also I believe that I may help to destroy the callous complacency with which the majority of those at home regard the continuance of agonies which they do not share, and which they have not sufficient imagination to realize.” Siegfried L. Sassoon. July 1917

## G. Plan suggested for *ELE 23 (2007)* on War – X. Lachazette, Le Mans

**Intro:** [1] *Introduce the docs:*] 2 famous documents: Five excerpts from **one of the three Churchill speeches** which marked the PM's countrymen's imagination at the start of WWII ((the "We Shall Fight on the Beaches" speech, in this case) to sustain the war effort & glorify soldiers ≠ Owen's famous WWI poem: **a realistic, behind-the-scenes look** at what waging war "really" means when you are at the front. A dark, disturbing painting by Goya which illustrates a **well-known infanticide** in a striking, nightmarish fashion (Saturn/Chronos maiming & devouring one of his sons) → **metaphorically linked** with the 2 preceding docs (nameless horrors, war between generations).

[2] *Indicate what the general theme of these documents is:*] Hence this set of documents stresses the horrors committed in war time & asks whether the killing off of hundreds of thousands of soldiers can ever be justified in the name of a cause or an ideal.

[3] *Indicate what your angle of approach will be:*] I will illustrate the long-standing debate between the **militarist & the antimilitarist stance**, and show the **strong & weak points of both sides**.

[4] *Indicate the plan you'll follow – slowly, clearly, fully.*]

### 1) *The problematic interpretation of the "face of war."*

- WC stresses how frightful the new war (the "**phoney war**" came to an end on May 10, 1940 = less than a month before this speech!): "the greatest military disaster in our long history" (6). WC insists on the **calamities which poured out on Allied soldiers** (F, GB, & Belgium here): magnetic mines, armoured divisions, decisive role of Germany's aircraft (Cf. **Blitzkrieg**), "hail of bombs," torpedoes, "many thousands of [...] wounded," etc. – but **never stresses the atrocities themselves**. Instead, focus on the heroism of those who died, resisted, or helped save hundreds of lives. [340,000 soldiers evacuated in 860 boats in 9 days, it is said, during the operation codenamed "**Operation Dynamo**".]

- During WWI, same horrifying scenes witnessed by WO: sludge, **Five-Nines [= 5.9-calibre shells]**, **traumatic image/memory** of comrade "floundering" (& "foundering" [= drowning] in water-filled bomb crater), flares, extenuated soldiers, etc. The white eyes writhing in the soldier's face (notice the alliteration in line 19) find an echo in Goya's rendition of Saturn's cruel face (**bulging eyes / eyes that stick out**) + disgusting sight of bloody & maimed body of the child in the picture ("obscene as cancer," to use WO's phrase).

- Goya's rendition: ugly face of war indeed! Like a madman. Plus, why **such a gaunt, skinny body**? Because Chronos is **ever famished & never satiated** (= Time, **the Grim Reaper**, kills everyone)? Conversely, remember the prophesy: Chronos will be overthrown by one of his sons → devours them to prevent this (he doesn't: Chronos's wife Rhea hides Zeus in Crete, → Zeus survives & finally overthrows his father).

**Transition: Opposite views of the same picture. Despair & ugly realities v fake optimism needed to keep the population's hopes up. Suffering v cruelty of the "top brass" (those in command).**

### 2) *Propaganda and counter-propaganda.*

- Had he lived through WW2, WO would obviously have called WC's propaganda an "**old Lie**" (27) = very similar to S. Sassoon's 1917 "A Soldier's Declaration" (against "deception," "callous complacency," "political errors and insincerities.") It is interesting to oppose the two writers' **use of capitals**: "Lie" (27) v "Island" (42, 51, 53) → truth v idealization / personification of the fatherland / patriotism.

