Formalist Critical Approach To Rupert Brooke’s ‘The Soldier’ Essay, Research Paper

FORMALIST CRITICAL APPROACH TO:

RUPERT BROOKE: THE SOLDIER

I am analyzing the poem “The Soldier” by Rupert Brooke. This poem is about a

man who loves his country dearly. The country is England. He believes that if he should

die in a far away battle field that people should remember of him only that he was English.

Brookes says in his forth line, “In that rich earth a richer dust concealed.” This means that

if he is to die in a land other than England that the soil would be made better because there

would now be a piece of England within it.

The plot of this poem reinforces it’s meaning because it deals with death and love.

These are two powerful things that evoke feeling in people. It helps to create an image in

the poem of a man who is very brave and would do anything for his country.

The character in the poem reinforces the meaning because he truly believes in his

country. He describes England in his ninth line by saying, “And think, this heart, all evil

shed away.” These are the words of a man who truly believes that his land is the greatest

of good.

Images in “The Soldier” are extremely strong and persuading. One image is the

line “Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam.” This line evokes images of a

beautiful woman cherishing and caressing the man who stands at her side. Another line is

“Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.” This line creates a feeling of tranquillity

and a unity with nature.

Another line that evokes a feeling of peace and happiness is, “Her sights and

sounds; dreams happy as her day.” Without such strong images, the poem would probably

not have such a great effect on the reader. Lines such as this one force the reader to see

the land in the same light as the poet.

Symbolism also plays a key role in this poem. Some of the more obvious uses of

symbolism are apparent in the line “And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness.”

Obviously we realize that the land does not laugh and is not gentle. This is symbolism

used to tell us how wonderful a place England is to live. More symbolism is in the first

stanza where the poem says “If I should die, think only this of me: That there’s some

corner of a foreign field that is for ever England. There shall be in that rich earth a richer

dust concealed.” As I mentioned earlier, Brooke believes that his dust will somehow

enrich the land because it will now have a piece of England in it.

The poem goes on to say that his dust was shaped and made aware by England. It

also says that England gave him it’s flowers to love. The author loves his country very

much and uses extremely emotional symbols to make his point. -