Prvi svjetski rat u engleskoj poeziji

Bobošević, Marija

Sveučilište Jurja Dobrile u Puli
Filozofski fakultet

Marija Bobošević

THE FIRST WORLD WAR IN ENGLISH POETRY

Završni rad

Pula, rujan 2022.

Sveučilište Jurja Dobrile u Puli
Filozofski fakultet

MARIJA BOBOŠEVIĆ

THE FIRST WORLD WAR IN ENGLISH POETRY

ZAVRŠNI RAD

JMBAG: 0303090226 , redoviti student

Studijski smjer: Preddiplomski dvopredmetni sveučilišni studij; Engleski jezik i književnost;

Preddiplomski dvopredmetni sveučilišni studij; Talijanski jezik i književnost

Predmet: Moderna britanska književnost

Znanstveno područje: Humanističke znanosti

Znanstveno polje: Filologija

Znanstvena grana: Anglistika

Mentor: izv.prof. dr. sc. Igor Grbić

Pula, rujan 2022.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

Warfare has been present since the beginning of time, embedded in human nature. The ancient world of the Romans and Greeks, where warriors were honoured and awarded immortal glory for fighting and dying for their homeland, symbolizes its antiquity. Equal perception of the war could be seen during the beginning of the First World War, when men and women, joining the same path, voluntarily enlisted in military service. The government used women to persuade men to join the British army. There is certainly something ironic about the fact that a nation built on a strong patriotic foundation, stringed with the masculine superiority complex, had to turn to a mere housewife to amplify its military involvement. Not long after the war began, the illusion of glory and honour revealed its expiration date. On one side was the no man's land and on the other side stood the struggling soldier. The continual bloodshed resulted in mass destruction, which in turn resulted in horrific alienation and dehumanization. Shattered by the invention of the advanced weapon systems, killing millions and wounding many. The ones who survived were scarred for their life, having to deal with trauma and multiple issues related to mental illnesses. The literary production changed and greatly reflected the results of accumulative changes that happened during that period. Led by horrific testimonies and an abundance of emotions many turned to writing. Poetry became a tool for the mass media, and an artistic device for revealing the truth with the use of words. It allowed poets to communicate their deepest thoughts, emotions, and memories of the war onto a sheet of paper. Amongst the most notable ones were Wilfred Owen, Isaac Rosenberg, Ivor Gurney, Rupert Brooke, Siegfried Sassoon, and Charles Hamilton Sorley. Due to the written testimonies of these fabulous poets, we can closely analyze the aftermath of World War One and the influence it left on the literature, the people and history. These testimonies show how different the modern world is from the one carved out by pens, genuineness, and the experience of war poets. The War did leave many dead, but not necessarily silent.

2. Historical background

The Great War was the first major war in which most of the world participated – hence defining it as a significant turning point in the course of history. There was a mass production of modernized weapons, newly established warfare, and the recent discoveries attributed to the birth of a new era in the history of humankind left many consequences. It was a war that penetrated almost every part of the world, devouring each corner and leaving behind nothing else but mass destruction. Michael Howard, the author of *The First World War: A Very Short Introduction*, argued that the Great War can rightfully be defined as a global war since it was fought on all the globe's oceans and ultimately featured belligerents from every continent (Howard 2007: 1). During the year 1914, an event that took place on June 28th in Sarajevo, the capital city of Bosnia and Herzegovina, quickly disrupted *la belle époque*. On that memorable day, a 19-year-old Gavrilo Princip killed Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the next in line to ascend to the Austro-Hungarian throne, and his wife Sophie. The killer, Princip, was a South Slav nationalist and a member of a secret terrorist group called The Black Hand society. This incident 'finally ignited the flames of war in Europe' (Simkins 2003: 55). There were two major alliances that fought in World War One - the Allied Powers and the Central Powers. The Allies consisted of France, Great Britain, Russian Empire, Italy, Japan, and the United States (which joined late in 1917 after being neutral for most of the war), and the Central Powers consisted of the German Empire, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire and the Kingdom of Bulgaria. It is hard to comprehend that one man's death can spark a worldwide conflict. In addition to that, many other factors can be credited as causes of the conflict. Germany was at the core of the Great War, so it was no surprise when it attacked France in 1914, causing Great Britain to join the war (Edwards 2005: 20). As more allies joined in, the need for the expansion of military units became greater. The government turned to mass media to help recruit new members. According to David Welch, the mass media played a significant role in transmitting news from the battlefield to the civilian population. It was also used to target the general population with systematically manufactured wartime propaganda. The propagating doctrine was transmitted in numerous ways – from pamphlets,

posters, and recruitment campaigns to poetry. War influenced poetry, which internalized the conflict, and served as a role model for the general population (Longley 2005: 57). Since the army was made up of professionals and volunteers, as David Welch points out in his article, the government had to rely on propaganda to recruit new members, additionally using it as an excuse for promoting the war and proposing sacrifice for the nation, as an act of nobility and heroism. Ian Cooke highlights the fact that both Great Britain and the German Empire used this tactic to lure in as many recruits as they could. Bombarding the people with nationalistic and patriotic messages such as: 'Your Country Needs YOU' or 'Daddy, what did YOU do in the Great War?'. The emotional blackmail, as Welch calls it, was imposed on men using innocent children and women as a sort of a poster child for their propagandist organization. They used women as a metaphor for the nation of high morals and great traditional values.

> The government and the wider culture acknowledged women's importance to the war in many ways. The recruitment campaign that led to slogans such as "Women of England Say Go" not only spoke for women but also directly addressed them. Women were asked to put pressure on the men in their lives to enlist. (Buck 2005: 90)

The stories of masculine camaraderie and bravery in war played a significant role in fostering national unity and pride, depicting the soldier as a heroic victim of government action, which brought protest and patriotism dangerously close to one another (Buck 2005: 93-94). Quickly, many became aware of the fact that the war was anything but glorious. The sudden realistic revelation influenced the pro-war literature to lose its luster. Paul Keegan and Matthew Hollis pointed out this shift in their anthology: 'The patriotic imperative "Dulce et Decorum Est" became "that [sic] old lie," and… our sense of "a war poet" was transformed' (Keegan, Hollis qtd. in Longley 2005: 57). As Vincent Sherry pointed out, Brooke and his colleagues' high-gloss, the arcadian surface had lost its lustre and credibility. A new norm arose around the strong models of (the latter) Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen, whose discordant tones highlighted a harsh realism lyric (Sherry 2005: 7). By the end of World War One, a new order took down, and swept away the old dominance. F. T. Marinetti, an Italian author, and the writer of the well-known manifesto titled *Manifesto of Futurism* of 1909 recognized this new order

created by the war as a process of purification of the world (Perloff 2005: 144). Thirty-eight million people died as a result of the War. Twenty-one million people were wounded, and around eight million people were killed. It was the first time that humanity had a complete understanding of its terrible and destructive potential. As a post-product, the war brought together powerful political forces. For a long time, communism had been lurking in the shadows, but the Bolsheviks' victory in Russia would spread its influence all over the globe for the remainder of the century. The ugliness of fascism arose from the war's aftermath: a pernicious mix of racism, nationalism, and right-wing orthodoxy, all nourished by the terrible post-war social and economic conditions that left millions seeking easy solutions to impossible questions. The war had also provided a perfect breeding ground for a new pandemic, the influenza virus known as the Spanish flu, which raced across the globe, killing millions of people, and surpassing even wartime devastation (Hart 2013: 19).

3. Analysis of Wilfred Owen's poetry

Harold Bloom mentions Wilfred Owen as one of Britain's best poets and perhaps the main representative of war poetry (Bloom 2002: 11). Born in 1893 and brought up in Birkenhead and Shrewsbury 'Wilfred Owen had the most concentratedly Christian upbringing of all notable English-speaking poets of the Great War. (Stallworthy and Potter 2011: 43). Owen became an assistant to the Vicar of Dunsden in 1911 in exchange for free tuition with the hopes of earning an Oxford scholarship. It was a very crucial period for Owen, where his interest in poetry widely developed. With the interest in poetry he also developed and expanded his fascination with religion (Bloom 2002: 11). Even if Owen found religion interesting, it did not play a key role in his life, or his poems. In his works of 1912-17, he rarely mentioned the name of God (Stallworthy and Potter 2011: 44-45). Nevertheless, the letters and poems he wrote at the time did show a sense of awareness of the difficult state of the poor, filled with compassion and emotion very prominent in his later poems about the Western Front (Stallworthy 2013: 156). Before the war broke out, he worked as a teacher in France, resulting in him becoming a Francophile (Bloom 2002: 11). Under the influence of Laurent Tailhade, a French pacifist, Owen's first reaction to the outbreak of war seemed uncertain (Bloom 2002: 11). As a war poet, he gained interest in other wartime works such as Rupert Brooke's *1914*, but it could hardly be attributed as the reason Owen decided to shoulder a rifle in 1915, as he didn't share the same patriotism ideals as Brooke or Gurney (Stallworthy and Potter 2011: 35). In December of the same year, he was appointed to participate in the Battle of the Somme, perhaps one of the bloodiest battles of the war, known for its use of chemical warfare. During his service on the field, Owen fell into a shell-hole and stayed trapped there for a few days. This experience left Owen with visible trauma, after which, in 1917, he was diagnosed with a case of neurasthenia (shell shock) and was sent back to his homeland to get treated. The return resulted in Owen encountering another war-shocked poet that left a profound impression on him, Siegfried Sassoon, 'beginning an important and productive literary friendship' (Bloom 2002: 12).

