

Compare and contrast There Is No God, The Wicked Saith with the Scouting article.

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1 Text A, There Is No God, The Wicked Saith, is a poem written by Arthur
2 Hugh Clough between 1819 and 1861, about people's differing views about
3 the existence of God, eventually questioning people's motives for believing in
4 God. Text B is a BBC News article written in April 2012 which deals with
5 the UK Scout movement and a group's claims that it is excluding young
6 people on the grounds of religion.

7 Text A is comprised of eight stanzas of four lines each, also known as qua-
8 trains, every line of each quatrain being of very similar length to the others,
9 indicating well thought out points and a quest to keep the reader engaged.
10 The article is split into seventeen paragraphs, in this case more often than
11 not one sentence is separated with a blank line, and it is true also that some
12 sentences could be joined to preceeding paragraphs in order to make broader
13 points: "The NSS [...] says that the Scout promise puts non-believers off
14 joining / And it asks why[...]". This may show that the author John Mc-
15 Manus was perhaps trying to make the article one page in length as per his
16 brief, with not very much consideration for literary flow or writing style.

17 Despite the poem's uniform layout on the page, its rhyme scheme is in
18 fact ABCBDEFE, an irregular one. Its meter is an iambic tetrameter (i.e.
19 each line has eight syllables), although with catalexis such as "blessing" and
20 "guessing" on lines two and four, which present further irregularity but a
21 boost to the rhythm, again keeping the reader's interest. The poem is split
22 clearly into two parts, split with a volta: quatrains one to five are state
23 the viewpoints of the non-believers, whereas quatrains six to eight state the
24 viewpoints of the opposite, more populated group of society, the believers in
25 God. Clough may have tactically put forward more points against people's
26 belief in God to balance the view of the time when he was writing when most

27 people believed in God.

28 The poem heavily uses enjambment, shown with the use of commas after
29 the two words quoted in the paragraph above, and indeed in nearly every
30 stanza. This technique emphasises continuity, clarity, and strong beliefs, yet
31 also at some points allows the reader to absorb a whole sentence in one go
32 and question it, not be stunted by the line breaks, as in the whole of the final
33 stanza when Clough criticizes human beings for believing in God only “when
34 disease or sorrows strike”. This claim in itself is hyperbolic, as it is most
35 certainly exaggerated, as some people do believe truly in God.

36 Alliteration (normal, sibilance, and plosive) is used in the poem to punch a
37 few syllables in together to emphasise words. It is possible that “shadow”
38 and “steeple” in stanza six could be interpreted as the figureheads in the
39 Church looking down intimidatingly from their high tower of security at the
40 perceived insecure atheists hierarchically below them.

41 In the title of the poem, Clough labels everyone who say that there is no God
42 as “wicked”, which is wicked and biased in itself, not accepting, however it
43 is the case that in the 1800s there was not the level of unholiness that we see
44 today, so much of it was seen as malicious as Britain was still very much a
45 Christian country and so it was thought that every respectable citizen was
46 expected believe in God. This is in complete contrast to the modern age and
47 country we live in now, however, which as we see in the article as embraced
48 multiculturalism. Curiously, despite being anti-atheist and pro-Christian, in
49 the article we learn that the Scout movement has “launched a new series
50 of clothing [...] aimed at the growing numbers of Muslim girl[s becoming]
51 members”. It could be argued that this move is to prevent any racial or
52 religious hatred claims, with the Scout group assuming that a kindly-worded
53 letter from the National Secular Society is a courtesy and not a serious threat
54 to the bad publicity of the movement as atheism is not considered by many to
55 be a religion. Clough writes about how “the rich man”, using one of the rarely
56 used adjectives in this poem to emphasise how his views must be important,
57 “says that [religion] matters very little” as long as everyone is grateful for
58 their chance in life. Therefore, religion could be described as a set of moral
59 values intertwined with fiction (“illusion”, in the seventh quatrain) to make
60 people feel more comfortable and brainwash them into doing good on religious
61 grounds, not on moral, common sense and plain decency grounds. However,
62 whenever something goes wrong or death occurs, people require emotional
63 support and instinctively look for answers in a higher power (“why me?”),
64 whether that power be imagined for that time in their lives or real always in
65 their minds.