



Dehumanization in the Poetry of WWI

نزع الإنسانية في شعر الحرب العالمية الأولى

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المخلص

تتناول هذه الدراسة موضوع نزع الإنسانية في شعر الحرب العالمية الأولى، مع التركيز على كيفية تصوير الشعراء للمعاناة الجسدية والنفسية للجنود. يحلل البحث قصائد مختارة لتوضيح كيف تُجرّد ظروف الحرب القاسية الأفراد من إنسانيتهم، مُختزلةً إياهم إلى مجرد أشياء أو آلات أو أشكال حيوانية. من خلال استخدام صور حية، ولغة قاسية، وبنية شعرية مُجزأة، ينقل الشعراء فقدان الهوية والعاطفة والقدرة على الفعل الشخصي الذي عانى منه الجنود في حرب الخنادق. تُركز الدراسة بشكل أساسي على أعمال ويلفريد أوين وسيغفريد ساسون، اللذين يُقدم شعرهما منظوراً نقدياً لحقائق الحرب ويتحدى المفاهيم التقليدية للشرف والبطولة. يُستخدم تحليل نصي نوعي لاستكشاف كيف تعكس التقنيات الأدبية السياقات الاجتماعية والسياسية الأوسع التي تُساهم في عملية نزع الإنسانية. مثل هذا الصراع أول احتكاك للبشرية بالصراع الآلي الحديث، مُدخلًا تكنولوجيا وتقنيات حوّلت ساحة المعركة إلى مشهدٍ من المجازر الصناعية. يُظهر التقييم المعروف أن مسعى أوين الشعري قد اتخذ منحىً أخلاقياً جوهرياً: التعبير عن واقع الصراع المعاصر لمن غُفلوا عنه، واستحضار الشفقة كسبيل نحو السلام، والحفاظ على كرامة أولئك الذين سُلبت إنسانيتهم بشكل ممنهج بفعل عتاد الحرب. تشير النتائج إلى أن شعر الحرب العالمية الأولى لا يوثق وحشية الحرب فحسب، بل يُعد أيضاً شكلاً من أشكال المقاومة ضد طمس الكرامة الإنسانية. فمن خلال إعطاء صوت لتجارب الجنود المكبوتة، تستعيد هذه القصائد إحساساً بالإنسانية وتكشف الثمن الباهظ للحرب.

الكلمات المفتاحية: نزع الإنسانية، شعر الحرب العالمية الأولى، حرب الخنادق، ويلفريد أوين، سيغفريد ساسون، أدب الحرب، الهوية، المعاناة الإنسانية.

Abstract

This study seeks to analyze the concept of dehumanization within World War I poems by exploring how the physical and psychological sufferings of the soldier have been depicted. The analysis of selected poems will highlight how the tough experiences of the war make people inhumane, stripping them of their emotions to transform them into objects, machines, and animals. In this regard, poets utilize graphic imagery and diction together with a fragmentary style to show the loss of individuality, emotions, and control suffered by the soldiers during trench wars. Major works analyzed in this study include poetry from authors like Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon, whose pieces provide an important view of the reality of war. In this respect, literary devices used in poetry are explored through qualitative text analysis of texts to see how societal and political factors lead to the loss of humanity in this period. This conclusion can be drawn that World War One poetry does not only capture the brutalities of war but is also a form of resistance against the stripping of humanity from the human beings of war.



Keywords: *Dehumanization, World War I poetry, trench warfare, Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, war literature, identity, human suffering.*

1. Introduction

While the occurrence of the First World War in August 1914 was initially seen as just a political crisis, it became a conscious shock for the West. The people involved in this fight were inspired by 19th-century ideas of dignity, development, and civilization – standards which, sadly, failed to help them see the true nature of warfare in modern society. The period of conflict which lasted from 1914 to 1918 produced an amazing amount of devastation; among others, there was heavy artillery that could annihilate a large body of people, lethal gases that caused people's horrific deaths, automatic weapons that could mow down men moving forward, and trenches that confined people to some sort of limbo state (Abrams, 1993: 1825).

