

Our first look at the opening paragraphs (setting the scene) in Act 1 and 2 shows us that the latter is noticeably shorter. Despite both of their simplistic descriptions of the bunkers and trenches, in Act 2 we see more complex structures weaving in, hinting that there is a chance of happiness and hope - describing the "shaft of sunlight" and the "large plate of bacon." These are the less traumatic aspects of war, perhaps those associated peace and joy, signifying to the audience that the end of the war is just round the corner. The characters attitudes in the first few pages of act 2 reflect this idea of hope, constantly talking about the "lovely smell" and the "wonderful flavours," yet staying away from the negative factors such as the battle itself and their inevitable death - what they have been talking about constantly for practically the whole of the play so far. The audience are told the feelings of the characters directly at one point, where the stage directions depict *Trotter coming down the steps, whistling gaily and rubbing his hands.*

In comparison however; we see that in the opening paragraph of Act 1 there is a lot of negative language used, depicting the trenches in a dark, gloomy and unpleasant way. Of course, Sherriff has done this to immediately depict the dreadful and unhygienic conditions in which the soldiers of WW1 had to live in, but additionally it acts as a potential omen of the outcome of the war and the inevitable death of the characters before the play has even started. Initially the audience are told of the stereotypes of the soldiers, showing how they look at crude pictures of "women in magazines hanging on the wall," however these soon fade away when we get to see the loving, comforting side of the soldiers, such as Hardy's singing in the opening of the scene. His initial mood and attitude is reflected by how Sherriff describes him - depicting him as a considerate, joyful man with a "red face," and with a "cheerful" personality. This is showing the audience that not everything about WW1 was bad, and that in reality there was hope among many people, and that there were people that were able to stay strong no matter what happened to them or their comrades. These are the kinds of personalities and attitudes towards the war that Sherriff tries to depict will win it - "optimism can never go wrong" he says in his analysis of the play.