

DISILLUSIONMENT IN WILFRED OWEN'S WAR POETRY

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When the First World War broke out in 1914, the cosmos was still mostly unadulterated. In this universe, fighting was still associated with massive horse charges and the valiant pursuit of lofty objectives. This was the first instance of heavily automated combat recorded in human history. As the weeks, months, and decades went by, each one bringing with it a greater degree of death and misery, the warriors' sense of hopelessness grew. Young men who were appalled by what they saw throughout the war frequently voiced their opposition to the war in poetry. These young guys were among the conflict's loudest critics. They wrote of the mental suffering brought on by the fight in addition to the physical agony of suffering injuries and losing loved ones. In fact, Wilfred Owen was a poet who belonged to this group. His poetry captures the feelings of utter powerlessness, terror, and demonization he endured while in the military.

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The start of World War I caught off guard a culture that still associated warfare with majesty cavalry attacks and the noble pursuit of heroic objectives. In essence, this world was naïve. The Vast War ended up wiping out nearly an entire generation of young men and shattering a great number of thoughts and ambitions because humans were completely equipped for the brutality of modern battlefields. Only World War I substantially questioned accepted standards of morality and morals in the same way as it did. The massive number of deaths that were incurred throughout World War I was caused by the automation of equipment (heavy weapons, tanks), the advent of toxic gas, the protracted deadlock on the Western Army, and battlefields.

The battle, which raged from 1914 to 1918, shook the whole world and appeared to mark the end of a significant phase in the advancement of European culture. An period of liberal culture in Western Europe came to an abrupt end as a result of the horrors perpetrated during the First World War. Over Europe, a literal and figurative devastation was created, leaving the victims' brains with profound psychological wounds. More and more of this

pain was depicted in the poetry that was written throughout these years. The challenge of holding to the high liberal principles outlined in Brooke's "The Soldier" has grown more challenging. Thomas Hardy once said that there is a pervasive and palpable feeling that the previous decade and its ideals are actually a "corpse outleant" (corpse outlier).

A few poets participated in the war and served in the army, while others, like Wilfred Owen, lost their lives as a result of the experiences they had there. At a period when the majority of the world believed that war was a heroic and honourable undertaking, these people, who are thereafter referred to as "war poets," present a first-person depiction of the cruelty and destruction of war in their poetry. They were particularly skilled at capturing the emotion of living through those trying years, and most of what they wrote was a response to their own unique experiences. However passionately they may have first felt about the war, they quickly discovered its true severity, and this understanding altered both their imaginations and their lyrical skills. They were on the front. Even when they did not openly communicate the horrible facts they had encountered, the underlying knowledge had an impact on the way they wrote. They had to find a method to do this.

"The experience of the front line war poets was more overwhelming, more prolonged and more intense than for any previous generation of soldiers. ... Men found themselves to be driven cogs in vast, insensitive, impersonal machines, stripped of will, morality, and dignity. They were victims of the grossest abuses by the countries which they served and so often loved. ... most of the poets showed no grasp of power politics, the relentless pressure of arms industry economics and propaganda, no understanding of causes or cures for the war. They spoke simply as human beings caught up in bewildering and shocking events. As human beings they recorded their experiences and moral responses. They spoke of the problems of modern warfare conducted by advanced and civilized nations".

Owen was unprepared for the conditions that he would face in the pits in France, which were described as being filthy, chilly, damp, and plagued with rats, and which stretched across the ugliness that was the Western Front. Owen saw the worst winters of the war, which was characterized by continual bombardment and the application of gas, as well as dirt and misery, as well as soldiers laying on the ground after having been blown to bits. 8 As was the case with the vast majority of his classmates in France, he quickly became first disenchanted, and then outraged at the atrocities of war, as well as a patriotism that he regarded to be premised on lies. He also became shocked by the notion that patriotism was

founded on contradictions. He had been raised and lived his life as a faithful Christian, but amid the muck of Belgium, he lapsed in faith, much like many others of his time. He was diagnosed with "neurasthenia" or "shell-shock," a condition that is defined by ambiguity, rattling, memory loss, and horrifying bad dreams. He was transported to Craiglockhart War Doctor's office, which is located near Edinburgh, and it was there he managed to meet Captain Siegfried Sassoon, a famous war writer who was residing at the same doctor's office. Sassoon was recovering from his injuries at the same time. It seems that this encounter was the true beginning of Owen's vocation as a matured and serious writer. Having Sassoon as a source of inspiration.