Human losses have become enormous. Some ten million young men died in battles, while tens and thousands were maimed either bodily or mentally. A whole generation of young men had been wiped out, leaving behind individuals changed for good because of trauma and devastation. But there was yet another catastrophe hidden beneath statistics – the war had questioned many of humanity's assumptions concerning man's very essence, moral growth and civilization altogether. Young boys inspired with patriotism found themselves to be mere parts of great, ruthless military machines which denied all human qualities such as individuality, entrepreneurship, morals and, perhaps, even humanity (Ford, 1990: 203). Against this background of disillusionment, the poetry of the First World War emerged. Unlike previous poetry written about wars, which emphasized valor and patriotism, poems of Owen, Sassoon, Rosenberg and others showed brutalities of the modern war and its dehumanizing effect on humans. Poets wrote based on personal experiences because they saw first-hand the change that came over humans in modern warfare. The poetry of these writers is thus not artistic but rather moral testimony an attempt to voice some truths that were deliberately concealed by official narratives.

1.1. The strength of Owen's poetry

Wilfred Owen, however, holds a special position among these poets. Enlisted in 1915 after being born in 1893, Owen fought bravely on the Western front. The opinions he developed while in battle, experiencing conditions of dust, cold, consistent shelling, attacks with fuel, and the continuous reality of death, deeply affected his poetry. Suffering from shell wonder (now called post-traumatic stress disorder), Owen was admitted to Craig Lockhart War Hospital in 1917, and it was there that he met Siegfried Sassoon. It would be this meeting that led to the formation of Owen's poetry, which, under the influence of Siegfried, focused on reality rather than patriotic fantasy (Grierson & Smith, 1983: 497).

The strength of Owen's poetry lies in his ability to portray the dehumanizing machine of the war itself. Previously, Owen's poems were concerned merely with the description of physical pain, whereas in his later poetry, they became a depiction of the slow process of



dehumanization, deprivation of freedom and spirituality that occurred in the course of war. Employing new poetic devices like Pararhyme, fragmented imagery and irony of official documents becoming ridiculous in their implications, Owen succeeded in developing a vocabulary to describe the unspeakable horrors of what he witnessed. As the poet himself stated, "My subject is War, and the pity of War. The Poetry is in the pity" (Carter & McRae, 1998: 333). In this essay, I will argue that the theme of dehumanization is the most important one present in the battle poems by Owen. Dehumanization refers to a series of practices employed in modern wars that made human beings inhuman: reduction of soldiers to goods, alienation of the enemy from the human dimension, removal of ethics from action, as well as the destruction of the spiritual and psychological foundations of humanity. While in demonstrating the practice of dehumanization, his poems remain relevant, they also do not ignore the enduring relevance of human compassion and moral principles. This essay will focus on selected poems by Owen and discuss his poetics.

1.2. The Historical Warfare

The Transformation of Warfare and Human Experience. In order for us to appreciate the dehumanization effect of the First World War, especially in the poems of Owen, we need to have some knowledge about both the old and new aspects that characterize war. The First World War, which started in 1914, was basically unlike any other warfare before. Industrialization had revolutionized the generation of armies, generating weapons of unprecedented lethality and efficiency. Heavy artillery must bombard positions from miles away, obliterating fortifications and humans alike without direct engagement. Machine weapons, able to fire hundreds of rounds in a minute, transformed infantry assaults into suicidal endeavors. Poison gas, first deployed at Ypres in 1915, delivered a brand-new measurement of terror: death that became invisible, agonizing, and indiscriminate (Abrams, 1993: 1825-1826).

Perhaps most significantly, the war has become characterized by a stalemate. On the Western Front, opposing armies dug complicated trench structures stretching from the North Sea to Switzerland. These trenches, intended as transient protective positions, have become eternal habitats for tens of millions of soldiers. Life in the trenches became defined through squalor, risk, and intellectual strain. Soldiers persisted in constant publicity to dust, cold, and disorder; the ever-present threat of shelling, sniper fire, and gasoline assaults; and the demanding experience of witnessing comrades killed or maimed. The static nature of trench warfare meant that gains were measured in yards rather than miles, were achieved at tremendous human cost, and were frequently lost once more in subsequent counterattacks (Ford, 1990: 196).

