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The Theme of War in Some Selected English Poems[1]

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ABSTRACT

Throughout history, humanity has been subjected to a slew of disasters, with World War I being one of the bloodiest. Millions of people died while fighting the good fight, believing they were taking part in a "war to end all wars." As history demonstrates, this was not the case. Many soldiers died in battles that were unnecessary. These battles occurred either to demonstrate a nation's strength or as a result of a feud over a few centimeters of land. For years to come, the entire world would be devastated. However, there appears to be a silver lining in this disaster. This tragic event gave birth to a new type of poetry that the world had not seen before. The face of literature as we know it was altered by war poetry. To be more specific, the poets of this era introduced us to a completely new interpretation of the term "war." Many authors contributed to this, including Sassoon, Brooke, Owen, Rosenberg, and many others. (Bloom, 2002, p:11)

The Great War lasted four years and resulted in drastic changes in social, cultural, political, economic, and literary aspects. The poets themselves became war poets as a result of the effects of the brutal war. Literature evolved into a means of expressing oneself in the depiction of reality. Women's and men's writings were similar in expressing their anguish as a result of the Great War. The literary tone shifted from romantic to war and death. During that time, most writings focused on themes such as life and death, purpose and direction, justice, patriotism, love, and sacrifice. The literature of light-hearted, carefree story-telling had turned to bitter memories and a generation that had experienced a great deal of pain and suffering. Many poems written by soldiers reflect their living conditions in trenches full of mud, rats, constant shell fire, and the sight of death. (Delaney, 2021, p:12). The Soldier, a series of patriotic sonnets written by Rupert Brooke, In Flanders Fields by Poet John McCrae, Parade's End written by an English novelist Ford Madox Ford, A Farewell to Arms, an autobiography by Ernest Hemingway, and Mrs. Dalloway, a novel by Virginia Woolf were notable works of the time. Modernism, the emergence of a genre, rejected romantic views in favor of focusing on the lives of people in the real world. This tone was reflected in Virginia Woolf's writings as well as in the works of other writers such as Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness, James Joyce's Ulysses, and T. S. Eliot's The Waste Land. The poem "The Waste Land" is one of the most famous poems of the twentieth century, and it depicts a haunting vision of postwar society. Some of the great English poets, such as Wilfred Owen, used their poetry to reflect the harsh reality of the war. "All a poet today can do is warn," he wrote. That is why a true poet must be honest." (Bloom. 2002. p:15).

DEFINITION OF WAR POETRY

Since the Greeks, poets have written about the experience of war, but the young soldier poets of World War I established war poetry as a literary genre. Their combined voice has become one of Europe's defining texts of the twentieth century. Hundreds of young men in uniform began writing poetry in 1914 in order to express extreme emotion at the edge of experience. The work of a few of these, including Owen, Rosenberg, and Sassoon, has endured to become what Andrew Motion refers to as a "sacred national text." (Keegan, 2000, p:25)

Although the term "war poet" typically refers to active combatants, many "civilians" caught up in conflict in other ways have written war poetry: Cesar Vallejo and WH Auden in the Spanish Civil War, Margaret Postgate Cole and Rose Macaulay in the First World War, and James Fenton in Cambodia. During the global, 'total war' of 1939-45, which saw the holocaust, the blitz, and Hiroshima, almost no poet was spared the horrors of war. The same could be

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said of civil wars and revolutions in Spain and Eastern Europe. However, this does not imply that every poet responded to war by writing directly about it. For some, the proper response of a poet was to remain silent consciously (conscientiously). (Keegan, 2000, p:34)

War poetry is not always 'anti-war.' It is, however, about life's big issues: identity, innocence, guilt, loyalty, courage, compassion, humanity, duty, desire, and death. War poetry's response to these questions, as well as its connection of immediate personal experience to moments of national and international crisis, lends it an extra-literary significance. Even Shakespeare, according to Owen, appears 'vapid' after Sassoon: 'not, War poetry is now taught in every school in the United Kingdom. It has become a part of national mythology, as well as an expression of historical consciousness and political conscience. The way we read – and perhaps revere – war poetry reveals something about who we are and who we want to be as a country. (Delaney, 2021, p:13).