Owen resolved "to speak out against the war, in harsh, clear and unpleasant words, unsoftened by any poetic or patriotic euphemisms."

Owen having composed poems before to the war using Gray, Keats, or Tennyson as inspirations; but, it was his loving affection for Mr. Sassoon that turned him a war poet. His poetry went through a transitional period of stylistic shifts as he hardened and condensed his vocabulary in response to the demanding and harrowing experiences he had while serving on the front lines of combat.

"his poetry has universality as it attempts to confront the reader about the experience of war. He is outraged by the senseless loss of life as well as the dehumanizing effects of war."

After Wilfred Owen was killed on 4 November, "among his papers a draft Preface was found for a future volume of poems. The most famous part of it is the following:

This book is not about heroes. English poetry is not yet fit to speak of them. Nor is it about deeds, or lands, nor anything about glory, honor, might, majesty, dominion, or power, except War. Above all I am not concerned with Poetry. My subject is War and the pity of War. The Poetry is in the pity ... all a poet can do today is warn. That is why the true Poets must be truthful. The contrast with the sentiments expressed in Rupert Brooke's "The Soldier" is very marked. When Owen says he is 'not concerned with Poetry', he means the kind of poetry associated with Brooke."

"Owen's poetic antecedents and personal tastes were of the nineteenth century; he was in no sense a conscious innovator of the kind of T. S. Eliot or Ezra Pound or even the Imagists; he was a bookish boy rather than a literary intellectual, he was probably unaware of any crisis in poetry, quite possibly he had read neither the Jacobites nor the

metaphysical. Simply, the war, a devastating non-literary event, forced him, as a poet and an honest man, to find another way of speaking. ...The great compulsion in Owen's work, was to communicate reality, to convey the truth of modern warfare to those not directly engaged in it. For this was the first modern war, in respect of destructive power; at the same time it was (for the British people at least) the last of the old wars in which the civilian population were at a safe distance from the destruction".

"the writers in the trenches felt it a duty, not simply to write poems or prose, but to write about the trenches. ... If Brooke has played the war poet for those who are fascinated by the idea of poetry (or indeed of war), Wilfred Owen is the war poet for those who desire the reality".

Owen was able to convey an ideal that was sincere but yet filled with cynicism and rage. Owen wrote in a more lasting, meaningful way, portraying the futility of the fighting and the horrific conditions the soldiers had to deal with in the trenches in a powerful, sometimes understated, but always compassionate and disturbing way, while many of his colleagues were writing poetry filled with sarcasm and cynicism at the injustices of war. Some of the strongest antiwar poetry ever written in the English language was composed by Owen, who was appalled by the savagery and senselessness of war. He used his keen individual viewpoint as a fighter to speak with an unmatched force about the physical, emotional, and psychological suffering of the First World War. His experiences are the basis for his work. He wrote each and every one of the outstanding war poetry that serve as the cornerstone of his career between August 1917 and September 1918. These songs were written in a remarkably short amount of time.

"Wilfred Owen wrote to tell the truth: the honest, vivid, horrific truth about modern warfare. ... Owen wrote about the pity of war; however, the pity was not his pity - he did not write to console himself or to express his own emotions.

..., he wrote of an universal pity, one that he felt the world should have felt about war....As Owen saw it, the pity of war is the dehumanization of man by war, the annihilation of human potentiality in war, and the futility of war. This is evident in his poems."

Owen's "Strange Meeting" serves as an example of how war is fruitless and only causes suffering for those who are involved. The poem gives readers a peek of a horrific, nightmare-like environment. The fact that the rhymes don't exactly fit together is evidence of how peculiar this situation is, and it adds to the poetry's eerie atmosphere. The phrases