These surroundings produced profound mental results. The term "shell shock" entered medical vocabulary to provide an explanation for signs and symptoms, including tension, tremors, nightmares, and emotional numbness—conditions now understood as manifestations of post-traumatic stress disorder. Soldiers' professional experience what psychologists may later call "moral harm": the psychological misery attributable to movements that violate one's moral ideals, or from witnessing atrocities that undermine



fundamental assumptions about human nature and ethical order (Carter & McRae, 1998: 331-332).

The home front has witnessed the war as well, but it has not undergone such trauma. Civilian life has been shielded from the immediate horrors of armed conflict, but the rationing, separation from loved ones, and mental anguish caused by sustained conflict have been experienced nonetheless. Propaganda by the government has been critical in sustaining public morale during the conflict, presenting the nature of combat as romantic and detached from the brutal reality of battle. The gap between the authoritative accounts and the reality of everyday life creates friction that is addressed by Owen's poetry: my art bears witness, tells me truths that I might never see at home. Grasping this timeless perspective makes clear the importance of Owen's poetic project. In truth, his poems are not about suffering but rather about the social, political, and technological forces that have created suffering. Through describing the dehumanization associated with modern warfare, Owen prompts the reader to recognize the cost of political machinations and to reevaluate the ideals that justify the mass killing of innocents. Therefore, Owen's poetry contains all the potentialities of every historical account and ethical intervention, carrying forward the witness of those whose humanity has been compromised.

2. The War Poets

2.1. Voice of a Lost Generation

Poetry written during the First World War took root within an awe-inspiring historical background, which featured the amalgamation of literary lifestyles and unique experiences. Poets serving in the trenches included Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, Isaac Rosenberg, Rupert Brooke, among others.

They were all products of Victorian and Edwardian education, grounded in classical literature, romantic poetry, and patriotism. They volunteered with genuine zeal due to their belief in the noble task of safeguarding civilization against aggression. Their initial poems frequently addressed those sentiments through conventional poetic structures and protracted diction, communicating patriotism. However, their participation in the actual combat brought about significant changes to their poetic, imaginative, and visionary capabilities. As Owen put it, the war compelled him "to find another way of speaking" (Ford, 1990: 203). It was impossible for the conventional poetic vocabulary of heroic deeds and glorious victories to communicate the reality of trench warfare, gas attacks, and mechanized carnage. The poets, therefore, had a dual task—to create new poetic forms that could communicate a profound appreciation of beauty, and articulate facts that would challenge the popular perception of the war. Such changes can be seen in the transformation of Owen's personal poetry. The poems composed prior to, and inspired by his experience during his preparatory military training, bear traces of Romanticism as well as the influence of the poems of poets like Keats and Tennyson, the use of rhyme scheme, rapid diction, splendor and transcendence. Nevertheless, following his review of the events on the Western Front, and upon meeting with Sassoon at Craig Lockhart, the poet transformed into a radically different writer; he developed an entirely new style involving



harsh images, disjointed syntax, irony, and Pararhyme, which involves rhyming sounds but produces dissonance in seeking concord (Grierson & Smith, 1983: 497). There were some issues and themes commonly addressed in the works of these poets that set them apart from any earlier literature about battles. Perhaps, one of the most important topics was the attack on patriotic rhetoric. The poems "Dulce et Decorum Est" by Owen and "The General" by Sassoon do not leave time to entertain the notion that death on behalf of one's nation is intrinsically or widely honorable.

Indeed, such a subject in the context of dehumanization reflects general philosophical and cultural trends that prevailed in the early twentieth century. The clash occurred in a time period when features associated with psychology, sociology, and philosophy questioned traditional perceptions about human nature, its reasonability, and moral advancement. Writers like Freud, Weber, and Nietzsche had been challenging the very concept of Enlightenment, which promoted the idea of human perfectibility and civilized development. Such a catastrophic form of violence was aimed at proving the skepticism of people regarding their perfectible nature because civilization is always on precarious grounds. Poetry about dehumanization by these poets can be seen as both a literary success and historic evidence because it represents not only the thoughts of poets but also captures the views of witnesses to human beings becoming machinery and suffering from industrialized forms of violence. In particular, paintings made by Owen can be regarded as an example of both features of conflict poets' literature because his poems represent well-crafted pieces of art, at the same time inspiring fear for the present era.