THE THEME OF WAR IN FAMOUS POEMS

There are many great war poems, and there are many famous war poets. Of course it is not possible to collect all these great poems and their great poets in one list because it needs a book and not a research paper. Moreover, such a list will always be a matter of personal preference balanced with more objective factors such as "impact" and "popularity". (Kipling. 2009. p:29)

The researcher has tried to provide a mixture of common titles. "Dreamers" is not as famous as "Everybody Sings" in Sassoon's work, but the scholar thought it was a good poem that everyone should read. The researcher has also tried to include poems that he thought were particularly interesting. To facilitate the selection of only ten war poems, it was limited to World War I, but that does not mean that there are not many interesting and successful poems written about other conflicts. as always. (Kipling. 2009. p:56).

Laurence Binyon, 'For the Fallen'.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:

Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.

At the going down of the sun and in the morning

We will remember them…

Charles Sorley, 'When you see millions of the mouthless dead'.

When you see millions of the mouthless dead Across your dreams in pale battalions go, Say not soft things as other men have said, That you'll remember. For you need not so…

This is not the title Sorley gave to this poem, which he left untitled when he died in 1915, at the age of 20. The Scottish poet Charles Hamilton Sorley is not well-known among WWI poets, but this poem is one of many reasons why he should be. In this poem, Sorley instructs mourning soldiers who have died not to praise or cry for their fallen comrades if they see the faces of their fallen comrades in their dreams. The dead men are unable to hear or see them. (Kipling. 2009. P:75)

Sorley's poem is stark and uncompromising: he tells us not to bother praising or weeping for the fallen soldiers because these ghosts are nothing more than shadows of the men they once were, and our tears or words now mean nothing to them. The poem appears to reject the Christian hope for the afterlife that underpins many earlier poems about death and mourning. When the dead are gone, there is no hope of reuniting or reaching across the void. (Kipling. 2009. P:80)

John McCrae, 'In Flanders Fields'.

We are the Dead. Short days ago

We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow, Loved and were loved, and now we lie In Flanders fields.

Although the association between fields of poppies and commemorating the war dead predates WWI, it was certainly popularized by WWI, specifically by this John McCrae poem. McCrae, who died of pneumonia while on active duty in January 1918, was inspired to write this poem in 1915 after conducting the burial service for an artillery officer

killed in the conflict, Alexis Helmer. In the chaplain's absence, McCrae presided over the young man's burial and penned these memorable lines, which helped to cement the link between poppies and the fallen of WWI in popular memory. (Kipling. 2009. P:85)

Wilfred Owen, 'Dulce et Decorum Est'.

If in some smothering dreams, you too could pace Behind the wagon that we flung him in,

And watch the white eyes writhing in his face, His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin…

Wilfred Owen wrote to his mother from Craiglockhart Hospital in October 1917, saying, 'Here is a gas poem, done yesterday…' …..the famous Latin tag (from Horace's Odes) means that it is of course sweet and meet to die for one's country. Sweet! 'And tasteful!' Despite the fact that he wrote the poem in October, the surviving drafts of 'Dulce et Decorum Est' show that Owen revised and revisited it several times before his death the following November – just one week before the Armistice. (Unfortunately, the telegram informing Owen's mother that her son had been killed in action the week before arrived on the day of the Armistice, while everyone else was celebrating the war's end.) (Kipling. 2009. P:90)

'Dulce et Decorum Est,' one of the most famous war poems (the title is a quotation from the Roman poet Horace, Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori, or 'it is sweet and fitting to die for one's country'), was written in response to the jingoistic pro-war verses written by people like Jessie Pope. Indeed, Pope is the 'friend' who Owen addresses directly in the poem's closing lines. However, the poem is also a harrowing and vivid account of a poison gas attack, with a number of details that immediately stick in the mind and haunt our dreams as they did Owen's, demonstrating how naive and damaging outlooks like Jessie Pope's truly were. (Kipling. 2009. P:99)

'Dulce et Decorum Est' is a fine example of Owen's superb craftsmanship as a poet: as young as he was, and as valuable as his poetry is as a window into the horrors of the First World War, in the end, we value his response to the horrific events he witnessed because he put them across in such emotive but controlled language, using imagery that is both true and effective. 'My subject is War, and the pity of War,' he wrote in the draft preface to his poems. 'There is poetry in the pity.' We've chosen some of Wilfred Owen's best poems for this section. Here you can hear actor Christopher Eccleston read Owen's poem. The manuscript of the poem is also fascinating. (Kipling. 2009. P:102).