"dull," "sullen," and "dark" are all applicable in this context to convey the impression of gloom. The rhyming at the end of the sentence illustrates how difficult it is to represent the situation when a person is searching for a hold in the dark. However, the poem also highlights another feature: the harmony and order of life are being disturbed. Its bewilderment is exacerbated by the "battle," "titanic warfare," and gunfire. The harm done to the poetry is comparable to the harm done to the world. There is no peace or rest in that "sullen hall," even though this terrifying power of combat cannot be seen or experienced in the hereafter. Instead, those who stay there must groan in their sleep because it is so painful. A tight rhyme would not be appropriate in this context given the agitation being displayed, despite the symmetry implied by the similarity of sounds. Owen has purposely used close end rhyming (half-rhymes: essentially generally drop from a consonant of high voice to one of low voice) to demonstrate that the fighting has no positive impact on the lives of the young soldiers. Because it looks as though the ideal of completeness, which is still discernible in the rhyming, is being destroyed as we read the poem, we experience disappointment and sorrow. This gives the impression that the ideal will never be attained. Owen came up with this unique plan as a direct result of the conflict. Wilfred Owens uses near end rhymes, commonly referred to as half-rhymes, in his poem "Strange Meeting." By communicating the disturbing mystery of a nightmare situation, these rhymes aid in setting a certain tone in the poem. They are a reflection of the strife that war causes as well as the unease brought on by the torments in hell. Through the deepening of the consonants in the following words, the following rhyme couplets portray pessimism, dissatisfaction, sorrow, despair, and death: "escaped - scooped (1-2), groined - moaned (1-3), grained - ground (11-12), moan - morn (13-14), years - yours (15-16), wild - world (17-18), tigress - progress (28-29), mystery Meeting and talking with the stranger allows Owen to further solidify his own sadness and sense of isolation. There is a break in the battle at this point in the conflict, and "... no guns hammered..." In a quest to find even one other living ghost, Owen prods and prods the dead bodies that are all around him. Despite being barely alive when he is discovered, the foreigner is found to be breathing and to be alive. The poet notices that they are both now in hell as the dead soldier rises and flashes a "death grin." According to the author, "I knew we stood in Hell." He was, in fact, overcome with dread, despair, and helplessness, just as Owen had been. This person's observations on life and the lessons they've learned about themselves and one another along the road take up the most

of the poem. The words of the dead man are introduced by a cryptic paragraph about grace and truth. Germans are depicted in a way by the poet that shows he did not view them as enemies outside of the circumstances of the war.

"The waste of war afflicted him even more than its horrors; it moved him less to indignation than to pity. The subject of his poems, he wrote, is War, and the pity of War. The poetry is in the pity. His compassion extended to the foe."

"Strange Meeting gives a strong image of Owen's thoughts on war, enemies, and mankind. Owen places the characters of Strange Meeting in Hell after they have died". Not just had they both passed away, yet they had also co-perpetrated in the act of murdering the other. They had already been adversaries in battle, and as a result of this, those who had both ended up dead, only to run into one another again in hell.

"Death has made them allies, and before they sleep for ever they can talk, agree on the horrors of war, and mourn the potential that has died with them. ... Paradoxically, this Hell is in fact a place of peace and reconciliation, where dead enemies become brothers in their loathing of war. Far from being at the beginning of an eternity of everlasting torment, the two soldiers are freed from all pain and horror. The real Hell is the war which they have left behind."

Owen makes a comparison in this poem between the solemnity of a funeral and the savagery of the battlefield. Owen employs the term "Anthem" in a way that is sarcastic in order to question the level of acknowledgment or respect that is afforded to the young warriors. "Anthem" may allude to a song of praise, dedication, or patriotism. The poem makes use of leading questions to draw attention to the depravity of the killings that are described. The brutal nature of their killings is further emphasized using personalization and repetition of weapons, such as in the following phrases: "the monstrous rage of the guns" and "the stuttering rifles fast rattle". Owen maintains the contrasts by referencing to choruses and "hasty orisons" throughout the passage. Nevertheless, these choruses are not the somber voices that are connected with the chanting of hymns; instead, they are described as "the shrill, deranged choirs of crying shells".

"The young male populations have so much patriotic love, and are so eager to serve, but this love turns sour. They spend time rotting in the wastes of the trenches, only to be mown down in the blink of an eye by a machine-gun nest. Not only are their lives wasted, going without the holy rite of funeral, but the lives of their loved ones at home are also ruined"

The poem focuses mostly on the theme of a funeral throughout its whole. In the song, the speaker wonders whether or not there will even be a burial service. What funeral chimes will be sounded in honor of the departed? No, just gatling gun and weapon fire. What kind of a pall will there be at the graveside? Just the blush of boyfriends' girlfriends and spouses. They are however not actually there; rather, they remain at home, where they are either waiting or fretting about the situation. It is stating that each of these guys are dying and they are not even receiving a dignified burial, which is the sacred ceremony of the dead. 35 In this context, "the pallor of girls' brows" honors fallen troops, and the somber, patient thoughts of the ladies who are grieving are not dissimilar to the somber religious solace. It provides some solace in the knowledge that the departed will not be forgotten by their loved ones. The consoling and dignified rituals of grieving that are practiced in religious and organisation's procedures stand in stark contrast to the violent manner in which they passed away. In addition to this, he places a strong emphasis on the story's immediate aural consequences. The end product is a series of lines that replicate the noises of battle.