2.2. Wilfred Owen: Life, Trauma, and Poetic Evolution

The biography of Wilfred Owen cannot be dissociated from his poetic career. The poet was born in 1893 in Oswestry, Shropshire. From an early age, Owen manifested a gift for writing, inspired by the works of the Romantic poets, especially Keats. His aesthetic values were those of the Romantic period in literature until he discovered the poetry of French symbolists during his work as a trainer and linguistic student in France prior to the war, thus aspiring to enhance his unique style. Owen volunteered to serve in the British Army in October 1915 because of a variety of reasons, including patriotism, self-interest, and possibly the wish to escape domestic life. His initial experience in naval training and garrison duty did not give Owen sufficient preparation for actual combat operations. In January 1917, Owen was sent to the front with the Manchester Regiment in the West of France, where he tasted all the horrors of trench warfare: constant shelling, gas poisoning, filth, blood, and inevitable loss of lifestyle. By (May 1917), Owen started exhibiting symptoms of too much trauma, an ailment described then as "neurasthenia" or "shell marvel." He was then admitted to Craig Lockhart War Hospital in Edinburgh, where he had his first encounter with Siegfried Sassoon, who was well-known for his skills as a war poet. It seemed almost like divine providence at work. Sassoon talked about Owen's proficiency in poetry and urged him to express his hardships through poetic ingenuity. Through Sassoon's influence, Owen felt compelled to write poetry that conveyed the truth about war (Ford, 1990: 203; Grierson & Smith, 1983: 497).



The time gap between the discharge of Owen from Craig Lockhart in 1917 and his return to battle in 1918 was rather productive. Although suffering from persistent mental depression, he produced some of his most significant war poems at this time, namely "Strange Meeting," "Dulce et Decorum Est," "Futility," and "Anthem for Doomed Youth." They demonstrate remarkable resourcefulness and maturity with respect to both technical innovations and deep philosophical insights. Owen developed a particular approach to employing pararhymes, fragmented images, and irony to form a language for describing the unusual horrors experienced by him. Owen returned to the front lines in September 1918, just a week prior to the signing of the Armistice – he was killed in battle while leading his men through the Sambre-Oise Canal in France. He was twenty-five years old at that time. In his papers, his mother found a draft introduction intended for inclusion into the volume of his poems, which included his famous phrase: "This book is not about heroes. English poetry has not yet reached the pitch of patriotic fervor... My subject is War, and the pity of War. The Poetry is in the pity" (Carter & McRae, 1998: 333).

Such is an overview of Owen's poetic mission and ethical commitment. He refused the traditional celebration of heroic feats associated with the birthday in favor of the stress on pity as compassionate acknowledgment of pain because it represents the proper reaction to conflict situations. The objective of his poems is not to sanctify violence but to elicit an ethical reaction, to convey the truths which are hard to capture within the framework of legitimating narrative, and to remember those whose humanity is endangered by the conflict machine. Owen's legacy has been gradually growing since his death; he is now considered among the best poets who have ever described the horrors of the First World War. The poet's paintings remain relevant because they raise important questions concerning the human condition, ethical obligations, and price paid for violence. As the paintings document the process of dehumanization taking place within the scope of today's conflicts, the poet invites viewers to acknowledge the humanity of people involved in political processes and to reflect upon the values which allow for mass violence.

3. Dehumanization

3.1. As Central Theme in Owen's Poetry

The "Strange Meeting" is one of the most thought-provoking poems written by Owen about war, death, and human relations within the context of any form of fighting. It is described in the poem how the speaker finds himself meeting his own "strange buddy," who turns out to be a German soldier whom he has killed during the war. Far from hating and seeking revenge for his death, the deceased soldier discusses the humaneness of both parties involved, their loss of abilities, and the meaningless of the entire war. In the beginning of the poem, the atmosphere of a dream or nightmare is set, when the narrator states, "It seems I have passed through Hell to tell / Down some profound dull tunnel, long since scooped out by the reality" (Owen, lines 1-2).