- **2 full-fledged rhetoricians**: Analyze WC's progression from past (1-26), present (27-40) with the striking use of present tenses in lines 30 & 32, future (the famous "we shall" sentences = **anaphoras**). Mention also: **Accumulation** (by... by... 31-2; if... if... 41-3), **hyperbole** (today's heroes make the past sound prosaic!), lyrical style & poetic (≠ prosaic) quotation from Alfred Tennyson's "Morte d'Arthur" (written mostly 1835-42), metaphors ("storm of war" 43), alliteration (49 flag or fail) ≠ WO's use of **meter changes** in a poem mostly written in iambic pentameters: "Knock-**kne**d, **cough**ing like **hags**" (2) = iamb / **trochee** / iamb + "problematic scansion of "**Gas! Gas! Quick**, boys! An **ecstasy** of **fum**bling" (9) = where do the 5 stresses fall? → too many feet here. WO's poem also breaks into 3 parts: we (1-8), I (9-16), you ≠ we (17-28) + 2 lines (15-16) obviously set off by line skipped, though they obviously belong to the previous stanza. The quote (from Horace's *Odes*), in Latin, sounds unnatural, hypocritical, as if "**lessons from the past**" are **bogus**. More frequent use of similes here, to convey the soldier's experience (1, 2, 12, 14, 20, 23) + striking metaphor ("blood-shod" 6).

- In this set of docs, **Saturn looks like Mars, the Roman God of War**. Cf. his hands, **ready to sever the enemy's body in two** + Interesting similarity between **the victim's Christ-like posture (an incomplete cross)** & WO's recurrent association between soldiers & Christ figures (innocence sacrificed). This is obviously a far cry from WC's **outdated use of chivalry & chivalric times** (the knight & war as a wonderful opportunity to show your mettle! 33 ≠ WO's final irony on the enthusiasm of his "friend" [Jessie Pope & her jingoistic "**poetry**," published in *The Daily Mail*, for ex.]). WC's model is Victorian (Tennyson) ≠ WWI was **the first modern war**, the worst slaughter ever. How can you be heroic when the enemy overpowers you & there is no choice but to retreat? How can you believe in God (miracle 31, God's good time 55) when all you see around you is cancer & corruption?

Conclusion: [Summarize:] Some of WC's arguments **sound strained and rehashed**. Rhetoric is used to heat things up & convince thousands of young men to give up their lives for their country, as perfectly understood by WO & Sassoon, for ex. There is **nothing grand or beautiful in the actual waging of war**. [Branch out:] Yet, when the foe's name is Nazism or Fascism, & the organized murder of millions of humans, is it really possible to sit still? Promoting antimilitarism & human brotherhood + doing away with nationalist feelings are obviously noble. Diplomatic tools must be developed must be used. But since the causes for the two world wars were dissimilar, can the same answer (antimilitarism) be used? Could antimilitarism have prevented the Shoah?



#### H. Notes on Wilfred Owen's "Dulce et Decorum Est"

Drafted at Craiglockhart in the first half of October 1917 (WO, 226–8), this poem was revised, probably at Scarborough but possibly at Ripon, between January and March 1918. The earliest surviving MS is dated 'Oct. 8. 1917', and on the [? 16th] WO wrote to SO: 'Here is a gas poem, done yesterday, (which is not private, but not final). The famous Latin tag [from Horace, *Odes*, III. ii. 13] means of course It is sweet and meet to die for one's country. Sweet! and decorous!' (CL, 499–500)

- 5 Men . . . Many: Cp. WO to SO, 16 January 1917: ' . . . craters full of water. Men have been known to drown in them. Many stuck in the mud . . . ' (CL, 427)
- 8 WO never finalized this line (see MS on CP&F, 292). Five-Nines: 5.9-calibre shells.
- 9 GAS: Cp. WO to SO, 19 January 1917: 'I went on ahead to scout – foolishly alone – and when, half a mile away from the party, got overtaken by GAS' (CL, 428).
- 12 flound'ring: 'I remember [WO] using this word floundering and, unable to resist the play, adding, " . . . but of course there is, I suppose, the possibility you might founder" ' (JFO, III. 132).
- 13 panes: The gas mask's celluloid windows.
- 17–25 you . . . My friend: Jessie Pope, to whom the poem was originally to have been dedicated, was the author of numerous pre-war children's books, as well as of *Jessie Pope's War Poems* (1915), *More War Poems* (1915), and *Simple Rhymes for Stirring Times* (1916) (WO, 227).

*The Poems of Wilfred Owen,*  
edited and notes by Jon STALLWORTHY,  
London: Norton, p. 117-8