While experimenting with literary styles, he began producing naturalistic poems on the horrors of war. Unlike Brooke, Wilfred Owen shatters the idea of the nobility of battle by criticizing it and exposing its true nature. It gives us a new

definition of ‘war poetry’ marked by aesthetic-ethical language, dialectical ‘pity’ and political agency, where Owen proclaims that ‘the central subject is not poetry, but war and the pity of war’, hence many labelling Owen as a ‘pitiful poet’ (Longley 2005: 71). Contrary to such opinions, Owen's poetry is anything but pitiful, it is strong and direct, giving such gruesome, forceful, and realistic pictures of something truly horrendous while using the language of divinity and musicality. Edna Longley presents Owen's religious orientation as the fundamental difference between him and Sassoon, affirming the Bible reading, redemption through Christ's sacrifice, emotional commitment, proclaiming the gospel in plain language, and practical ethics as an exemplar of the evangelical tradition.

> Although he had rejected Christianity (“murdered my false creed”), his war poems take place on a cosmic stage between earth and heaven, heaven and hell, body and soul, death and life. (Longley 2005: 69)

Dulce et Decorum Est is Owen's most famous poem. The title comes from a phrase in Latin: ‘Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori’. The phrase was written by the renowned Roman poet Horace in his *Odes*, meaning ‘It is sweet and fitting to die for one's country’, later followed by the final stanza in which he vows ‘pro patria mori’, i.e. ‘to die for the homeland’. This Latin phrase insists it is good to sacrifice oneself and die for the sake of one’s country. Owen deliberately attacked the pro-war patriotic ideology. Bloom explains Owen's action as his hope to demolish the romanticized decency of the war. The poem, written in *iambic pentameter*, begins with the soldiers on the battlefield, comparing them to beggars because of their worn-out appearance: ‘Bent double, like old beggars under sacks, / Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge’ (ll. 1-2). The reader can identify the person narrating the story as one of the soldiers, because of the personal pronoun ‘we’ used in the second line. Owen aptly describes the image of dead soldiers that haunt the comrades: ‘In all my dreams before my helpless sight/ He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.’ (ll. 15-16). Men who are exhausted, filthy, and bleeding are abruptly informed about a toxic gas: ‘Gas! GAS! Quick, boys!’ (l. 9). In his article titled ‘How deadly was the poison gas of WW1?’, Marek Pruszewicz explores the question of whether Owen's firsthand military encounters could have been incorporated into the

realistic depiction of the gas attack. According to Pruszewicz, there is no proof in Owen's letters from the front of his regiment's war record, that he was subjected to such gas attack before authoring the poem. Owen draws a line to the biblical motif of Lucifer as the face of death.

His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues (ll. 20-24)

The poem ends on a bitter note, with a critique of those that glorify the war: 'My friend, you would not tell with such high zest.' (l. 25). The juxtaposition between this dream-like atmosphere and the violent, graphic pictures and sounds of death, allows Owen to emphasize the difference between war's reality and fantasy (Bloom 2002: 16), demonstrating it as a deceitful belief: 'The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.' (l. 28). Longley compares Owen to Marx and Freud saying: 'Owen's dialectical 'pity', his doubling of victim and oppressor, friend and enemy, speaker and implied audience, belongs to the sphere of Marx as well as Freud' (Longley 2005: 71). Owen plays with the individual, the fictive 'self' and the lyric 'I' (Longley 2005. 67).

The poem *Apologia Pro Poemate Meo*, meaning 'in defence of my poetry', exhibits the use of pronouns to highlight how and why 'I', the mediating poet, attempts to put you in 'their' shoes (Longley 2005: 71). To create the desired contrast, Owen uses positive words such as 'laugh', 'smiled', 'merry', combining colourful language with war's suffering and uplifting feelings above the battle's presence. He mentions God's name in the first line of the poem: 'I, too, saw God through mud' (l. 1). Owen did not practice religion, but he wrote about it in a few of his poems. *Le Christianisme*, one of Owen's shortest poems, written ironically, talks about soldiers from both parties that believed in their victory because God is on their side. He describes these faithful soldiers as 'virgins' because they have yet to see the true harm of war. This faith diminishes at the exact moment they enter the battlefield: 'But a piece of hell will batter her.' (l. 8) – maybe even reflecting Owen's loss of faith. 'Strange Meeting' is another poem with similar

biblical motifs: ‘By his dead smile, I knew we stood in Hell’ (l. 10). Longley explains:

> His humanized Christ is finally neither crucified soldier nor self-crucifying poet but the actively redemptive spirit, posited in “Strange Meeting,“ that “would wash“ the wounds of history “from sweet wells.“ Owen not only indicts the politics of Old Testament patriarchy; he rewrites the New Testament. (Longley 2005: 71)

According to Bloom, *Futility* is one of Owen's best poems about the aftermath of war, where Owen concentrated on the emotional reaction to mortality and the attempt to comprehend its meaning rather than the mention of war. This poem, containing the usual elegiac characteristics, is also a representation of how far Owen's poetic technique developed – simple diction, melody of vowels, strong consonant clusters, and regular rhyme (Bloom 2002: 53). The poem begins with calmness but is quickly converted to discomfort in the second stanza. The Sun is interpreted as the light that gives life to seeds and crops. Having said that, the poet portrays his lack of faith in nature in his denial of the elegy's conventions (Bloom 2002: 53). At the end of the poem, the poet states it would have been better if the soldiers were not born in the first place. At least then they would not endure such suffering.

4. Analysis of Isaac Rosenberg's poetry

According to The War Poets Association, Isaac Rosenberg was a prominent member of the society, while his works had a profound impact on poetry and have been featured in all notable war anthologies (qtd. from the online source The War Poets Association). Rosenberg is arguably the least known of all the main war poets, even though his place in the English literary canon has been strongly argued for by experts like Jon Silkin and Joseph Cohen (Bloom 2002: 64). Isaac Rosenberg was born in 1890, in a humble family of Latvian and Lithuanian roots. During his childhood, his family had to emigrate from Russia after his father evaded conscription. When he was fourteen years old, Rosenberg started to develop an interest in a variety of English and American authors (Bloom 2002: 63). Bernard Bergonzi identifies the qualities that primarily set Rosenberg apart from other war poets, specifically his working-class and Jewish background, as well as his adventurous approach to language. His creative spirit went beyond only writing. The fact that he was not only a writer but also a painter, distinguished him from other poets of the era. Three wealthy Jews sponsored Rosenberg to attend the Slade School of Fine Arts, where he won several awards for his paintings and even had some of them displayed at the Whitechapel Gallery (Stallworthy 2005: 280). After finishing his studies at the Slade School, Rosenberg enrolled at Birkbeck College in Chancery Lane's Art School. In his lecture, Steven Connor agreed that, without a doubt, Birkbeck helped the seventeen-year-old Rosenberg realize his potential and narrow his goals (Connor, qtd. in Birkbeck College's Mechanics to Millennium lecture series, 2000). Human face and shapes were Rosenberg's primary preoccupation and constant motifs in both his paintings and poetry. His older sister was the one that encouraged him to have his writings published. The first one was a minor anthology of poems with the title *Night and Day*. It would be the first of three small, independently published collections (Bloom 2002: 63). When the war was declared, Rosenberg was in South Africa. He enlisted in the Suffolk Bantam Regiment and served on the Western Front. A year later, he was reassigned to the King's Own Royal Lancasters and dispatched to France in June of that year. He never advanced past his rank, and due to

physical and psychological issues, he found life in the army more challenging than others. He may have even faced prejudice because of being Jewish (Bloom 2002: 63). Longley states: ‘The national, regional, and ethnic bearings of the Great War poets are significant as their classes’ (Longley 2005: 73).

According to Steven Connor, during this time Rosenberg started a new poem that was more complex, allusive, and overtly Jewish than anything he had ever written (Connor, qtd. in Birkbeck College’s Mechanics to Millennium lecture series, 2000). In the dramatic fragment *Moses*, he combines annoyance and dissatisfaction into a political rage at the repressive institution of the army. He had made it obvious that his willingness to serve in the military, which infringed on his moral standards, had truly little to do with his patriotic principles. In his letter to Lascelles Abercrombie, he expressed his hatred for the war: ‘Believe me the army is the most detestable invention on this earth and nobody but a private in the army knows what it is to be a slave’ (Parsons 1979: 230). He reflects his view of the war in his dislike for Brooke's ‘begloried sonnets’ and his exaggerating need to make a sacrifice (Longley 2005: 62). With only two brief breaks, Rosenberg spent over 20 months in, or near the trenches. During this time he completely abandoned painting and committed himself to composing poems (Bloom 2002: 64). Unlike the other poets, Rosenberg did not have an English pastoral background, because he grew up in an urban and working-class environment. As Bloom pointed out, Rosenberg was ‘distinguished by the nature of his poetic talent’ while most of his contemporaries were formed ‘in the Georgian mould’ (Bloom 2002: 64). To support the weight of the new experience, the other poets had to modify their verse form, which was essentially conventional. However, Rosenberg was far more open to experimenting with poetic language from the beginning, because this tradition did not constrain him, and his poems were ‘a natural extension of the art he was making before he entered the trenches’ (Bloom 2002: 64). Candace Ward compares him and Wilfred Owen, as inventive poets, with Rosenberg producing the rawest material that he later transformed into far larger and symbolic art, due to his urban upbringing and trench experience. Siegfried Sassoon characterized Rosenberg's poetry as an ‘experiment’ that indicated a ‘strenuous effort for impassioned expressions’ (Sassoon, qtd. in Bloom 2002: 64). As enthusiastic as Rosenberg's poetry is, it

nevertheless has a detached quality that goes beyond the stark realism of the events that served as the inspiration for the poem (Ward 1997: 13).