The near rhyme created by the words "escaped" and "scooped" adds dissonance to the verse, mirroring the broken harmony of the world in war. The encounter with the useless



soldier becomes a conversation that goes beyond national and ideological lines. Rather than mentioning anything about military grandeur or patriotism, the foreigner describes something more about waste: "I mean the truth untold, / The pity of struggle, the pity conflict distilled" (Owen, strains 25-26). Such a statement is reflective of the underlying ethics of Owen: the need to respond not to the struggle in anger or revenge but through pity. At the end of the poem, there appears a call for sleep: "Let us sleep now..." (Owen, line forty-four). Such an ending represents both death and awakening, offering new chances to reflect. Through his depiction of the possibility of reconciliation in hell, Owen offers judgment on the ideologies that cause human struggle in our world. In other words, the poet makes it clear how costly human solidarity continues to be.

3.2. The Horror of Mechanized Death

Owen's ultimate assault on the language of patriotism and romanization of battle. The speaker of the poem gets his identity from the Roman poet Horace, "Dulce et decorum est.. seasoned patria mori," meaning "It is good and fitting to die for your country." In an undefined period ahead of the poem, whose action depicts a dying that was painful because of being caused by gas poisoning, his identity will function satirically. It starts by establishing the physical weariness and debasement of the front-line squaddies: "Bent double, like vintage beggars beneath sacks, / Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge" (Owen, strains 1-2). His imagery works in opposition to conventional depictions of soldiers as perfect heroes, depicting them as broken, elderly, and stripped of any humanity by the realities of trench warfare. The poem's essential passage describes a fuel assault: "Gas! Gas! Swift, boys! An ecstasy of fumbling, / Fitting the ungainly helmets truly in time" (Owen, strains 9-10).

"Ecstasy" is used here as a term signifying not happiness but rather frantic actions driven by fear; it reflects the disorientation associated with unexpected danger. The passage about the soldier who failed to put on the helmet is especially photo:

"He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning" (Owen, line 16).

These three participles make up the image of continuous and inevitable suffering, forcing the reader to experience the pain of losing someone with the help of poisonous fuel resources. The final stanza of the poem written right now refers to those who spread the false idea about the necessity to fight for the sake of the motherland:

"My friend, you would now not inform with such immoderate zest / To youngsters ardent for some decided glory, / The antique Lie: Dulce et decorum est / Pro patria mori" (Owen, strains 25-28).

It criticizes the rhetorical abilities used both as an individual experience and as a political tool. With the help of this poem, the reader can clearly comprehend the difference between propaganda and the reality of war, between ideas and physical suffering. "Dulce et Decorum Est" shows us the way in which the dehumanizing logic of war is established. It illustrates how patriotic rhetoric leads to depersonalization of people and turning them



into symbols. Using the example of the metaphorical fuel, the poet makes his reader understand what people become in professional descriptions of violence.

3.3. Cosmic Indifference and Human Fragility

The poem "Futility" gives an additional philosophical reflection concerning absence of life, loss, and the evident pointlessness of war. The poet writes about soldiers who try to bring their friend back to life by making his corpse lie under the sun rays—a helpless attempt that leads to other questions regarding creation, origin, and indifferent cosmos. The opening images create the main action of the poem:

"Move him into the sunlight— / Gently its touch had wakened him once, / At dawn, mouthfuls of lark and meadow unsown" (Owen, strains 1-3).

It is worth noting the softness and tenderness of the description, which contrast sharply with the harsh reality of struggle. It is obvious that there is a contradiction between natural processes and the absence of life and unnatural death created by people during wars. Noticing that even sun rays cannot help to cure the dead man, the narrator's mood changes from hope to despair :

"Was it for this the clay grew tall? / O what made fatuous sunbeams toil / To break earth's sleep at any rate?" (Owen, strains 12-14) .