Siegfried Sassoon, 'Dreamers'.

Sassoon, like Owen, was a celebrated WWI poet and one of the most astute observers of what Owen called "the pity of War." Sassoon even played a significant role in inspiring and encouraging Owen's taut style of poetry. This sonnet isn't his most well-known, but it's a moving depiction of the ordinary soldier's longing for home, loved ones, and the normal life he'd left behind. (Kipling. 2009. P:110)

Rupert Brooke, 'The Soldier'.

If I should die, think only this of me:

That there's some corner of a foreign field That is for ever England…

Brooke is another well-known WWI poet, though he died relatively early in the war and wrote very different types of war poetry than Owen and Sassoon. He did not live to see much of his fame, but this patriotic and stirring poem played an important role in bringing England together in the early days of the War, helping to bring England together in uncertain times. Indeed, the poem was read aloud in St Paul's Cathedral shortly before Brooke's death in Easter 1915. (Kipling. 2009. P:119)

Isaac Rosenberg, 'Break of Day in the Trenches'.

The darkness crumbles away.

It is the same old druid Time as ever, only a live thing leaps my hand,

A queer sardonic rat,

As I pull the parapet's poppy

To stick behind my ear…

Along with Sorley and Owen, Robert Graves considered Isaac Rosenberg (1890-1918) to be one of the three important poets lost during the First World War. Rosenberg, like Owen and McCrae, died before the Armistice in 1918, and his reputation as a great war poet was established after his death. His style is far tauter and more reserved – even down-to- earth and matter-of-fact – than Owen's or Sassoon's. (Kipling. 2009. P:125)

The emphasis is less on the pity of war and more on an almost documentary-like attention to detail, showing us what life was like in the trenches for the average combatant. (Consider T. E. Hulme's poem about the trenches of St. Eloi, which is similarly restrained and unsentimental.) 'Break of Day in the Trenches' is perhaps Rosenberg's most well-known poem, and it exemplifies his taut, no-nonsense style, which he shares with Owen (and Sorley, to a degree). Rats, poppies, the "torn fields of France": like Owen, Rosenberg immerses us in the action, painting a stark, realistic picture of warfare and the soldiers' daily lives. (Kipling. 2009. P:133)

Majorie Pickthall, 'Marching Men'.

Under the level winter sky

I saw a thousand Christs go by. They sang an idle song and free As they went up to Calvary…

Although the most famous war poets in the English language were men, this does not mean that women did not write about the First World War – and many turned to poetry as a way of expressing their experiences of witnessing war from the sidelines (though it is worth noting that many, such as volunteer nurses and others, were not on the sidelines but were in the thick of it). (Kipling. 2009. P:140)

Pickthall (1883-1922) was Canadian, despite being born in London. Some consider her to be the greatest Canadian poet of her generation, and this short poem is a moving religious take on the sacrifice made by thousands of men every week: 'With souls unpurged and steadfast breath / They supped the sacrament of death. / And for each one, far away, apart, / Seven swords have rent a woman's heart.' The poem should be better known outside of Canada because it is an interesting example of a "war poem" written during the First World War by a female civilian rather than a male combatant. (Kipling. 2009. P:145)

Clifford Dyment, 'The Son'.