The 1914 poem *The Dead Heroes* looks at Rosenberg's early patriotism (Bloom 2002: 66). Furthermore, it serves as an important reminder of the scope and depth of Rosenberg's account of the war; in contrast to Sassoon, who focused on the soldiers' bitter betrayal by those at home, and Brooke, who was only interested in the noble act of self-sacrifice for one's country, Rosenberg's poems demonstrate his struggle with both the sublime and the horrifying aspects of war (Bloom 2002: 65). This dichotomy appears to have some roots in Rosenberg's discontent with the pre-war social structure. Thus, despite loathing the conflict, he was unable to imagine leading a normal life as a civilian. Rosenberg admitted to the use of writing as a way of coping during the war (Bloom 2002: 65). The poem's opening line requests the heavens to receive the fallen troops. The narrator assures them of a new existence, even though they must give up their grasp on life: ‘New days to outflame their dim/ Heroic years.’ (ll. 7-8). The language Rosenberg used in the poem is general but very visual, creating a Blakean atmosphere with expressions such as ‘glorious skies’, ‘mailed seraphim’, ‘burning spears’, and ‘bright air’. He uses dynamic words like ‘flame’ and ‘flash’ - invoking and welcoming a new world beyond anything humans can understand (Bloom 2002: 66). The final two stanzas portray the soldiers having a special bond with England, which simultaneously functions as the soldiers' parent and homeland: ‘Their blood is England’s heart;/ By their dead hands /It is their noble part/ That England stands.’ (ll. 17-20). ‘The children’ are the product of the soldiers' sacrifice for their homeland. As a reward for their bravery and sacrifice, these soldiers ‘won eternity’ and ‘claimed God's kiss’. Rosenberg wrote *The Dead Heroes* before he had taken part in the war. After enrolling, he developed a harsher, more sober perspective on combat, which would be reflected in his subsequent writings. At that point, Rosenberg was no longer drawn to poems that just reflected sentiments of patriotism (Bloom 2002: 66). According to Edna Longley, Rosenberg ‘upsets the retrospective binary model of how modern poetry came about’. In the poems *Returning, We Hear the Larks* and *Break of Day in the Trenches*, Rosenberg distinctively combines discursive comment, inconsistent line length, and Imagist freeze-frames (Longley 2005: 77). Sassoon explains this in his 1973 edition of *The Collected Works of Isaac Rosenberg*, where he states

that the uneven verse-paragraphs and rhyme, the influence of French Symbolism, irony, blend of Hebrew and English culture, scripture and sculpture, biblical and prophetic, are all characteristics that make Rosenberg ‘a poet of movement’ (Sassoon, qtd. in Ward 1997: 13). Sassoon alludes to the fact that Rosenberg was not consciously a war poet but the war that destroyed him, shaped him into one.

One of Rosenberg's poems that paints a realistic picture of the Great War is *Break of Day in the Trenches*. Compared to most of Wilfred Owen's writing, which is rife with rhyme schemes and regular meter, Rosenberg wrote this and many other pieces in free verse. Additionally, Owen's writing lacks Rosenberg's strong moralization and subdued righteous fury. Rosenberg described this poem as ‘a poem I wrote in the trenches, which is surely as simple as ordinary talk’ (Bloom 2002: 74). The strong imagery and symbolism make it quite hard to believe that the poem is anything close to simplicity. The phrase ‘Break of the day’ in the title, indicates that a new day has begun. The night disappears, but time, embodied by an elderly druid, remains unchanged: ‘The darkness crumbles away. / It is the same old druid Time as ever’ (ll. 1-2). The dawn brings a certain feeling of anxiety about what the new day brings. The only living thing that can move about freely right now is ‘a queer sardonic rat’. While the soldiers remain trapped, the rat can freely move from one side to the other, meaning, from German to English side. Rosenberg contrasts the soldier with natural objects to show their parallels and distinctions (Bloom 2002: 74). He quickly reveals that even a rat is not safe on the battlefield: ‘Droll rat, they would shoot you if they knew/ Your cosmopolitan sympathies. /Now you have touched this English hand/ You will do the same to a German’ (ll. 7-10). The demoralizing aspect is the fact that an animal has a greater probability of surviving in the ‘sleeping green’ than a soldier. If he were to cross the battleground, he would come across a lot of dead troops: ‘Less chanced than you for life, / Bonds to the whims of murder,/ Sprawled in the bowels of the earth, The torn fields of France’ (ll. 15-18). What understanding does a rat have of the horror and continual anxiety in the soldiers' eyes, given the irony of the scenario and *reductio ad absurdum* created as the speaker tries to view the war from the perspective of the rat (Bloom 2002: 82). A rat could not realize how much blood had been shed on the grounds he was passing by. He is using the rat as a foil to the soldiers, but also as a representation of the line between the two

fronts. Rosenberg, like many other poets, was heavily influenced by Metaphysical poets. The imagery of the rat is like that of John Donne's poem *The Flea*, which also plays with the same concept, but does so for courting purposes. (Bloom 2002: 74-75). Once the rat appears, the soldier picks a poppy out of the trench soil and places it behind his ear: ‘As I pull the parapet’s poppy/ To stick behind my ear.’ (ll. 5-6). As a symbol of the British war dead, he compares the soldiers to poppies.

> Poppies were thought to feed off the blood that had soaked into the earth, which turned their petals red. A short-lived flower, poppy's transience mirrors that of the soldier's. (Bloom 2002: 74)

The image at the poem's conclusion will once more refer to the association of poppies with the deceased: ‘Poppies whose roots are in man’s veins’ (l. 23). Rosenberg elevated the rat above the limitations imposed by people, by the usage of the adjective ‘sardonic’ meaning anything skeptically humorous. Ironically, the soldiers are depicted as being on the verge of exhaustion, while the rat is described as having greater strength and more chance of surviving than the soldiers: ‘What do you see in our eyes / At the shrieking iron and flame / Hurled through still heavens’ (ll. 19-21). Rosenberg describes both a human being and an animal to create the mood of the time when it did not matter if you were a person or not. The war is a cruel condition and to it everyone is just another animal, a prey to be caught and killed. Dehumanization was a coping strategy employed by soldiers to deal with what they experienced and witnessed on the battlefield. James Forsher, a film historian, and documentary filmmaker states that the reason this process was commonly used during the war was: ‘When you dehumanize, it allows you to kill your enemy and no longer feel guilty about it’, adding ‘That is why during World War II, a lot of caricatures became animals… You can kill a monkey a lot more easily than you can kill a neighbor’ (Forsher, qtd. in James, 2003).

5. Analysis of Ivor Gurney's poetry

Gurney was a poet destined for both musical and poetic greatness (qtd. from an online source War Poets Gallery). Ivor Bertie Gurney was a poet and a composer born in 1890 in a modest Gloucester household. He was the elder son and second of four children of Davide and Florence Gurney. Since his godfather Alfred Cheesman, a local vicar, supported him, young Gurney had free access to his library. There, Gurney met with Hopkins's and other religious poets' works. At the age of ten, Gurney joined the Gloucester Cathedral choir, where he had first discovered his passion for music and singing. Eager to follow his musical dreams, he became a student at the Royal College of Music in London, where he further expanded his knowledge of and passion for religious music (Stallworthy 2013: 253). Sir Charles Stanford, Gurney's teacher at the time, recognized his enormous potential and described him as the 'biggest of them all (his pupils), but the least teachable' (Kendall 2013: 365). Additionally, Cheesman introduced Gurney to the Hunt sisters, who would also assist Gurney in whatever way they could, both monetarily and by continuously motivating him to follow his passion. During the Summer of 1912, Gurney already demonstrated the characteristics of a creative mind with 'no evident models' (Hurd 1978: 39). Gurney composed five Elizabethan songs for piano and voice know as the *Elizas* (Hurd 1978: 38). He titled the five songs *Orpheus, Tears, Under the Greenwood Tree, Sleep,* and *Spring.* Gurney seems to have been producing distinctive English songs while also wishing for the abilities and self-assurance needed to produce more ambitious works that appeared out of his reach (Hurd 1978: 40). Gurney's failure to achieve his potential as a composer of larger works before the First World War, in the opinion of Michael Hurd, is extremely regrettable. He began composing poems seriously in 1913, but by May, he had been diagnosed with dyspepsia (Blevins 2008: 77). Soon after, the Great War began and changed Gurney's life forever. Marion Scott, who had known Gurney since they first met when he enrolled at the Royal College of Music, claimed that Gurney initially offered to serve in the military, but they turned him down due to bad eyesight (Hurd 1978: 53). He made another attempt to enlist, and this time it was successful. In 1915, he was enlisted in the 5th Gloucester Reserve Battle (Stallworthy 2013: 253).

In his *Collected Letters*, Gurney explained that his goal was to replace ‘nervous exhaustion’ with a healthy ‘state of fatigue’, adding that ‘fatigue from body brings rest to the soul – not so mental fatigue’. In his letters he commonly used a powerful sense of patriotism, together with the topic of dying for one's country. In the *Letters*, Gurney says that he would rather like to pass away while serving his country and the King, than continue the path he had been on for the previous two years:

> It is a better way to die; with these men, in such a case: than the end which seemed near me and was so desirable only just over two years ago. And if I escape, well, there will be memories for old age; not all pleasant, but none so unpleasant as those which would have come had I refused the call. (Hurd 1978: 54)

Following a gas-related injury in 1918, Gurney was promptly released from the Army. Gurney's mental health issues began to mock him once more. As a result, he started behaving in a way that had troubled him before the war. On June 19th 1918, he sent a suicide note to his friend Scott, afterward telling his superiors that he wants to be transferred to an asylum because he could hear voices in his head (Stallworthy and Potter 2011: 25). Immediately after, they transferred Gurney to the Barnwood House in Glouchester, and then to the City of London Mental Hospital in Dartford, where he died in 1937 (Stallworthy and Potter 2011: 27-29).