These verses contain biblical symbols of creation ("the clay") while wondering about the causes of life in such a cruel world. The word "fatuous" conveys something more than just foolishness; the sun's vital energy seems to be fatuous when considering how warfare can lead to the taking of life. "Futility" is a poem that reveals dehumanization in many ways. At one level, the poem describes an individual who was dismissed into a ridiculous framework deprived of attention, commerce, and dignity. But at another level, it challenges the grand frameworks religious, philosophical, cosmic – which can lend meaning to life and death. Through the contrast of the sun's ability to create and war's ability to destroy, the speaker illustrates the indifference of the universe.

However, the life of this very poem itself is a form of witnessing the moral implications of the situation. Through voicing one's pain, one's outrage, and one's existential questions, Owen acknowledges the costs of human consciousness and human morality. The poem, therefore, does not attempt to provide an idealized comfort or transcendence; instead, it encourages an honest and compassionate engagement with struggles and tragedies. Such is Owen's conviction that "the pity of war is proper to poetry.

3.4. Ritual Denied, Dignity Stripped

The "Anthem for Doomed Youth" focuses on the denial of standard burial rights to the squaddies fallen in warfare, focusing on how struggle robs people of the privilege and glory associated with death in civilian society. The title is used satirically, because an "anthem" generally implies either triumph or reverence, whereas Owen's poem grieves



over the useless loss of youthful life with no right to mourn. The query opens the poem by setting up its primary scenario :

"What passing-bells for individuals who die like cattle?" (Owen, line 1).

Through the use of simile, the infantrymen are referred to as cattle, indicating how much of disposable property they were regarded as. The contrast between the normal funeral ceremonies (*"passing-bells," "orisons," "choirs"*) and the sounds of battle (*"the booming anger of the guns," "the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle"*) demonstrates the dehumanizing character of contemporary warfare (Owen, strains 2-4). The second stanza provides attention to the dwelling at the back side, focusing on the feelings of the ones who had been left behind:

"What candles may very well be held to light them all? / Not within the palms of boys, however of their eyes / Shall shine the holy glimmers of goodbye" (Owen, strains 9/eleven).

The images above reveal how comfort based on tradition but not secularism has been redefined through the silent suffering of those who love, with their mourning becoming the only memory of their lost loved ones. The last verses illustrate the enduring impact of this tragedy: "And each slow dusk a drawing down of blinds" (Owen, line 14). The image of mourning at home juxtaposed with violent death mentioned in the introduction indicates the profound influence of war not only in the battlefield but even at homes and in businesses for many years after. By means of irony, contrasting images, and denial of ritual comforts, Anthem for Doomed Youth reveals how war robs every home and the vain of their humanity.

3.5. Nature's Rejection of War

In works such as "Spring Offensive" and "Miners," Owen examines how violence is linked with the environment. In particular, he suggests that violence is fundamentally opposed to the cosmic order and human dignity.

"Spring Offensive" describes infantrymen preparing for an attack during a glorious spring, in which there are great contrasts between the harmony of the environment and the horrors of war. At the beginning of this poem, the author gives pictures of pastoral tranquility:

"So, speedy they crowned the hill, and raced collectively/Over an open stretch of herb and heather" (Owen, traces 20-21).

This peaceful image adds to the brutality of events that will occur later and helps demonstrate that war violates all aspects of nature. When the attack starts, even nature shuns human violence:

"And proper away the whole sky burned/With fury towards them; earth set surprising cups/In lots for his or her blood" (Owen, traces 32-34).

Such anthropomorphic description proves that war opposes cosmic order. In the end of the poem, the author provides ambivalent images of heavenly judgement:



"Some say God stuck them even earlier than they fell"

(Owen, line forty-five),

leaving open the debate on whether dying in wars is an act of punishment, mercy, or empty threat. "Miners" makes comparisons between deaths of coal miners and soldiers in terms of how both groups die, indicating that every firm suffers as a consequence of social indifference and exploitation. The poem gives life to coal, claiming that coal has been made out of "ferns and forests that had been smothered and changed to gas for men's business" (Owen, traces three-fourths). From such description, one can infer that just like human beings, nature was being exploited as well, with both being treated as means of production and consumption:

"But they may not dream humans' terrible lads / Left within the ground" (Owen, strains 17-18).

