

The significance of the magic numbers in poems

Previously in school I studied the poem 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' written by Alfred Lord Tennyson. This poem describes the disastrous battle between the British cavalry and the Russian forces during the Crimean War. Tennyson wrote this poem as a sign of respect for the brave soldiers who were lead into war unprepared and defenceless. This poems echoes their inevitable death through extensive language and structural techniques.

In the third stanza

Cannon to right of them,

Cannon to left of them,

Cannon in front of them

 Volley'd and thunder'd;

Storm'd at with shot and shell,

Boldly they rode and well,

Into the jaws of Death,

Into the mouth of Hell

 Rode the six hundred.

The quote "Cannon to right of them, Cannon to left of them, Cannon in front of them" "The soldiers were under attack from every side; the feeling of being trapped but being unable to escape and keep going the courageous nature and bravery of the soldiers as well their strong faith towards their country. The quote" Storm'd at with shot and shell, Boldly they rode and well "This key line shows the aggression and force of the attack which is compared to the immense power of mother nature 'storm'. The rhyme scheme of 'shell and well' contrast the loud and dangers impact of shells to the reaction the soldiers who continued on unaffected. The rhyming couplets and triplets derive the poem forward but the momentum is broken by the unrhymed lines which could mirror the horse stumbling and soldiers falling and hints the chaos of war.

At the end of every stanza the line 'rode the six hundred' repeated perhaps intentional to illustrates the refusal of the soldiers to stop from their certain death. The six hundred being the magic number here is a structural and language device as at the beginning of the war there was 600 soldiers however

at end there would have not been 600 soldiers remaining this could be reflection that their souls have continued through the long battle. The number 600 attributes to number 6, and the energies and qualities o powerful, infinity, potential and/or choice, continuing cycles and flow, and the beginning point this is reflective of war's nature and process leading to it.