*"What passing-bells for those who die as cattle? Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
Only the shuttering rifles' rapid rattle Can patter out their hasty orisons."*

In "Anthem for Doomed Youth" The symbolism of songs and memorial service rites is managed skillfully, moving from the noises of the European battleground to the trumpets in the English home counties and eventually to the simple border control of a residence in shock and grief. This movement begins with the noises of the European battleground and ends with the simple border control of a residence in shock and grief. The freshness and charm of spring are set against the cruelty and carnage of war in the short story "Spring Offensive." The environment around here is inimical to those who wage war. The degree of nature's animosity against man is directly proportional to the amount of damage man does. In the beginning, nature is kind, but only so long as the humans allow her to bestow her gifts upon them. The troops then choose to disregard the cautions that were given to them, which included phrases such as "the impending line" and "fearfully flashed," and as a result, they reject the beneficial features of environment. The phrase "but gripped to them like sorrowing hands" conveys, in a subdued manner, the idea that nature is making an effort to prevent the troops from proceeding to the battleground. Later on, the use of the word "no" many times underscores the sarcastic stillness that is present before the combat,

which is designed to maximize the surprise factor. "Of alarms / Of bugles, no high flags, no clamorous rush." In a manner similar to "Futility," the sun is personalized to emphasize that combat is in direct opposition to existence.

"O larger shone that smile against the sun,— Mightier than his whose bounty these have spurned."

In the previous paragraph, the warriors are on the verge of turning their backs on the enormous sun and all the benefits it provides. They could seem to be "mightier" than that of the sun, but this is only because the sun's power in the poetry is limited to assisting in the process of creation, while they have the capacity to eliminate it. Due to the fact that they disregarded nature's warnings, the whole of nature is now working against companions:

"And instantly the whole sky burned

With fury against them; earth set sudden cups In thousands for their blood; ..."

As the bloody nature of the conflict is revealed, the tempo quickens to reflect the escalating tension. It emphasizes the unnatural character of battle by depicting nature as aggressive at first, and subsequently as devastated and brutalized as a result of combat. The phrase "chasmed and steepened sheer to endless space" describes the appearance of the landscape. The horrific nature of the devastation is conveyed via the use of images connected to the ritual of fellowship. The references to hell are a further demonstration of the guilt associated with surviving. "The poem illustrates the physical horrors of the men experienced in war as they 'plunged and fell away past the world verge.' Owen suggests that god and nature had set a trap, for just as the soldiers had turned their back on nature and religion so too had God and nature rejected the soldiers." 37 It's possible that God, in his kindness, may grab some of them while they drop, but the viciousness of nature validates their guilt, which would be exacerbated by the survivors' quietness: "Why speak not they of comrades that went under?"

"Spring Offensive is a vivid account of what warfare is like. The soldiers spurn safety and the peace and love of nature to destroy it all instead. They negate nature, remove themselves from the nurture of nature, alienate themselves from what gave them life in the first place; and thus, they reject all characteristics of humanity, to kill, maim and destroy. This is the dehumanization of man, in the violation of nature. To Owen, this is part of the pity of war – that mankind could turn its back on all its values to become base creatures. It

is only with their deaths that these men are forgiven, and are reunited with their creator, whose creation they tried to destroy ...plunged and fell away past this world's verge, / Some say God caught them even before they fell. But for those who commit such a crime yet survive, they are The few who rushed in the body to enter hell, / And there out-fiending all its fiends and flames; those who never regain the humanity they lost, for they have been to hell and back, and are no longer as human as others."

In the beginning, "Miners" is on the murders of miners, but it eventually moves on to discussing the fatalities of warriors. Both are portrayed as groups that are victims of the disregard shown by society toward them. In the first two paragraphs, the coal is given a personality; in the first line, it is said to mutter and groan, and in the second stanza, this anthropomorphism is enhanced when the coal is claimed to derive from plants and the woods. Although 'smothered ferns' is a metaphor for the strangled mine workers, "men / Writhing for air," there exists sensuous evidence that his emotions fix also upon such flora and fauna, "the low, sly lives," which have been given a place in the neighborhood of creatures. This refers to case despite the fact that 'smothered ferns' is a metaphor for strangled miners. 'Sly' conveys a proactive meaning in which the crops are at minimum able to strive for life, but 'wry' describes a scenario in which the mining could do nothing, a predicament which was eventually produced by other men. Both meanings refer to the same situation. Through the use of alliteration of the letter's in the phrase "display steam-phantoms simmer," the author is able to communicate the roughness and hardness of the world in which he or she lives. The anguish of the miners is related to the rhyming couplets phrases "wry slumber" and "...men writhing for breath" by the personification of coal. Individuals don't connect the extraction of coal from the ground with the dangers faced by the miners since they are either insensitive or ignorant, and as a result, they don't make the connection between the two:-----