Gurney, like many other memorable war poets, composed his works while on the frontline. Marion Scott, who often shared works with Gurney, saw it as her responsibility to save as many of his writings as she could (Stallworthy and Potter 2011: 112). The two volumes published, *Severn & Somme* (1917) and *War's Embers* (1919), were compilations of poems he sent to Scott while serving in the army (Stallworthy and Potter 2011: 111). But these volumes tell only a small part of Gurney's story. Gurney's ability to produce a range of quality work can be recognized particularly with the release of his *Collected Poems* (edited by P. K. Kavanagh, 1982), which contained close to three hundred pieces, along with the editions by Edmund Blunden (1954) and Leonard Clark (1973). The publishing of *War Letters* and *Collected Letters* further demonstrated how well Gurney developed as a poet, while he demonstrated his musical development through publishing two cycles of songs titled *Ludlow and Teme* and *The Western Playland*. The deeply rooted tradition

of Gurney's can be examined through works like *In Flanders*, or *By a Bierside*, but also the *War Elegy*, *A Gloucestershire Rhapsody*, or his Elizabethan songs.
What made Gurney so great was not his love for his country and his will to die for it. He was a versatile poet, or as Walter De La Mare called him, a 'poet with no restrictions' in his creativity (La Mare 1938: 9).

> Lyrical poets are seldom ranked according to the range of their subject-matter; a few even among the finest are in this respect curiously restricted. But if they were, Ivor Gurney would be peering out from well towards the top of the green and golden tree. (Walter De La Mare 1938: 9)

Gurney not only wrote and commented on his own poetry, but he reviewed other poets' works as well. In Hurd's opinion, Gurney demonstrated that he was a well-read individual who was particularly fascinated with Hardy's writing since he made references to Hardy's *The Dynasty* in a few of his letters. Another letter from Gurney to Marion Scott, dated November 9, 1915, is a story that demonstrates his talent for ironically comedic writing (Hurd 1978: 59). Many of his poems have the word 'song' in their title or are song-like poems. One of the best examples of this kind is *Ballad of the Three Specters* (Stallworthy 2013: 253). It uses an easy-to-remember ABAB rhyme pattern in quatrain form, to tell a story about the supernatural, a popular theme for ballads. The poem is organized like a standard ballad or song. The *Ballad* opens with a realistic scene set in France: 'As I went up by Ovilliers / In mud and water cold to the knee' (ll. 1-2). Hurd argues that the poem touches on a terrible fact, in which Gurney bizarrely predicted his ending. Two passing soldiers are the ones discussing the soldier's (Gurney's) faith. One said: 'Here's a right brave soldier/ That walks the dark unfearingly;/ Soon he'll come back on a fine stretcher, /And laughing for a nice Blighty.' (ll. 5-8). He uses the word 'blighty' as a way of mocking the soldier, suggesting that he is a deceitful coward. While the other soldier replied: 'Read his face, old comrade, / No kind of lucky chance I see;/ One day he'll freeze in mud to the marrow, / Then look his last on Picardie.' (ll. 9-12). Another indicator that the poem is set in France is the mention of the French town Picardie. The ironic, but also the obvious, fantastic element in this is that the soldiers speaking are ghosts of dead soldiers. The poem ends in waiting to see if the words the third ghost said about the faith of the soldier would soon come true: 'Waiting the time I shall discover/ Whether the third spake verity.' (ll. 19-20).

> Like Brook, he was a “Great Love” – a celebrant of friends (”To His Love”), of fellow soldiers (”Farewell”), of places (”Above Maisemore”), of dawn and sunset (”Lovely Playthings”), of music (”Schubert”) and of literature (”Walt Whitman”). ”Love”, ”lovely”, ”dear” are among his favourite words, and he shares with Rosenberg a remarkable absence of anger, a humanity and humour, even when remembering “The Silent One”. (Stallworthy and Potter 2011: 43)

The Silent One is a prime example of Gurney's artistic diversity, combining his love for music and language. W.H. Auden defined the poem as a classic example of the poetry of ‘memorable speech’. ‘This is a poem for voices and about voices’ (Stallworthy and Potter 2011: 43). Ivor Gurney's *The Silent One* offers a close-up look at a soldier's perspective on the front lines, not to mention that it completely contradicts with what Owen discusses in his poem *Dulce et Decorum Est*. Gurney exploits the troops' bravery to add to a strong sense of reality, even though he doesn't support characterizing wilful death as heroic. Gurney uses the poem's vocabulary, shape, and structure to underline the chaotic environment he wants to conjure, mimicking his disordered mental state. Gurney begins the poem with the title as the first line: ‘The Silent One/ Who died on the wires, and hung there, one of two’ (l. 1). A dead man, known as ‘the silent one’, was left hanging from the wires after passing away. The narrator gives the impression as though he knew the deceased personally when he says: ‘Who for his hours of life had chattered through/ Infinite lovely chatter of Bucks accent’ (ll. 2-3). The soldier fails to cross the wires and is killed abruptly. The soldier’s ‘nobility’ and ‘faithful stripes’ indicate that he stayed loyal to his country and his uniform right up until the last moment: ‘Yet faced unbroken wires; stepped over, and went/ A noble fool, faithful to his stripes - and ended.’ (ll. 4-5).The personal pronoun ‘I’ in the line: ‘But I weak, hungry, and willing only for the chance’ (l. 6) - refers to all soldiers, not just one. Each wants to resist the enemy, even as they stand there with hardly any energy left, yet they each do not want to cross the line by themselves. The ‘politest voice and finicking accent’ of a commander stands in contrast to the soldier's ‘Bucks accent’ that was previously noted. To the conventional perception of the war as a nobleman's game, this remark would appear satirical. The commander asks the soldier a question: ‘Do you think you might crawl through there: there's a hole.’ – to which the frightened soldier replies: ’I'm afraid not, Sir.’/ There was no hole no way to be seen, / Nothing but

chance of death, after tearing of clothes.' (ll. 10-13). Gurney, being a composer, added auditory details to his poetry to make it 'fuller'. Through these phrases, the speaker is attempting to convey that the soldier obeyed his commander, while facing the 'screen', or wires, praying to God to let him survive:

> Kept flat, and watched the darkness, hearing bullets
> whizzing –
> And thought of music - and swore deep heart's oaths
> (Polite to God) and retreated and came on again,
> Again retreated a second time, faced the screen. (ll. 14-17)

Despite Gurney's maybe unconventional theological stance, God frequently makes an appearance in his works.

> I repose myself on a blind faith that all evil is somehow unavoidable, and therefore necessary, and that in the End a complete explanation of and compensation for the least scrap of evil is to come. I hate all formal ceremonies and Churches, and my master in all these things is Wordsworth, and my place of worship his. (Stallworthy and Potter 2011: 42)

Gurney adds that people who found their faith shaken up by the War, may need to look for a new, stronger faith. After the war, Gurney spent time in the London Mental Hospital, where he wrote the short poem *To God*. The title might suggest it is a religious poem but it is far more than that. The poem's importance is contained in the fact that the main theme of it is Gurney's struggle with the consequences of the war, which strongly affected his mental health. This is something with what many other trench soldiers struggled with. According to an article by Oliver Tearle, *To God* is a cry for help. A particularly important one, because with this poem, Gurney represents his trauma, as well as the trauma of other soldiers. Many others like Gurney were sent to mental facilities immediately following the war because of the horrifying events they had witnessed – 'Why have you made life so intolerable/ And set me between four walls...' (ll. 1-2). Gurney does not speak about God, but to God about his suffering. He cries out to Him saying he cannot live in the 'sensual' and 'dreadful Hell' anymore, while asking for his last hour to come quickly: 'And I am merely crying and trembling in heart/ For death, and cannot get it…' (ll. 6-7). His tortured soul is not praying to God for salvation but for a quick ending: 'And I am praying for death, death, death, / And dreadful is the indrawing or out-breathing of breath' (ll. 12-13). In

the final few paragraphs, Gurney describes the mistreatment he experienced, either in the hospital he stayed in, or on the battlefield. Gurney, like Rosenberg, mentions the ‘cruelty of man, on man’ and the degrading conditions of World War One.

6. Analysis of Rupert Brooke's poetry

One of the most well-known war poets from the first generation is undoubtedly Rupert Brooke. In the opinion of Tim Kendall, Brooke embodied the idealistic patriotism and innocence of 1914 (Kendall 2013: 331). Rupert Brooke, who was born in 1887, attended Rugby School before continuing his education at King's College in Cambridge (Ward 1997: 1). With his idealistic war poems, Brooke became the primary spokesperson of the patriotic pro-war poetry, together with Gurney, and came to represent the full extent of the 'Englishman's sacrifice' (Ward 1997: 1). Long before the war ever started, Brooke began to develop his literary career. He read a variety of classical authors, but his genuine loves were Elizabethan and Jacobean plays (Kendall 2013: 331). As The War Poets Association states, Brooke received a Fellowship in appreciation of his work on John Webster during his stay at the King's College, where he studied English literature. During this time, he became a prominent member of a group of intellectuals called the Neo-Pagans, known for their love of nature. Furthermore, he became the president of the university's Fabian Society and developed an interest in socialism. The Georgian Poets organization, noted for releasing five anthologies of Georgian poetry, was one of the groups that Brooke was most intricately linked with. Some of Brooke's works were included in both the first and second anthology. The editor of the anthologies, Edward Marsh, separated the poems *Choriambics – I, Choriambics – II* and *Desertion* from the collection,despite them being produced during that time (Kendall 2013: 331). Brooke was not a devotee of the literary tradition. He took part in the tradition-questioning movement that challenged the Victorian era. Based on Sara Elizabeth Kahn's *A critical assessment of Rupert Brooke's poetry,* Brooke is considered 'a modern artist in thought, questioning and often mocking traditional values'. Khan also adds that Brooke 'was traditional in his use of verse forms. However, he made the forms work for him'.

In 1911, he published his first volume titled *Poems*, which helped him gain his early recognition as a poet in the public eye (Kendall 2013: 331). According to The Rupert Brooke Society, *Poems* was regarded to reveal two of Brooke's most compelling personality features at the time: his variety of interests, and his daring lack of taste.