Dyment (1914-1971), a literary alumni of Loughborough Grammar School, was born in the year WWI broke out and wrote this sonnet about his father, who died during the conflict when Dyment was still a child. The poem was inspired, ironically, by the discovery of his father's letters home to Clifford's mother, including the last letter he ever wrote to her about his request for leave being denied. The image of his luck being "at the bottom of the sea," which is used so effectively in this fine poem, was taken from his father's letter – an example of a poetic image taken from a private letter and used in a poem. (Kipling. 2009. P:155)

Philip Larkin, 'MCMXIV'.

In Roman numerals, the year 1914 is 'MCMXIV.' As literary critic Christopher Ricks points out, Larkin's choice to title his poem 'MCMXIV' rather than '1914' or 'Nineteen Fourteen' means we don't know how to pronounce the poem's title aloud: calling it '1914' is correct, of course, but fails to convey the Latin stylising of the date. Reciting the individual.

letters (or numerals) that make up the title, on the other hand, makes little sense. This is a title that demands to be read aloud: like the 'Latin names around the base' in another of Larkin's poems, 'Arundel Tomb,' 'MCMXIV' alludes to the lapidary inscriptions on tombs – or, indeed, on war memorials. (Kipling. 2009. P:165)

This poem tops our list of Larkin's best poems because it's a stunning and moving depiction of how WWI changed the world – not by focusing on mustard gas and machine-gun fire (Larkin, born in 1922, was obviously born after the end of WWI and was excused service in WWII on medical grounds), but by focusing on the changes wrought on the daily lives of families and communities. The poem's moving conclusion is built on a roll-call of everyday Edwardian details that Larkin believes have vanished in the aftermath of the First World War. (Kipling. 2009. P:170)

Wilfred Owen As A Soldier And Poet

Wilfred Edward Owen Soldier-English Poet. He was born on March 18, 1893 in Plas, Wilmot, Oswestry, Shropshire, in the home of his maternal grandfather, Edward Shaw. On June 11, 1900, Wilfred Owen joined Birkenhead Institute and remained there until 1907. In 1907, he began attending Shrewsbury Technical School as a day boy. In September 1911 he entered the University of London. From October 1911 to the summer of 1913, he was at Dunsden Vicarage, Oxfordshire as a student and indirect assistant to the Reverend Herbert Wigan. In August 1913 he was appointed English teacher at Berlitz Language School, Bordeaux. In July 1914, he left Berlitz School and became a teacher for two sons in a Catholic family in Bordeaux. In September 1915, he returned to England and served in the Manchester Regiment on October

22. On December 29, 1916, he sailed to France on active duty, attaching to the Lancashire Fusiliers. On March 19, 1917 he was sent to the thirteenth center to cleanse the victims. Owen returned to his battalion in early April. In May, he was returned to Injury Removal Center No. 13, and from there to 41 'fixed hospital'. In June he went to General Hospital No. 1, from which he was brought back to England, and arrived at Hospital of Wales, Netley, about 18 June. On June 26, 1917 he was transferred to Craiglockhart War Hospital, Edinburgh in November 1917 He was discharged from Craigluckhart: he was sent to the Northern Cavalry Barracks, Scarborough in August 1918 he returned to France for active duty and in October he was awarded the Military Cross, and on November 4, 1918, he was killed in one of the battles that attempted to transport his men through the Samper Canal (Louis, 1965. P:169).

A large number of Owen's war poems were written between 1917 and 1918, and this has probably made many critics describe him as an enigma. During Owen's life, only four of his poems were published, while his fame was posthumous. The originality and grandeur of the language of his poems, blending harsh realism with sensuality, and depictions of horror proved Owen to be a wonderful poet and his poetry mature too. It was not a gradual development that made his work mature, but a kind of revolution in the mind that enabled him to clearly recognize his subject: ―War and pity for war‖. This topic inspired Owen to write his poems that contributed to a fundamental change in citizens' attitudes toward war: not to think of war as anything but evil. There were various experiences and circumstances that influenced the development of Owen's talent for writing poetry. Apparently, the tour in the trenches during his military activities produced emotional and spiritual aspects. Owen was also an admirer of the English poet, Keats, who influenced his biblical poetry in a pseudo-Kitsanian manner. (Louis, 1965. P:168)