The proclamation talks about the demoralized sentiment of expendability of the good folks even as others enjoy the outcome of cessation in their endeavors. Through the interlinking of the fate of the miners and the soldiers, Owen is able to shed light on the social and economic mechanisms at work that lead to dehumanization. It is through such poetry that Owen takes the dehumanization from its literal meaning of being in the battlefield to become something that applies to other aspects of life.

4. Poetic Techniques

4.1. Expression of Dehumanization

The specific use of para-rhyme by Owen is among the key technical inventions of this author. While other forms of rhyme provide harmony and resolution, para-rhyme uses consonance and vowel dissonance to give the effect of tension and dissonance. For example, in the poem *Strange Meeting*, rhyme combinations such as "*escaped/scooped*," "*groined/groaned*" and "*years/yours*" reflect the feelings of disruption that reflect the thematic concerns of fragmentation of identity and moral uncertainty in the poem (Grierson & Smith, 1983: 497).

It operates on two levels. First, phonologically, para-rhyme makes sounds that create disturbance and prevent the reader from having the comfort and closure that rhyme usually provides. Second, thematically, it represents the attempt to explore the themes of limited understanding, unresolved conflicts and challenges to represent painful experiences. Ethically, it forces the reader to face the pain rather than finding solace.

4.2. Imagery of Fragmentation and Decay

Imagery in Owen's poetry consists of images that focus on fragmentation, decomposition, and bodily mutilation. Soldiers are described as "*antique beggars*," "*hags*," and "*cattle*"; the body becomes "*guttering, choking, drowning*"; and the landscape is transformed into a hellish world of filth, gore, and ruins. Such imagery achieves several purposes at once. First, it captures the image of corporeal existence of people under



modern warfare conditions. Second, it defies any idealization of the phenomenon of war. Third, it discloses the mechanisms of degradation of humans. Of special importance in Owen's poetry are sensual images, through which one gets an impression of immediacy of a shocking discovery. The sound of "stuttering rifles' rapid rattle," the scent of "the white eyes writhing in his face," the touch of "the blood / Come gargling from the foam-corrupted lungs" force readers to experience the reality of violence, which cannot be justified by anything else (Owen, "Dulce et Decorum Est," traces four, 19-20).

4.3. Irony and the Subversion of Patriotic Discourse

Ironic techniques play a significant role in the poems of Owen, since he uses them in order to criticize nationalistic rhetoric and, at the same time, promote opportunities ethics. "Anthem for Doomed Youth" and "Dulce et Decorum Est" can be referred to as examples of ironic titles, since they use conventional types of poems best suited for ironic purposes. In a similar fashion, the poet makes use of literary references that have biblical and classic roots; however, the goal is not proving transcendental significance but rather drawing attention to the gap between spiritualism and historical reality. Irony has both ethical and aesthetic roles, as its use enables the poet to criticize legitimacies that support violence and cruelty.

As Owen holds the role of utmost significance, the poetry of battle is further enriched by placing his work side by side with other works of poets from his era. Siegfried Sassoon, Owen's teacher at Craig Lockhart, held the same values for a true representation of warfare; yet, he chose to employ satire and sarcasm in his works. Works such as "The General" and "They" make use of ironic and inflammatory language to comment on naval commandship and the rhetoric of patriotism, which enhances the meditation employed by Owen in his poems. Isaac Rosenberg, who is another prominent figure in the field of battle poetry, offers a distinct point of view that is influenced by his Jewish identity and historical walk.

This type of poetry includes Rupert Brooke, who offers an early stage of conflict poetry marked through the asset of patriotic idealism and a romantic view of warfare. The sonnet "The Soldier" (If I should die, think best of this of me...) gives an example of the pre-conflict mentality that Owen along with others could risk. Comparing Brooke's poetry with that of Owen makes obvious the deep change in poetry imagination and vision caused via experience of modern warfare. Through comparing the visions, one can notice not only individual traits in Owen's accomplishment but also the cultural importance of war poetry as a genre. As a whole, these poets gave birth to a certain literary tradition that contradicted prevailing ideologies, described unparalleled suffering, and showed respect for human values and conscience.