Brooke's friend and poet Edward Thomas, reviewed the work in *The Morning Post*, where he wrote:

> He is full of revolt, self-contempt, and yet arrogance too. He reveals chiefly what he desires to be and to be thought. Now and then he gives himself away, as when, in three poems close together, he speaks of the scent of warm clover. Copies should be bought by everyone over forty who has never been under forty. It will be a revelation. Also, if they live yet a little longer they may see Mr Rupert Brooke a poet. He will not be a little one.

In 1912 and 1913, Brooke struggled greatly with his mental health. After that, he travelled widely in North America and the Pacific, where he produced a large quantity of poetry. During this time, Brooke wrote some of his best poems, the most popular and well-liked of which is perhaps *Tiare Tahiti.* Brooke's sense of struggle was reflected in several of the pieces he wrote. The author overtly expresses his sense of loss in *The Funeral of Youth: Threnody*, where he is torn between the life he is leading in Grantchester, and the duties of starting a family and employment, like many of his friends already do. He talks about a variety of emotions such as pride, joy, lust, and grief. The spring represents youth but is temporary as every other experience in life: ‘And never seen him since. / And Spring came too, / Dancing over the tombs, and brought him flowers --/ She did not stay for long’ (ll. 48-50). This poem serves as a burial place for Brook's younger self, who must now be ready and accept a new direction in life. Contrary to *The Funeral of Youth*, *The Chilterns* tries to belittle the loss. However, the most important poem in the volume is *The Old Vicarage, Grantchester.* Brooke wrote it during his stay in Berlin, specifically on his visit to Cafe des Westens, as he mentioned in the title of the poem. *The Old Vicarage* expresses a yearning for home. Brooke compares Germany - as an uncomfortable place: ‘Here am I, sweating, sick, and hot’ (l. 19) – to England, a place ‘Where men with Splendid Hearts may go’ (l. 75). Other than yearning for the place, Brooke mentions the yearning for the past. But unlike the desire for home, which may be satisfied, a yearning for the past will never be.

As the Poetry Foundation states, Brooke was considered a national hero even before his death in 1915. Young, attractive, and talented, Brooke contributed to the mystique surrounding him by writing poetry that supported the war effort and by being killed in its initial stages (Kendall 2013: 333). When war broke out in August 1914, Brooke volunteered for active duty, when he became a part of the British Expeditionary Force

and Royal Naval Division (Stallworthy 2013: 20). Due to his attendance at the siege and fall of Antwerp, Brooke was significantly more knowledgeable about the war, but his experience was far less intense than that of Owen, or Sassoon (Kendall 2013: 331). After his first shocking experience on the battlefield in early 1915, Brooke produced one of his most recognized works. In December of 1914 Brooke wrote the *1914* sonnets. The five sonnets included in the collection are *Peace, Safety,* two poems titled *The Dead, The Soldier,* while *The Treasure* acts as a preface to the five sonnets (Stallworthy 2013: 22). The collection serves as Brooke's cry to a nation which did not know what it is 'in for and what great sacrifice - passive or active – everyone must make' (Kendall 2013: 331). Brooke's poetry gained more prominence in English literature because of his early death, as he was only twenty-eight when he passed away from blood poisoning, just before the Gallipoli mission (Ward 1997: 1). Following his death, Brooke became a representation of idealistic youth and selfless sacrifice. *The Times* published Winston Churchill's obituary in three days following the funeral:

> He expected to die; he was willing to die for the dear England whose beauty and majesty he knew… The thoughts to which he gave expression in the very few incomparable war sonnets which he has left behind will be shared by many thousands of young men moving resolutely and blithely into this, the hardest, the cruellest and the least rewarded of all the wars that men have fought. (Kendall 2013: 333)

Churchill unquestionably used the poet's passing to illustrate the sacrifice a nation was required to make the day after its armed forces entered the highly criticized Battle of Gallipoli (Bristow 2014: 663). After Churchill announced Brooke's poetic death, the five poems of *1914* gained attention from the British public. Perhaps the collection gained such popularity because it reflected sadness and loss the nation felt, caused by the Great War.

In Bloom's opinion, *The Soldier* is 'perhaps Rupert Brooke's best-known and loved work and may be the most famous single poem of the war' (Bloom 2003: 35). It is a patriotic poem that is worth noting, because it promotes political propaganda, in a way encouraging others to enlist in the army to take his place in case he is killed (Bloom 2003: 35). Fairly enough, Brooke did witness the war, but not the entire tragedy of it. Brooke's writing is worthy, but very different from the other poets' writings, such as Owen and Rosenberg (Stallworthy 2013: 26). While Owen writes

about the barbarity of war and Rosenberg about how pointless the conflict is, Brooke demonstrates a glorified image of the war and soldiers as nobles. The unnamed soldier in the title stands for all soldiers. In the first stanza, the soldier addresses the reader, saying his death should not be mourned because his remains will be somewhere in a foreign country that will forever be England: 'If I should die, think only this of me: / That there's some corner of a foreign field / That is forever England…' (ll. 1-3). The 'if' in the first line implies the soldier's acceptance and willingness to sacrifice himself for his country, whereas the second line alludes to Brooke's own death, as he was buried in 'a foreign field' in Cyprus. Since the English soldier was buried there, the surrounding soil has become 'richer': 'In that rich earth a richer dust concealed' (l. 4). The lines where Brooke personifies England as the mother of the soldiers who gave birth to and raised them, is the epitome of his glorification of England: 'A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware, / Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam' (ll. 5-6). Brooke expresses his adoration for the natural beauty: 'A body of England's, breathing English air, / Washed by the rivers, blest by the suns of home.' (ll. 7-8). The author makes use of religious imagery to demonstrate that God is on England's side, and that those who die for it, will be freed from all evil and will enter heaven: 'And think, this heart, all evil shed away,/ A pulse in the eternal mind, no less' (ll. 9-10). The poem ends with Brooke romanticizing England as a 'heaven', better than other places: 'In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.' (l. 14). He repeats the word 'England' six times throughout the poem, highlighting the strong patriotic influence, and demonstrates death in a way that makes it seem almost delightful rather than traumatizing. Parts III and IV of Rupert Brooke's collection *1914*, contain two poems titled *The Dead*. These poems, like the one before them, also celebrate death. The author suggests the same thinking the nation promoted during the war, and that is that the passing of some should not be frowned upon, because they remain alive in the memories of others. *The Dead (III)* defines those who die as the 'rich Dead', meaning the soldiers who died gained a fortune, and its name is glory. Once more, Brooke alludes to religion in his use of the phrase 'red sweet wine' suggesting that soldiers are like Jesus Christ, since they willingly gave their lives to save the world. In the process, they also attained immortality, just like Christ.

> Blow out, you bugles, over the rich Dead!

There's none of these so lonely and poor of old,
But, dying, has made us rarer gifts than gold.
These laid the world away; poured out the red
Sweet wine of youth; gave up the years to be
Of work and joy, and that unhoped serene,
That men call age; and those who would have been,
Their sons, they gave, their immortality. (ll. 1-8)

The soldiers who died became kings, and the earth became their kingdom: ‘Honour has come back, as a king, to earth’ (l. 11). Brooke concludes the poem stating that acquiring nobility is far more essential than preserving one's life. *The Dead (IV)* opens with the happy hearts woven to serve their country: ‘These hearts were woven of human joys and cares’ (l. 1). A quick contrast in the second line indicates that after the triumph, everything is swept away with sorrow: ‘Washed marvelously with sorrow, swift to mirth.’ (l. 2). The author keeps reflecting on the happier days after coming to the realization that nothing will ever be the same.

These had seen movement, and heard music; known
Slumber and waking; loved; gone proudly friended;
Felt the quick stir of wonder; sat alone;
Touched flowers and furs and cheeks. All this is ended. (ll. 5-8)

The final few lines discuss how soldier's weapons illuminate the sky during combat, ending with the ‘unbroken glory’.

There are waters blown by changing winds to laughter
And lit by the rich skies, all day. And after,
Frost, with a gesture, stays the waves that dance
And wandering loveliness. He leaves a white
Unbroken glory, a gathered radiance,
A width, a shining peace, under the night. (ll. 9-14)

The author's glorified perception of battle is once again on display in the poem *Peace*. According to an article by Robert Means, this poem is ‘a product of muscular Christianity’, just like Brooke was. It should be remembered, says Means, that several of the other poets once shared a similar perspective:

> …a pre-war poet, expressing the pre-war sentiment of cleansing just as poets as diverse as Robert Graves and Isaac Rosenberg wrote poetry in the early days of the war that celebrated this image of the “Happy Warrior.” Even Siegfried Sassoon's early poems display this idea of spiritual cleansing afforded by the war, for example his aptly-titled “Absolution”’... (Means)

From the very beginning of the poem, Brooke challenges the tremendous opposition to the war, claiming that men should consider the battle with pride, as a blessing from God:

> Now, God be thanked Who has matched us with His hour,
> And caught our youth, and wakened us from sleeping,
> With hand made sure, clear eye, and sharpened power,
> To turn, as swimmers into cleanness leaping (ll. 1-4)

Men who answer ‘God's call’ will be recognized for their deeds, while those who fail to do so will be held accountable: ‘Glad from a world grown old and cold and weary, / Leave the sick hearts that honour could not move’ (ll. 5-6). The poem's final few words demonstrate Brooke's war ideology's blatant ignorance: ‘Oh! We, who have known shame, we have found release there, / Where there's no ill, no grief, but sleep has mending’ (ll. 9-10). Given that Brooke did serve as a soldier throughout the conflict, this poem's ironic conclusion reflects the fact that he was omitted from witnessing the bloodied trenches, the bodies stacked one on top of the other, and the cries of anguish from the relatives of the fallen. Yet, he takes it upon himself to say that death is the enemy, not the war that leads them to it.