*"And I saw white bones in the cinder-shard. Bones without number;
For many hearts with coal are charred And few remember."*

The cinders, that serve as a symbol for their status as perpetual victims, portray them as bones. The darkness pits in which the miners struggled became associated with the schmucks and tunnels in which the military fought: "I thought of those who labored black holes / Of war, and died....." The laborers are compelled to work since they are looking for a means of subsistence, just as warriors are expected to carry out their assigned tasks.

Mines and trench combat have a lot in common with one another. An ironic contradiction may be seen between the personifications of terror and the representations of tranquility in the form of the dead warriors. The transition from "rooms of amber" to "rooms of amber" sets the setting for persons who have grown self-satisfied and would quickly forget that they were "...well- cheered / By our lives' flame." As the poetry comes to a conclusion, the mood gradually changes to becoming more somber and reflective. As the reader's feelings go from melancholy to joy and then back to sorrow once more, the regularity of the rhyming in this section gradually rises and then gradually decreases as continues to follow:

*"The centuries will burn rich loads With which we groaned,
Whose warmth shall lull their dreaming lids, While songs are crooned;
But they will not dream of us poor lads Left in the ground."*

Owen's objective, like to those of the others war writers, was to convey the truth about his experiences rather than to idealize or exaggerate the poetry. He was able to capture the realities of the war, including the monotony, the powerlessness, the terror, and most importantly, the pointlessness of it, without sacrificing his artistic balance or enabling bitterness to seep into his works. He was successful in expressing all of these aspects of the conflict. He spoke with an unrivaled force on the physical, moral, and psychic anguish of the First World War, drawing from his acute individual perspective as a soldier. His writing is based on his experiences. He paints a vivid picture of the agony and suffering endured by troops while serving in the military. By demonstrating compassion for his fellow soldiers, Owen provides the reader with a lot more than simply a glimpse into the atrocities of war. His poems will be remembered for the forceful language he used to convey his vehement opposition to war. He is resolved that his writing would advocate on behalf of people who suffer but are unable to communicate their experiences to others who are either unaware of or indifferent to the pain of others. This argument is made in the song "Anthem for Doomed Youth," which does so by drawing parallels between the treatment of the troops and that of livestock just before they are slaughtered. The feelings of sympathy or pity are what spark the action in "Anthem for Doomed Youth, Miners, and Strange Meeting", respectively. His thoughts on the sheer waste and futility of war are summed up in the poem "Strange Meeting." The relieve in which the coalmine in "Miners"

is enlarged to create a picture of war, or with which the cave system in "Strange Meeting" is characterized as like and yet utterly apart from a wartime dugout, demonstrates how Owen's fantasy could, without contorting, invest actual reality with mythological significance. In "Miners", the coalmine is greatly amplified to create a picture of war. In "Strange Meeting", the cave system is characterized as like yet still utterly with exception of I n several of Owen's works, nature is portrayed as a hostile entity, such as the dangerous snow in "Exposure" or the "winds' scimitars" in "Asleep." However, this hatred is a reaction to the conflict that Owen experienced. His comprehension of the issue is most clearly articulated in the work "Spring Offensive", which describes how nature makes an appeal to individuals to prevent them from engaging in hostilities, how it then engages in a violent invasion against the humans when they disobey the appeal, and how it then returns to its peaceful state as soon as the hostilities are over. Owen's demonstrations against war are voiced in the Sassoon-like poems "Dulce et Decorum Est" and "Spring Offensive", which replicate horror. In these poems, frustration, satire, or irony is particularly guided against the resumption of the war, and as a result, it is guided also at the citizens, who appears to have little knowledge of the horrors of warfare. A mixture of rage and sympathy may be seen in his poetry. Because of existence of the anger, the compassion is compelled to take action on behalf of the person who is suffering, and the frustration itself does not obscure its view of the suffering. Despite this, his multilayered awareness was an improvement over Sassoon's and allowed for a more adaptable view of combat.

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