Owen's father was a man with an adventurous spirit, while his mother was brought up in a Calvinist religious doctrine, emphasizing the absolute power of God and the salvation of the elect only by God's grace, and a strict Victorian atmosphere. It was believed that this contradictory nature of his parents was behind the tensions between opposites that often create the poet and develop his mind. Moreover, the cultured atmosphere in Owen's House had a strong influence on the rapid development of his writings. During his military service, he would write letters to his family, showing his childish feelings for his mother, feeling responsible for his sister and younger brothers as if he were their father. Owen's sense of responsibility to his younger family members and to his widowed mother embodied how he felt as a soldier and a poet to his men and to all the soldiers on the front. While working in Dunsden for pennies, he made several rounds among the rural slums there and was strongly brought up on some facts of life: misery, disease and poverty. This experience must have sounded the bells in his mind, and it seems to have left a pragmatic impression that forced him to look into the real world. Thus, the enormous power of angry pathos in his war poems arose not only from the front, but also from a sense of social responsibility for the painful life circumstances associated with the Dunsdon’s people. (Louis, 1965. 187)

During this period, Owen suffered from secondary illnesses from which he became ill. He has stated in detail that he felt depressed about his future and had no definite conviction of what to do with his talent. When the war broke out, Owen was living in a rural community. At first, Owen opposed the war in a naive, violent, and deadly dangerous manner. He was hardly affected by the war and his firm belief was that war was a severe nuisance to private life. But after the first witness to the true case of a wounded soldier in the Bordeaux hospital, he told in a harsh and sharp tone the facts of the war. Then he joined the military, and an eye for the artist's gun. He plunged into a difficult and boring life while he was getting his training. Military expressions affected his language in terms of sharpness and hardness that mostly appeared in his writings. (Louis, 1965. P:197)

According to Kendall (2007), Owen used hair as a remedy. Psychologically, he aimed to forget the painful memories around which the poems themselves revolve. By repeatedly writing the same memories, he wanted to keep himself away from unholy impulses and free his mind from the worst record ever. Owen's war poetry resides 'in pity', referring

to pity, for friend and foe alike, at a point where the true experience must be overcoming any other kind of literary celebration, such as laurels,

heroism, and patriotism. He reinforced this view that the best war poetry is a mixture of bitterness and nostalgia as seen arising from the great disappointment of World War I. (Kendall. 2007. P:160)

Owen was an innovative poet; he inserted some new advanced methods and played with vocabulary in a way that make the reader indulge in the breast of the situation. Touch, for him, became the ground of both testimony and trauma. A month before his death, Wilfred Owen wrote to Siegfried Sassoon about his servant Jones, 'shot through the head, lay on top of me, soaking my shoulder, for half an hour". He goes on to elaborate: "Catalogue? Photograph? Can you photograph the crimson-hot iron as it cools from the smelting? This is what Jones's blood looked like, and felt like. My senses are charred. Owen here struggles with the paradoxical notion of sense experience: on the one hand, it is intensely private and stubbornly resists translation, and on the other hand, for it to be shared and communicated, it has to create a retrospective narrative. In order to evoke the judder of the moment, he has recourse here to certain literary devices: images, alliteration, and metaphor. (Kendall, 2007. P:168)

The first experience that happened to Owen with 'the actualities of war' was in a hospital in France. He wrote a letter to his brother Harold characterized by realism, pity and writing as testimony. At the same time, there was a full involvement of the body in pain formulated into child- like sketches or verbal witticism. However, the rich diversity in Owen's imagination, drawn back to Owen's pre-war letters were saturated with depictions of illness and pain. Owen's war poetry which widely attributed to the actualities of the trench life, in large, formed the 'modern memory' of the war. The vivid images of darkness, guns, mud, rain, gas, bullets, shells, barbed wire, rats, lice, cold, and trenches enriched the modern war poetry. (Kendall, 2007. P:178)