7. Analysis of Charles Hamilton Sorley's poetry

Charles Hamilton Sorley was another poet active in the initial stages of the war. Sorley, the son of Moral Philosophy professor William Ritchie Sorley, was born and raised in Aberdeen, Scotland (Kendall 2013: 557). He attended King's College Choir School, where he gained extensive knowledge of the Bible from its required chapel service, which would later impact the language of his poems (Stallworthy 2013: 51). He received a scholarship to Marlborough College in 1908, when he discovered a love for cross-country running, like Grenfell's, and composed several poems (Stallworthy 2013: 51). One of the first was *Barbury Camp*, a poem written from the perspective of a dead Roman soldier (Stallworthy 2013: 51). According to Carol Rumens, Sorley continuously resisted traditional war-inspired sentimentality and jingoism, yet his poetry cannot be simply grouped together and labelled as anti-war. Sorley lived in Germany from January to July of 1914, while pursuing his studies in philosophy and politics at the University of Jena (Ward 1997: 5). After the war was declared, Sorley immediately joined the Suffolk Regiment, but that did not stop him from appreciating the German culture and people (Kendall 2013: 557). Sorley wrote in one of his letters:

> I regard the war as one between sisters, between Martha and Mary, the efficient and intolerant against the casual and sympathetic. Each side has a virtue for which it is fighting, and each that virtue's supplementary vice... But I think that tolerance is the larger virtue of the two, and efficiency must be her servant. (Kendall 2013: 557)

During his first few months on the front, Sorley wrote some of his best poems. At the Battle of Loos, on October 13, 1915, Sorley died after a sniper struck in his head (Kendall 2013: 557). The manuscript of what has now become his best-known poem, 'When You See Millions of the Mouthless Dead', was discovered among his possessions after his passing (Kendall 2013: 557).

> The attitude that Sorley exhibited in his own poetry was unsentimental and tragically ironic. Killed at the age of twenty at the Battle of Loos, Sorley saw more actual combat than Brooke, and experienced the horror of the first poison-gas attacks. (Ward 1997: 5)

His father, William Sorley published posthumous editions of the poems and letters that Sorley wrote, and combined, they serve as a testament to Sorley's brilliance (Kendall 2013: 557). As mentioned in The Riverside Dictionary of Biography, Sorley's family released *Marlborough and Other Poems* posthumously in 1916, and *The Collected Poems of Charles Hamilton Sorley* were edited in 1985. Sorley left less than forty full poems in all, the best of which are straightforward and unsentimental (The Riverside Dictionary, 2005: 744). As stated by Poem Hunter, other war poets such as Isaac Rosenberg and Wilfred Owen admired Sorley, while in his book *Goodbye to All That*, Robert Graves referred to him as 'one of the three poets of importance [that] died during the war'. Sorley could be considered a precursor to Sassoon and Owen, and his writing style is far from sentimental, therefore contrasting sharply with Brooke's style (Stallworthy 2013: 57). Both Brooke and Sorley spent time in Germany before the war. As a result, Brooke mentions England no less than four times in *The Soldier*, whilst Sorley writes *To Germany* only a few months later (Stallworthy 2013: 57).

Sorley's poem 'When You See Millions of the Mouthless Dead' contrasts sharply with what Brooke wrote: 'Sorley proved a powerful antidote to Brooke in quarters that mattered' (Sherry 2005: 63). The poem's title effectively conveys the grim reality of war, which claims the lives of millions of troops. When the soldier sees how many have perished, the poem's opening line advises him not to mourn or praise them, because they will not be able to hear him regardless:

> 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.
> Give them not praise. For, deaf, how should they know (ll. 1-5)

The absence of feeling can be seen in the line telling the soldiers to accept that these men are no longer there: 'Say only this, "They are dead." Then add thereto, / "Yet many a better one has died before."' (ll. 9-10). The lack of emotion lasts all the way to

the last line: ‘It is a spook. None wears the face you knew. / Great death has made all his for evermore.’ (ll. 12-13). Through this poetry, Sorley captures the brutality of the conflict. He uses the adjective ‘mouthless’ to emphasize how helpless and silent people become as a result. Given that Germany was viewed as the enemy at the time, Sorley's choice to write a sonnet with the title *To Germany* may seem odd, but on closer inspection, the poem is nothing more than the author's confession of feelings for a nation he has been entranced with ever since he visited it. Sorley makes the daring statement that both sides are the same and share the same feelings, thoughts, and concerns: ‘You are blind like us. Your hurt no man designed’ (l. 1). The adjective ‘blind’ may suggest that the soldiers on both sides were lured into fighting in the war. As they stumble through ‘fields of thought’, uncertain of what will happen next, these men may not even be aware of what they are fighting for: ‘We stumble and we do not understand. / You only saw your future bigly planned’ (ll. 4-5). According to the author, only peace can bring about a reconciliation between the opposing parties: ‘When it is peace, then we may view again/ With new-won eyes each other’s truer form’ (ll. 9-10). The word ‘when’ in the final words, expresses Sorley's need to know whether peace will ever arrive, or if there will always be darkness, thunder, and rain: ‘When it is peace. But until peace, the storm, / The darkness and the thunder and the rain’ (ll. 13-14).

8. Analysis of Siegfried Sassoon's poetry

Siegfried Sassoon is most remembered for his angry and sympathetic writings about World War One. Sassoon was born on September 8, 1886, in Kent, to a wealthy Jewish family of bankers (Stallworthy 2013: 101). Feminine figures directed Sassoon's childhood and adolescence, as his father abandoned his mother when he was five years old (Stallworthy 2013: 101). In his *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man* he would describe himself as a lonely child: 'as a consequence of my loneliness, I created in my childish day - dreams an ideal companion' (Stallworthy 2013: 101). Prior to enrolling at Clare College in Cambridge in 1905, he attended Marlborough College (Stallworthy 2013: 101). It was during his time at Cambridge, that he discovered that he was homosexual (Stallworthy 2013: 101). There, he had a partner, David Thomas, who after dying on the Western Front in March 1916, inspired the poems *The Last Meeting* and *A Letter Home* (Stallworthy 2013: 101). After David was shot, Sassoon declared that he would 'Gladly stick a bayonet into a German by daylight' (Kendall 2013: 285). Sassoon created *The Kiss* the following month, after hearing a lecture on the use of a bayonet: 'He spins and burns and loves the air, / And splits a skull to win my praise' (ll. 5-6). In the poem, Sassoon captured conflicted feelings about the war, which he 'found beautiful or dreadful, or both' (Kendall 2013: 285). Sassoon never completed his studies at Cambridge, but he did secretly publish a few pamphlets of verse (Kendall 2013: 285), some of which drew Edward Marsh's attention. Marsh had just finished editing the first collection of Georgian poetry, and it was through Marsh, that Sassoon first met Rupert Brooke (Kendall 2013: 285). His early work, which spans from his 1906 *Poems* to his other works published until 1916, can be regarded by the Poetry Foundation as modest and imitative while being influenced by another British poet, John Masefield. Sassoon made the decision to enlist in quest of something more in his life; he joined the Sussex Yeomanry on the day that Britain declared war on Germany (Kendall 2013: 285). He joined the Royal Welch Fusiliers in May of the following year, and by July of that year, he was fighting at Mametz Wood and taking part in the Somme Offensive (Stallworthy 2013: 101). He earned the Military Cross and the nickname 'Mad Jack' for his extraordinary bravery (Stallworthy 2013: 101). Sassoon wrote his first war poem, titled *Absolution*, in 1915

(Stallworthy 2013: 101). Although Sassoon titled his poem with a religious connotation, its focus is on the liberation of the ‘eyes’ rather than the remission of sins (Stallworthy 2013: 101).

> The anguish of the earth absolves our eyes
> Till beauty shines in all that we can see.
> War is our scourge; yet war has made us wise,
> And, fighting for our freedom, we are free. (ll. 1-4)

Sassoon takes the phrase ‘War is our courage’ more metaphorically, contending that while soldiers do have bodily wounds, the psychological harm they endure is far more severe. The author acknowledges how awful the war is but claims that times of war must eventually end: ‘Horror of wounds and anger at the foe, / And loss of things desired; all these must pass.’ (ll. 5-6). Time is a consoling factor, because it will turn the horrible experiences into memories: ‘We are the happy legion, for we know/ Time's but a golden wind that shakes the grass.’ (ll. 7-8). The poem's conclusion shows that the author may have written it for a fellow soldier: ‘What need we more, my comrades and my brothers?’ (l. 12). In his elegy *To My Brother*, which he devoted to his own brother Hamo who died at Gallipoli, Sassoon employed the same upbeat ending (Stallworthy 2013: 101). The poem *Absolution* is the first to discuss the war, however, *The Redeemer* is the first to be based on Sassoon's personal experience in the trenches (Stallworthy 2013: 103). The title once more alludes to a Christian theme in which Christ's persona contrasts with that of a soldier: ‘I say that He was Christ , who wrought to bless’ (l. 30). The persistent presence of darkness is a sign of how difficult the times are, particularly considering the tragedies of war that cast a shadow on the path of faith. The ‘black ditch’ indicates that the soldier is in the trenches during fire: ‘I turned in the black ditch, loathing the storm; / A rocket fizzed and burned with blanching flare, / And lit the face of what had been a form’ (ll. 10-12). Sassoon depicts the soldier's agony in the Hell created by humans: ‘But to the end, unjudging, he’ll endure/ Horror and pain, not uncontent to die’ (ll. 25-26). Similar to how Jesus Christ gave his life for humanity, the soldier will make a sacrifice for his country: ‘And with His mercy washed and made them fair. / Then the flame sank, and all grew black as pitch’ (ll. 32-33). The poem ends with the soldier being stuck in Hell

on earth: ‘Mumbling: “O Christ Almighty, now I’m stuck!”’ (l. 36). About the poem, Jon Stallworthy stated the following:

