



Old Lie: The Great War and the Public School Ethos

Peter Parker

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Long unavailable, this acclaimed book traces the history of an ideal and examines its effect on the lives of those caught up in the First World War. Rupert Brooke's apparent enthusiasm for the War in 1914 was echoed throughout England, particularly by young men who had been educated in a gentlemanly tradition of patriotism, chivalry and sportsmanship at their public schools. These codes had also trickled down through society thanks to the school stories that appeared in popular boys' magazines, and to the missions and boys' clubs run by the schools and universities in the poorer parts of the country.

Drawing upon a wealth of material, Peter Parker's fascinating book traces the growth and dissemination of what Wilfred Owen dismissed as 'the old lie' in his poem *Dulce Et Decorum Est*. It also explores the wide variety of responses to the war - from celebration to denigration, from patriotic acquiescence to bitter rebellion - as they were reflected in the poetry, plays and prose of the period. The *Old Lie* unearths some truly bizarre notions about education and warfare and illuminatingly re-examines the literature of the First World War by placing it in its historical and social perspective.

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