'Dulce et Decorum Est', is one of Owen's major poems. It was published posthumously in 1920. The title is an ironic allusion to a line taken from a Latin poem for the Roman poet Horace, "Dulce et Decorum Est Pro Patria Mori", which means it is sweet and fitting to die for one's country. Owen wrote the poem as a response to the patriotic poetess Jessie Pope whose recruiting poems encouraged many young men to fight in the futile war. Ironically, Owen referred to Jessie Pope in line 25 using the term 'My Friend', but how come to be a friend while her poetic works performed as an enemy toward the humankind. The poem is known as 'a gas poem' in which Owen employed both senses of experience and language in their extreme limits. Although the phrase 'gas poem' does not fully convey the aspects of poetic and thematic issues, the desperate moments during and after the gas attack weep through the whole lines of the poem. Bloom thinks that, "Owen's goal from such title is to attack the concept that sacrifice is sacred, and to destroy the glamorized decency of the war" (Bloom, 2002. P:154).

The Theme of War in The Poetry of Wilfred Owen

Although one of the most famous and well-known war poets, Wilfred Owen never made it past World War I. Born in a middle-class family in Oswestry, he was not the usual type of a man one finds among the English troops. Already as a child, he was more of an artistic spirit than a fighter and he began writing even before he enlisted, although with little success. When the war broke out, he was conflicted about it and wrote his thoughts to his mother: ―I can do no service to anybody by agitating for news or making dole over the slaughter. On the contrary I adopt the perfect English custom of dealing with an offender: a Frenchman duels with him; an Englishman ignores him‖. Finally, he enlisted but gave up on writing and dedicated himself to be the best solder he can. In 1917 he suffered from a very common disorder at the time – shellshock. (Bloom, 2002. P:176)

This lead to ―the most fortunate event of Owen‘s brief life‖ (Bloom, 2002. P:156). The hospital where he was recovering could be labelled as the starting point of his successful literary career. There he met Siegfried Sassoon, a fellow war poet, ―thus beginning an important and productive literary friendship‖ (Bloom, 2002. P:179). Sassoon helped him a lot, gave him the courage to keep writing and even mentored him by correcting his mistakes and expanding his vocabulary. This friendship was the push he needed to start writing again, and it connected the two poets in more ways than one:

Vivian de Sola Pinto, Sassoon‘s second-in-command, described how the civilian and military sides formed ―Two Nations‖. Sassoon later explained that ―the essence of my war poems was fellow feeling for the

troops, whose sufferings were so remote from the comprehension of many civiliansǁ; likewise, Owen returned to the front in 1918 ―in order to help these boys . . . indirectly, by watching their sufferings that I may speak of them as well as a pleader canǁ. (Krockel, 2011. P:148).

Dulce et Decorum Est

One of Owen's most famous poems is ―Dulce et Decorum Estǁ, which he wrote in an attempt to demonstrate ―the gap between the reality and fantasy of warǁ (Bloom, 2003. P:183). The soldiers in this literary work are described as being in constant agony: ―Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots,/But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;/Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hootsǁ (5-7). Considering all the dangers that a soldier could face in war, the loss of his boots does not seem so significant, but it was the worst kind of problem they faced. Because of the deep mud and water in the trenches, they often suffered from a disease called trench foot. The long exposure to water and mud caused the tissue on their feet to rot and fall off, making them more of a liability than a part of the battalion. Owen wanted to show how things that may seem trivial in peacetime often turned out to be of vital importance in war. It was a strategy to show how extremely the war changes our perception of reality, of what is important and how profoundly it changes people. The soldiers were also tired, blind, and even deaf from all the gunshots and explosions. As explained by Bloom, they did not fight ―in the hopes of achieving some noble aim, but rather simply toward some brief respite from physical exhaustionǁ (15). They just wanted to rest for a while or even try to sleep, but that is something they could rarely do. (Owen, 2018. P:67)

In the poem, Owen then famously displays one of the most gruesome scenes a man can witness:

Gas! GAS! Quick, boys!—An ecstasy of fumbling Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time, But someone still was yelling out and stumbling And flound‘ring like a man in fire or lime.— Dim through the misty panes and thick green light, As under a green sea, I saw him drowning. (9-14)

Gas! GAS! Quick, boys!—An ecstasy of fumbling Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time,