> For all its bad theology, the poem does have a certain dramatic force – much of it derived from the explosive colloquialism of the last line. This use of direct speech, learnt from Sassoon's reading of his admired Thomas Hardy in 1914, brings us literally down to earth, whereas the ending of 'Absolution' had left us uncomfortably in the air. (Stallworthy 2013: 105)

According to the Poetry Foundation, after converting to Catholicism in 1957, Sassoon began to employ religious imagery more frequently. Religious poems published between 1917 and 1920 are often thought to be noticeably better, although Derek Stanford, a critic, argues that this is untrue. He uses *Sequence* as an example, which came out just before Sassoon converted. The poems in *Sequences*, according to Stanford's assessment in *Books and Bookmen*, ‘constitute some of the most stunning religious poetry of our century’ (Stanford, qtd. from Poetry Foundation). *Attack* and *Enemies* are two other well-known poems by Sassoon that critique the revolting conditions in which war was fought and the reality of it. The poem *Attack*, written as a part of Sassoon's *Collected Poems* (1918), begins with a description of the battlefield, giving the reader a sense of what it is like to be on the front lines and in the trenches:

> At dawn the ridge emerges massed and dun
> In the wild purple of the glow'ring sun,
> Smouldering through spouts of drifting smoke that shroud
> The menacing scarred slope; and, one by one,
> Tanks creep and topple forward to the wire. (ll. 1-5)

The author uses visuals to convey the circumstances the soldiers face as accurately as possible.

> With bombs and guns and shovels and battle-gear,
> Men jostle and climb to, meet the bristling fire.
> Lines of grey, muttering faces, masked with fear,
> They leave their trenches, going over the top,
> While time ticks blank and busy on their wrists… (ll. 7-11)

He expresses the soldiers' misery in the final line, where they beg Jesus to end their suffering: ‘And hope, with furtive eyes and grappling fists, / Flounders in mud. O Jesus, make it stop!’ (ll. 12-13). The subject of the responsibility of killing in war and the impact it can have on the mental health of soldiers is raised in the poem *Enemies*, which is part of the collection *The Old Huntsman and Other Poems* from 1918 (Kendall 2013: 285). In the poem's opening line, a soldier stands by himself in the Sun, presumably after the combat already ended: ‘He stood alone in some queer sunless place/ Where Armageddon ends.’ (ll. 1-2). The next few lines reveal that the soldier is dead: ‘For days he might have lived; but his young face/ Gazed forth untroubled: and suddenly there thronged’ (ll. 3-4). It is possible that the poem was composed in response to Sassoon's partner David Thomas's death as a result of the German invasion: ‘Round him the hulking Germans that I shot/ When for his death my brooding rage was hot’ (ll. 5-6). Sassoon's close friend Robert Graves said that the author vowed to seek revenge for the passing of his partner.

> He stared at them, half-wondering; and then
> They told him how I’d killed them for his sake
> Those patient, stupid, sullen ghosts of men
> And still there seemed no answer he could make. (ll. 7-10)

The dead soldier encounters the ‘sullen ghosts’ of German soldiers who died at the front as well. The conclusion makes it clear that the only way they can cross paths as regular people and not enemies, is through death: ‘At last he turned and smiled. One took his hand/ Because his face could make them understand.’ (ll. 11-12). ‘The customary battle-lines of war that keep enemies apart have been obscured in death, where they are now united as victims’ (Bloom 2003: 47).

9. Conclusion

World War One altered the course of history by causing widespread suffering and highlighting the depth of human capacity of sacrifice for the sake of victory. The war shattered the reputation and power of fervent nationalism and patriotism. In Britain, poetry developed into a form of mass communication, and poets used it to voice their ideas and views of the war. The war was widely perceived to require a significant lyrical response from the outset. By reading the war poets' testimonials, the public was able to obtain some understanding of what had actually happened behind the veil of war propaganda. The poets viewed conflict from different angles regarding their individual views and experiences. Every one of these poets participated in the War, yet they all portrayed it in different manners. Some attempted to shatter the false illusion of the war, while others glorified the chance to die in service to their country, and described it as a noble deed. Wilfred Owen's poetry offers a thorough and sensitive description of the horrors he personally experienced while serving in World War One. Isaac Rosenberg explores the horrors of battle and the fragility of the soldier, and Charles Hamilton Sorley's pacifist poems offer us a realistic depiction of the brutal conflict that wrecked the nation. Siegfried Sassoon's literature exhibits the same opposition to the war. On the other hand, poets like Ivor Gurney and Rupert Brooke give us a glorified image of the War, in which the body is solely viewed as a noble sacrifice to its temple, which is the nation. With the undoing of First World War, mankind witnessed the rebirth of a new world, made on the foundation of a terrible event that came before it. One saw the creation of a new world built on the ruins of a tragic event, as the First World War ended. Considering this, reading war poetry is crucial for gaining knowledge and increasing awareness of various global challenges. In addition to expressing their thoughts and experiences, war poets used their poetry to warn us about the dangers that can result when the desire for power and victory consume human nature.

Bibliography and sources

Blevins, P. (2013). *Ivor Gurney and Marion Scott : Song of Pain and Beauty*. New York: Boydell & Brewer Group Ltd.

Bloom, H. (2002). *Poets of World War I : Wilfred Owen & Isaac Rosenberg*. Broomall, Pa: Chelsea House Publishers.

Bloom, H. (2003). *Poets of World War I : Rupert Brooke & Siegfried Sassoon*. Philadelphia, PA: Chelsea.

Bristow, J. (2014). (2nd ed., Vol. 81) [*Review of Rupert Brooke's Poetic Deaths*]. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Buck, C. (2005). *British women's writing of the Great War*. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Gurney, I. and Thornton, R.K.R. (1993). *Collected Letters*. Manchester: Carcanet Press Ltd.

Hart, P. (2013). *The Great War : a combat history of the First World War*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press.

Hollis, M. and Keegan, P. (2003). *101 Poems Against War*. London: Faber.

Howard, M. (2007). *The First World War: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press.

Hurd, M. (1978). *The ordeal of Ivor Gurney*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press.

Ivor Gurney, Rosenberg, I., Owen, W., Stallworthy, J. and Potter, J. (2011). *Three poets of the First World War : Ivor Gurney, Isaac Rosenberg and Wilfred Owen*. London ; New York: Penguin.

Kendall, T. (2013). *Poetry of the First World War: An Anthology*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press.

Longley, E. (2005). *The Great War, history, and the English Lyric,.* Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Paul, E. (2005). *British war memoirs*. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press.
Perloff, M. (2005). *The Great War and the European avant-garde*. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Rosenberg, I. and Parsons, I.M. (1979). *The collected works of Isaac Rosenberg : poetry, prose, letters, paintings and drawings*. London: Chatto And Windus.

Sherry, V.B. (2005). *The Cambridge companion to the literature of the First World War*. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Simkins, P. (2003). *The First World War*. Oxford: Osprey Publishing Ltd.

Stallworthy, J. (2013). *Anthem for Doomed Youth : Twelve Soldier Poets of the First World War*. London: Constable.

The Riverside Dictionary of Biography (2005) (eds. of American Heritage Dictionary). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
Ward, C. (1997). *World War One British Poets: Brooke, Owen, Sassoon, Rosenberg, and Others*. Newburyport: Dover Publications.

Backhouse, F. (2019). Franz Ferdinand, archduke of Austria-Este | Biography, Assassination, & Facts. In: *Encyclopædia Britannica*. [online] Available at: https://www.britannica.com/biography/Franz-Ferdinand-Archduke-of-Austria-Este [Accessed 30 April 2022].

Ducksters.com. (2019). *World War I for Kids: Allied Powers*. [online] Available at: https://www.ducksters.com/history/world_war_i/allied_powers.php [Accessed 30 April 2022].

Welch, D. (2014). Propaganda for patriotism and nationalism. *The British Library*. [online] doi:https://www.bl.uk/world-war-one/articles/patriotism-and-nationalism [Accessed 15 May 2022].

Cooke, I. (2014). Propaganda as a weapon? Influencing international opinion. *The British Library*. [online] doi:https://www.bl.uk/world-war-one/articles/propaganda-as-a-weapon [Accessed 15 May 2022].

Pruszewicz, M. (2015). How deadly was the poison gas of WW1? *BBC News*. [online] 30 Jan. Available at: https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-31042472 [Accessed 16 May 2022].

Anon, (n.d.). *Isaac Rosenberg (1890 – 1918) – The War Poets Association*. [online] Available at: https://warpoets.org/conflicts/great-war/isaac-rosenberg-1890-1918/ [Accessed 29 May 2022].

Connor, S. (n.d.). *Isaac Rosenberg: Birkbeck's War Poet*. [online] Available at: http://www.stevenconnor.com/rosenberg/ [Accessed 30 May 2022].

Finn Jr. , J. (n.d.). *Dehumanization in WWI & WWII*. [online] Available at: https://luckysaxman.tripod.com/id14.html [Accessed 20 June 2022].

Forsher, J. (2006). [online] ABC News. Available at: https://abcnews.go.com/International/story?id=79071 [Accessed 20 June 2022].

Griffiths, A.G.M. (2011). *Ballad of the Three Spectres – Ivor Gurney*. [online] Move Him Into The Sun. Available at: https://movehimintothesun.wordpress.com/2011/04/22/ballad-of-the-three-spectres-ivor-gurney/ [Accessed 26 June 2022].

www.finzisong.com. (n.d.). *Ivor Gurney biography*. [online] Available at: http://www.finzisong.com/gurney_bio.html?fbclid=IwAR2X-W-Fm5W2Zw9Hl1vdJx4FRjZUHaCAxq0FzLI_7DAhp7_AXl24txkbhqA [Accessed 29 June 2022].