5. Results and Discussions

5.1. Themes in Modern Literature

The work done by Owen regarding the theme of dehumanization during war is one that has left an indelible impact on future literary portrayals of war. This is due to the themes



highlighted in Owen's work, such as the importance of psychological injury, moral ambivalence, and the criticism of patriotic speech, which would go on to become common aspects of other war literatures in the coming years.

In addition to the distinctively ancient context of the poem, Owens' poetics are relevant in regard to contemporary debates around violence, trauma, and human dignity. The focus on truthfulness of illustration, compassionate witnessing, and ethics provide valuable resources for addressing contemporary moral challenges connected to modern warfare and other forms of systematic violence. In addition, the technical devices utilized by Owen – parathyme, fragmentation, and irony – have contributed to modernist and postmodernist trends in English poetry. The example of Owen has shown how aesthetic experiments could be used for moral purposes, prompting the following generations of poets to investigate this relationship. It is known that World War I influenced the development of the Anglo-American Modernists. Rupert Brooke captured the idealistic atmosphere of the beginning of the war in his poems before he died on duty; Siegfried Sassoon and Ivor Gurney described growing feelings of anger and futility as the war progressed; and Isaac Rosenberg, who was one of the most innovative among war poets together with Wilfred Owen and Edmund Blunden, illustrated not only the brotherhood of the trenches, but also moral problems raised by war.

5.2. Poetry

Wilfred Owen is one of the best-known poets who dedicated their life to describing the harsh reality of the First World War in their poetry works. Being born in Ouwelty, England in 1893, Wilfred Owen died a short but tragic death on the battlefield just one week before signing the Armistice in 1918. Despite the fact that he lived a short life, his contribution to poetry still cannot be overlooked due to his great mastery of imagery and symbolism used in his poems. This paper will focus on analyzing the background of Wilfred Owen's poetry in order to examine the deeper layers of the imagery and symbolism used in his works. The main subject matter in this research paper concerns analyzing the poetic background of Owen by means of examining certain poems written by Owen such as "Dulce et Decorum Est," "Anthem for Doomed Youth" and "Strange Meeting" in order to identify the symbolic and imagery elements in Owens' poetic style. Wilfred Owens is a poet who worked during the First World War that was one of the most important events in the life of people and humanity. The violence and savagery of trench warfare, attacks using gas and cruelty of the war itself served as the material basis for Owens' works in poetry. In Owens' works, images and symbols get their brightest interpretation. Poetry written by Owens can be considered to be a deep reaction on feelings of disappointment and tragedy in which Owens participated while taking part in a war. This effect produced by Owens is based upon creating the psychological picture of trauma that is caused by horror of war.

6. Conclusion

In this respect, Wilfred Owen's poetry becomes a powerful contemplation about the implications of the dehumanization brought about by modern warfare. In his detailed



account of physical torment, psychological agony, and ethical uncertainty, Owen highlights the prominent philosophies behind the perpetuation of violence and thus makes it possible to understand better the complexities involved in comprehending these experiences' human dimensions. His innovative stylistic elements like pararhyme, fragmentation, and irony create a form of literary expression that allows one to experience true pleasure without stripping it of the humane and ethical essence. The fundamental idea of Owen that "the pity of war" is what should be a proper preoccupation of poetry remains highly pertinent today. Through his revision of the term to mean an ethical insight into our mutual vulnerability, Owen creates possibilities for moral action even when it is subjected to deliberate dehumanization.

Within a generation characterized by constant struggles, innovations in military technologies, and endless justification through ideologies of the need for violent conflict, there is much that can be learned about a basic contemplation from the work of Owen. His emphasis on clear representation, understanding of the human spirit, and the need for moral responsibility will ensure that his audience is forced to contemplate the cost of political decisions and the ideologies used to justify mass murder. Through the work of Owen, one can learn more about the ways in which modern warfare strips people of their humanity and freedom, thereby confirming the inherent worth of all human beings and the importance of building societies that nurture human capabilities rather than erode them.

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