But someone still was yelling out and stumbling And flound‘ring like a man in fire or lime.—

Dim through the misty panes and thick green light,

As under a green sea, I saw him drowning. (Owen. 2018. P:294)

They were attacked with gas and most of them managed to put their gas mask on time, but one of them did not. The narrator then focuses the attention on this one soldier, ―flound‘ringǁ to put his gas mask on, but at the end ―drowningǁ in a ―green seaǁ. Owen is using words like

―guttering,ǁ ―choking,ǁ ―drowning,ǁ and ―gargling‖ to portray the agony as realistically as possible, but he is well aware that it is futile to try to imagine the anguish of this horrible death. (Clausson, 2006. P:276)

Insensibility

Another of Owen‘s famous poems is ―Insensibilityǁ, which depicts the psychological effects the war had on the soldiers. He suggests that they had to become numb and cold-blooded just to survive: ―Happy are men who yet before they are killed /Can let their veins run coldǁ (1-2). It was a state of mind they had to adopt to increase their chances of beating the enemy. Showing emotion meant weakness, and there was no room for weakness in the trenches. The two lines ―And some cease feeling /Even themselves or for themselvesǁ (12-13) indicate, that they stop caring about themselves, about whether they are going to die or not, but also become unable to feel at all or to come to terms with what they are feeling, and this should give them strength to continue fighting. Owen also claims that ―Happy are these who lose imaginationǁ (19), because imagination can also get a man killed, and it can make him miserable in his present situation. There is no fantasy or something unrealistic about war. It is the truest and most undeniable part of their lives, and no emotion nor imagination can change that. This is the long-term effect from which the soldiers suffered after the war. Without any feelings, there is small chance they could ever maintain a relationship or create a new one. (Magella, 2014. P:283).

Happy are men who yet before they are killed Can let their veins run cold.

Whom no compassion fleers Or makes their feet

Sore on the alleys cobbled with their brothers. The front line withers.

But they are troops who fade, not flowers, For poets‘ tearful fooling:

Men, gaps for filling:

Losses, who might have fought

Longer; but no one bothers. (Owen, 2018. P:327)

Owen also portrays soldiers as expendable, easy to replace, with the lines ―But they are troops who fade, not flowers, /For poets‘ tearful fooling: /Men, gaps for filling:‖ (7-9). The people who sent them to war view them as such, and Eagleton describes this perfectly: ―The final phrase of the verse – 'but no one bothers' – contrasts the unavoidable an aesthesia of those plunged in the thick of warfare with the rather more culpable insensitivity of those kicking their heels comfortably at home, not least perhaps the politicians who sent the soldiers there. Insensibility applies to both groups, but for quite different reasons‖. The politicians do not care if the soldiers lose their lives in the battle, and as already portrayed by Owen, neither do the soldiers themselves. The one group is safe at home, insensible to what is happening to millions of young men across the world, while the other group had to desensitize themselves to such an extent, that they lost all feelings and imagination in the process, just to survive. (Eagleton, 2007. P:378)

CONCLUSION

War poetry is a phenomenon that cannot and will not be repeated. These poets went through something that most people cannot even fathom, thus making it so unique. All of them partook in the same war and fought for the same country, and same ideals, yet every single one of them portrayed a different perspective of a soldier, or a whole new soldier character in general. Wilfred Owen explicitly writes about how gruesome and painful death can be, showing a soldier choking to death because of poisonous gas. The poet shows the readers the vulnerable mortality of those men. A rat, a poppy, even mud found on the bottom of trenches can be one's worst enemy. No one is safe out there, be it day or night, warm or cold, peaceful or in the line of fire. He comments on the authorities that have sent these young men to die, and also about how loneliness destroys their sanity. After the hell they have lived through, barely any one of them remained completely sane. The soldiers in his poems are men of flesh and blood; people who are vulnerable to bullets, abuse, and loneliness. To conclude, the Great War destroyed so much and killed so many, but it also inspired a new kind of poetry which, based on their personal experiences, war poets described and wrote about soldiers making them human and nearer to us than was ever before imagined.

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