One, T.S. (n.d.). *The Silent One by Ivor Gurney*. [online] allpoetry.com. Available at: https://allpoetry.com/poem/8540761-The-Silent-One-by-Ivor-Gurney [Accessed 29 June 2022].

The War Poets Gallery. (n.d.). *Biography of Ivor Gurney, World War I poet and musician.* [online] Available at: https://www.warpoetsgallery.org/ivor-gurney [Accessed 30 June 2022].

Sengupta, R. (n.d.). *What Storms Did Shake Macbeth*. [online] https://www.ijcrt.org/. Available at: https://ijcrt.org/papers/IJCRT2003033.pdf [Accessed 1 July 2022].

ww1lit.nsms.ox.ac.uk. (n.d.). *The Ivor Gurney Collection | First World War Poetry Digital Archive*. [online] Available at: http://ww1lit.nsms.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit/collections/gurney [Accessed 1 July 2022].

Tearle, O. (2016). *A Short Analysis of Ivor Gurney's 'To God'*. [online] Available at: https://interestingliterature.com/2016/01/a-short-analysis-of-ivor-gurneys-to-god/ [Accessed 3 July 2022].

Ifinedo, A. (2021). *To God by Ivor Gurney*. [online] Poem Analysis. Available at: https://poemanalysis.com/ivor-gurney/to-god/ [Accessed 3 July 2022].

Anon, (n.d.). *Rupert Brooke (1887 – 1915) – The War Poets Association*. [online] Available at: https://warpoets.org/conflicts/great-war/rupert-brooke-1887-1915/ [Accessed 3 July 2022].

Kahn, S.E. (1972). *A critical evaluation of the poetry of Rupert Brooke*. [online] Core.ac.uk. Available at: https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/228668552.pdf [Accessed 3 July 2022].

www.rupertbrooke.com. (n.d.). *The Rupert Brooke Society - Poems 1908-1911*. [online] Available at: https://www.rupertbrooke.com/poems/1908-1911/ [Accessed 3 July 2022].

www.rupertbrooke.com. (n.d.). *The Rupert Brooke Society - Poems 1912-1913*. [online] Available at: https://www.rupertbrooke.com/poems/1912-1913/ [Accessed 3 July 2022].

Wilde, R. (2019). *Rupert Brooke: Poet-Soldier*. [online] ThoughtCo. Available at: https://www.thoughtco.com/rupert-brooke-poet-soldier-1221798 [Accessed 5 July 2022].

Means, R. (n.d.). *Rupert Brooke: I. Peace*. [online] First World War Poetry Digital Archive. Available at: http://ww1lit.nsms.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit/education/tutorials/intro/brooke/ipeace [Accessed 5 July 2022].

Foundation, P. (2022). *Barbury Camp by Charles Hamilton Sorley*. [online] Poetry Foundation. Available at: https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/47424/barbury-camp [Accessed 7 July 2022].

Rumens C. (2012). *Poem of the week: To Germany by Charles Hamilton Sorley*. [online] Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2012/nov/14/poem-to-germany-charles-hamilton-sorley [Accessed 7 July 2022].

Poem Hunter. (n.d.). *Charles Hamilton Sorley Biography - Biography of Charles Hamilton Sorley*. [online] Available at: https://www.poemhunter.com/charles-hamilton-sorley/biography/ [Accessed 7 July 2022].

Foundation, P. (2019). *Poetry Foundation*. [online] Poetry Foundation. Available at: https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/siegfried-sassoon. [Accessed 7 July 2022].

Foundation, P. (2021). *The Kiss by Siegfried Sassoon*. [online] Poetry Foundation. Available at: https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/57213/the-kiss-56d23a7c0343d [Accessed 8 July 2022].

Foundation, P. (2021). *Absolution by Siegfried Sassoon*. [online] Poetry Foundation. Available at: https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/57212/absolution [Accessed 8 July 2022].

Foundation, P. (2022). *The Redeemer by Siegfried Sassoon*. [online] Poetry Foundation. Available at: https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43168/the-redeemer [Accessed 8 July 2022].

Foundation, P. (2020). *Attack by Siegfried Sassoon*. [online] Poetry Foundation. Available at: https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/57323/attack-56d23aba391f5 [Accessed 8 July 2022].

www.bartleby.com. (n.d.). *24. Enemies. Sassoon, Siegfried. 1918. The Old Huntsman and Other Poems*. [online] Available at: https://www.bartleby.com/135/24.html [Accessed 8 July 2022].

Abstract

The First World War, or the Great War, was one of the most significant events marking the first half of the 20th century. The first global conflict destroyed the world, leaving behind a great loss and nothing but bitter memories. There have been differing opinions on the war and its motives. War literature discusses various standpoints, and poetry is one of the primary sources. Poets like Rupert Brooke favoured and romanticized the image of war. Brooke's poems *The Soldier* and *Peace* present a patriotic and nationalistic outlook on the war as an idyllic event. The same patriotic stance can be seen in Ivor Gurney's poem *The Silent One.* On the contrary, some poets were anti-war protestors, criticizing the deluded minds of those who were pro-war. In particular, Wilfred Owen's poems *Anthem for Doomed Youth* and *Dulce et Decorum Est*, Siegfried Sassoon's poems *Enemies* and *Attack*, Isaac Rosenberg's *Break of Day in the Trenches* and *Dead Man's Dump*, and Charles Hamilton Sorley's poems *To Germany* and *When You See Millions of the Mouthless Dead* all showcase a firm sense of loathing towards the war. The thesis examines a selection of different viewpoints to understand the great influence World War One left on English poetry.

Keywords: World War I, English poetry, Wilfred Owen, Isaac Rosenberg, Ivor Gurney, Rupert Brook, Charles Hamilton Sorley, Siegfried Sassoon

Sažetak

Prvi svjetski rat ili Veliki rat jedan je od najznačajnijih događaja koji su obilježili prvu polovicu 20. stoljeća. Prvi globalni sukob uništio je svijet, ostavivši iza sebe veliki gubitak i samo gorka sjećanja. Postoje različita mišljenja o ratu i njegovim motivima. Ratna književnost raspravlja o različitim stajalištima, a poezija je jedan od primarnih izvora. Pjesnici poput Ruperta Brookea favorizirali su i romantizirali sliku rata. Brookeove pjesme 'Vojnik' (The Soldier) i 'Mir' (Peace) predstavljaju patriotski i nacionalistički pogled na rat kao idiličan događaj. Isti patriotski stav može se vidjeti u pjesmi Ivora Gurneyja 'Šutljivi' (The Silent One). Naprotiv, neki pjesnici bili su antiratni prosvjednici, kritizirajući zavedene umove onih koji su bili za rat. Konkretno, pjesme Wilfreda Owena 'Himna za prokletu mladež' (Anthem for Doomed Youth) i 'Dulce et Decorum Est', pjesme Siegfrieda Sassoona 'Neprijatelji' (Enemies) i 'Napad' (Attack), 'Dnevni predah u rovovima' (Break of Day in the Trenches) i 'Deponij mrtvog čovjeka' (Dead Man's Dump) Isaaca Rosenberga te pjesme Charlesa Hamiltona Sorleyja 'Njemačka' (Germany) i 'Kad vidite milijune bezustih mrtvaca' (When You See Millions of the Mouthless Dead) pokazuju čvrst osjećaj gađenja prema ratu. U radu se ispituje izbor različitih gledišta kako bi se razumio veliki utjecaj koji je Prvi svjetski rat ostavio na englesku poeziju.

Ključne riječi: Prvi svjetski rat, Engleska poezija, Wilfred Owen, Isaac Rosenberg, Ivor Gurney, Rupert Brook, Charles Hamilton Sorley, Siegfried Sassoon

Abstract

La Prima guerra mondiale o la Grande Guerra è stata uno degli eventi più significativi che hanno segnato la prima metà del XX secolo. Il primo conflitto combattutosi su scala globale ha distrutto il mondo, lasciando dietro di sé una grande perdita e nient'altro che ricordi amari. Le opinioni sulla guerra e sui suoi motivi sono vari e divergenti. La letteratura di guerra ne discute i vari punti di vista e la poesia è una delle sue fonti primarie. Poeti come Rupert Brooke favorivano e romanticizzavano l'immagine della guerra. Le poesie di Brooke 'Il soldato' (The Soldier) e 'Pace' (Peace) presentano una visione patriotica e nazionalista della guerra come un evento idilliaco. La stessa posizione patriottica si può riscontrare nella poesia di Ivor Gurney 'Canzone del silenzio' (The Silent One). Al contrario, alcuni poeti manifestavano contro la guerra, criticando le menti illuse di coloro che ne erano favorevoli. In particolare le poesie 'Inno per la gioventù condannata' (Anthem for Doomed Youth) e 'Dulce et Decorum Est' di Wilfred Owen, 'Nemici' (Enemies) e 'Attacco' (Attack) di Siegfried Sassoon, 'Nascita del giorno in trincea' (Break of Day in the Trenches) e 'Avanzi di uomo morto' (Dead Man's Dump) di Isaac Rosenberg, e 'Alla Germania' (To Germany) e 'Quando vedi milioni di morti senza bocca' (When You See Millions of the Mouthless Dead) di Charles Hamilton Sorley dimostrano tutte un forte senso di disgusto verso la guerra. La tesi esamina una selezione di diversi punti di vista nei confronti della guerra per comprendere la grande influenza esercitata dalla Prima guerra mondiale sulla poesia inglese.

Parole chiave: Prima guerra mondiale, poesia inglese, Wilfred Owen, Isaac Rosenberg, Ivor Gurney, Rupert Brook, Charles Hamilton Sorley, Siegfried Sassoon